“Before you decide to pummel me, Natasha, welcome to the US!” Tony put his hands in his pockets and smiled at her. Natasha actually looked shocked.

“What? You actually got him to change his mind? How in the hell did you pull that off?”

“Well, it wasn’t that hard. You just have to do one teeny tiny little thing before you can exchange your red star for our red, white and blue stripes.” Tony’s demeanor changed.

“Stark. What do I have to do?” she honestly wasn’t sure she wanted to know.

“Look its simple. All you gotta do is marry Capsicle over here and bam! You’re a US citizen!”
Everyone literally froze. Did he just say what she thought he did?

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UPDATES WILL BEGIN December 17, 2018 for spelling and grammatical errors and some wording because I'm a perfectionist.

Notes

Hi! I know, I really shouldn't have started another story, but I couldn't help myself. I've been playing with this onw and another one similar to it for a few months now and decided to go through with this one. It's kinda influenced by the movie the Proposal and it takes place about six months after AoU. Bruce/Tasha didn't happen. Well it did in the aspect they grew closer as friends, BUT NOTHING MORE.

Anyways I stuck with Natasha's age from the comics so fingers crossed I got stuff right. If you see something off, let me know. Also in this I think Peggy and Natasha are friends and have been for many years as you will see. I love the idea of the dynamic between them. Also Peggy's a little more all there then in the movies.

Um um um...I'm sorta doing this after Ultron for a reason, in like this is some of the beginning's of the government starting to be ass holes after Sokovia, but this in no ways will be a series.

I imagine between six and seven chapters I have through chapter three finished and four and five planned out, so that's really the main reason I posted this, because it's mostly done. If you've read my other works you know I'm not a fast updater. Sorry also school just started back up, though last semester before break I felt like I was updating more...so yeah, I think I got it all. Rating may change, but I doubt it.

DISCLAIMER: I may use movie quotes, if I do it will be said before the chapter. the character's are not mine, except for one random dude. I make no money, yada yada. did I miss anything? I'll update if I did.

Anyways I hope you enjoy feedback is encouraged! also for those of you following my story The Black Swan I have the next chapter ready I'm just debating between two endings and the next chapter is planned so I may just wait till I finish nine to post eight.

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UPDATED: December 17, 2018 for spelling and grammatical errors.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Natasha played with the hem of her dress as she stared at it from where it hung on the hanger. The others had given her the space she had asked for. She didn’t need any help getting ready, but she really just wanted time to think. *This isn’t right. I can’t keep lying, he didn’t ask for this.* Before she knew what she was doing she was climbing out the window of the church and running towards the street. She hailed a cab and got in.

“Where to?” The driver asked.

“Anywhere. Far I don’t care. Just not here.” The driver pulled away from the curb and started driving. “Actually take me to Willow Tree Estates please.”

“Sure thing.”

The ride was only a half hour away and she didn’t even notice the time pass by. The driver pulled up to the front entrance of the Willow Tree Estates Nursing Home. Paying the cabbie, Natasha stepped out of the car and stared up at the pristine white building and took a deep breath as she walked in. She hadn’t been here in at least a year and to be honest, she wasn’t even sure why she was here now.

“Natasha.” Donna was the front desk nurse, who always greeted everyone with a warm smile. Natasha was honestly surprised the woman remembered her. “Aren’t you supposed to be getting ready for your big day?” Donna raised an eyebrow as Natasha chuckled lightly.

“I had some time. Is she…?” *All there? Coherent? Sane?* Natasha let her question hang. She didn’t like using those words.

“Actually, she’s having a great day today. Best she’s had in a while, you can go on back. She was actually talking about you this morning at breakfast, so I know she’ll be happy to see you.” Donna smiled a bright happy smile as Natasha thanked her and headed on back.

She came to a stop at the correct door, and read the sign, Margret “Peggy” Carter. She took a deep breath and knocked on the door as she stepped inside.

“Peggy? It’s Natasha, may I come in?” Peggy looked up from her newspaper and smiled warmly at her. The nurse was right she was having a good day, only if Natasha was herself.

“Of course you may. You’re always welcome. But don’t you have someplace to be.” Natasha sighed as she shut the door and sat in the chair next to Peggy’s bed.

“Oh, oh. I know that look. You ran didn’t you?” It wasn’t really a question. She found it funny how well Peggy knew her.

“Technically I climbed out the window and took a cab.” Natasha told her sheepishly. “So, Steve told you about the wedding, huh.”

“Well no. He didn’t get to before the news.” Peggy handed her the newspaper. “I’m happy for you two, you both deserve this.”

“I shouldn’t be doing this.” Natasha sighed as she stared at the front page. *The Wedding of the Century.* She tossed the paper on the table and shook her head.

“No, you should be getting ready to walk down the aisle.” Peggy chuckled, but one look at the
young woman and she knew there was something more. “My, I haven’t seen that look for a long, long time. What’s really troubling you?”

“It’s not real. None of it. It’s all a scam and I can’t do it! Not to him, it’s not worth it.” Natasha brought her legs up to her chest as she held back the tears that started to form.

“Oh boy. What happened?”

Natasha laughed bitterly as she thought back.

“It’s a long story.”

Peggy smiled.

“Well I don’t know about you, but I don’t plan on going anywhere anytime soon.” Natasha laughed for real at that, while Peggy gave her knee a gentle shove. “Start from the beginning.”

Natasha took a deep breath as she tried to calm herself.

“It all started a few months ago when I received an unexpected visit from my immigration’s officer…”

_Two months earlier…_

Natasha stepped out of the elevator and into the common room floor. She stopped suddenly when she saw someone she didn’t expect, Mr. Hannagan. What was he doing here? He was standing at the kitchen counter talking with Tony as he was obviously waiting for Natasha.

“Mr. Hannagan, this is unexpected.” Natasha said in lieu of a greeting.

“Kind of the point Ms. Romanoff. Is there somewhere we can talk in privet?” He asked and judging by the smile on his face, Natasha wasn’t going to like what he had to say. She watched as the others joined in the kitchen as it was almost time for dinner.

“Out here.” Natasha led him out of the small eating area and into their living room. “What’s so important that you had to-?”

Mr. Hannagan shoved a piece of paper in her face before she could finish speaking.

“Your being deported Ms. Romanoff.”

He was fighting a shit eating grin as he watched her expression.

“What!” Natasha yelled. She ripped the piece of paper from his hands and looked at it. Sure enough, there in big black bold letters read “Notice of Deportation”. She looked back up to see a smug smirk on his face.

“You can’t be serious. On what grounds!??” She shoved the paper back at him as he explained.

“Well as you know, you were only allowed to live here because of your work with SHIELD and seeing how SHIELD is no longer operational and a terrorist organization…” He cringed, shrugging,

“Not to mention your actions in the Ultron incident was technically a violation of your rights that have been so generously handed to you. You have two months to pack your bags and head back to Russia, before we send you back ourselves.”
Natasha wanted more than anything to wipe that smug look off his face.

“I’ll apply for citizenship.” And she will! She’d been holding off for the last decade or however long, because with SHIELD she was a citizen.

“Good luck with that Ms. Romanoff, but due to your extensive criminal history I wouldn’t bank on your chances. Not to mention regardless you would have to go back to Russia and stay in Russia for the duration of the very, very lengthy legal process. But I’m sure you’ll be able to accomplish it before you die.”

“You can’t do this!”

The two looked behind them to find the others: Clint, Tony, Bruce and Steve, entering the room and of course the complaint came from Clint.

“Ah of course, Mr. Barton. I’m sorry, truly I am, but this is final. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have other business to attend to.”

“Sure you are.” Clint growled lowly. He really hated that man.

“Clint, he said it was final. Mr. Hannagan, allow me to walk you out.” Tony smiled at the man and Steve had to keep Clint from attacking him.

They all watched as Tony and Mr. Hannagan entered the elevator. Tony could hear them voicing their outrage at the situation, but focused on his main objective. As the doors closed and they began descending Tony hit the emergency stop button, effectively stopping the elevator mid decent. Mr. Hannagan turned to look at the genius.

“What? You honestly thought you could just waltz right on in to my Facility and deport one of my friends and I’d just be cool with it? I am the same man who showed up the congressional panel when they tried to confiscate my suites and those were just my suites. My friends, now that’s a bad move.” Tony said.

“Are you threatening me Mr. Stark? Because I can assure you that will do nothing but hinder your friend’s situation.”

Tony laughed at the man.

“No, no. I’m not threatening you, I’m warning you. She may have made a mess of her life, but I can assure you she has taken her second chance and is making something of it. You send her back to Russia and they’ll kill her.”

“I’m sorry Mr. Stark, but that’s not my problem. The price of her actions. She knew she wouldn’t be able to avoid it forever.”

Tony was starting to think he should have let Clint kill the guy.

“This isn’t just going to affect her.” Tony spit out.

“Tell me, who else would it effect? Besides Mr. Barton, who could that soulless woman possibly affect by leaving?”

_Did he seriously just say that? Oh, now he was going to commit murder. Or maybe not…_

“Fine. I’m done fighting with you.” Tony flipped the emergency switch and the elevator started
moving again.

Mr. Hannagan raised an eyebrow at him.

“Just like that, you’re done?”

Oh, Tony was far from it, but he just didn’t exactly know where he was going with this. But then a lightbulb went off.

“Yeah well, if I can’t get you to change your mind, then I guess there’s no point in wasting oxygen. God, he’s going to be heartbroken.”

Mr. Hannagan’s eyes widened.

“Who?”

Tony shrugged not looking at the other man.

“Cap of course.”

Tony looked at him then and he could see he had gotten the man’s attention.

“Captain Rogers? Why would Captain America be any more concerned than the rest of you?”

Mr. Hannagan folded his arms and looked skeptically at Tony. He was really going to have to lay it on thick.

“Look it’s really not my secret to tell, and knowing Natasha she’d rather die than make this public, but…”

“But what?”

Oh, he had him now.

“Cap and Red have been dating for, oh gosh, a year now? I think that’s what Steve said last week when I asked.” Tony looked down trying to think.

“You expect me to believe that the great American hero and the Russian assassin are in a relationship?” The man laughed at the ridiculous thought.

“I believe there should be a former somewhere in there and no they’re in love. Steve even bought a ring, said he found the perfect one a few days ago. That’s why everyone who can be here is here. But now, thanks to you-” Tony poked him hard in the chest. “-he’s going to have to say good-bye to the woman he loves.”

Mr. Hannagan scrutinized him, but the genius kept hold of his saddened, yet serious expression.

“My God you’re serious.”

“Why wouldn’t I be?”

Now it was Tony crossing his arms.

“Because if they were to be married then she would automatically be granted citizenship.”

“Yeah she would, but why in the hell would I lie about this? Not my relationship, after all that would
Yeah Tony. Really stupid, but hey it’s working!

“Regardless they’re not married yet and in order for that to uphold, they would have to be.”

What? Oh shit…

“What if they got married in the next two months? Regardless they’re in love and intend to be wed that has to count.”

Yeah…this could work.

Mr. Hannagan raised an eyebrow and thought for a moment before making up his mind.

“I suppose yes, it would work. Alright fine and for measure I’ll up her visa for an extra month. That should give me and my people plenty of time to perform an investigation.”

Oh, this man was good…

“How kind.” Tony replied. The words felt like acid in his mouth.

The other man smiled like he’d just one the lottery.

“I’ll have my assistant drop the paperwork and information Captain Rogers and Ms. Romanoff will have to fill out and review tomorrow. As for my investigation, I will arrive sometime the day after tomorrow to begin the questioning. After all, I’m sure you know if I find this to be a scam marriage Ms. Romanoff will never be allowed back on US soil ever again and you and Captain Rogers will be sent to federal prison for committing fraud along with whatever else I can charge you two with. Have a good day Mr. Stark.”

The doors opened, and Mr. Hannagan stepped out of the elevator tipping his invisible hat at Tony.

“What the hell did I just get myself into?” Tony mussed to himself.

Tony stepped out of the elevator and was immediately grabbed by Clint. The archer bundled his fist in Tony’s shirt, shaking him, Clint’s eyes full of anger.

“What the hell.” Tony shoved him off and held up his hand.

“Before you decide to pummel me, Natasha, welcome to the US!” Tony stuffed his hands in his pockets and smiled at her. Natasha actually looked shocked.

“What? You actually got him to change his mind? How in the hell did you pull that off?” Tony was a little shell shocked when she actually hugged him. Natasha Romanoff, The Black Widow, was hugging him. After she backed off and he recovered, he gave them all a tight-lipped smile.

“Well, it wasn’t that hard. You just have to do one teeny tiny little thing before you can exchange your red star for our red, white and blue stripes.” Tony’s demeanor changed, and Natasha could see he was holding back on the actual severity of it all.

“Stark…what do I have to do?” She honestly wasn’t sure she wanted to know.

“Well…” he said kind of high pitched. Natasha glared at him and he shrunk. “Look its simple. All you gotta do is marry Capsicle over here and bam! You’re a US citizen!”
Everyone froze.

*Did he just say what she thought he did?*

“I’m sorry…I have to what?” She let out a breathy laugh, praying she had heard wrong.

“You have to marry Steve. Please don’t kill me!” Tony put up his arms waiting for the hit. He peeked opened one eye and saw the look of utter shock.

“I…what the hell would possess you to even think-!”

*Oh, she was pissed.*

“Before you freak out, it could be worse. I could have told him you were marrying me.” He joked, but it probably wasn’t a good idea. Natasha ran her hands through her hair as she paced back in forth.

“I’m sorry, how do I fit into this?” Steve asked as everything was finally starting to sink in.

“Stark just committed a federal offence and involved the two of us.” Natasha answered for him.

“Tony!” Steve yelled. He didn’t do that often and when he did, well…

“Where did you even come up with this crazy insane idea?” Clint asked, and Tony put on the best smile he could muster.

“Well, last night Pepper made me watch some chick flick with Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds and well it kind of just fueled the idea.”

“You got this idea from watching *The Proposal*?”

Bruce sometimes wondered why he was friends with Tony, this would be one of those times.

“Wait, isn’t that the one where the mean boss forces her assistant to marry her for a green card?” Everyone looked surprised at Steve. “What? Bruce can know the name of the movie, but I can’t catch up?”

“Yeah it is. And if I recall correctly, they get caught!” Clint added and now everyone was looking at him like he had two heads. “It’s one of Laura’s favorites.”

“Well, unlike the movie, we won’t. Steve and Natasha know each other fairly well, neither have living relatives, they live in the same building and if I’m not mistaken Natasha practically lives in Steve’s apartment when she’s not at the Farm. We have enough technology and experience to pull this off.”

“Maybe if I hurry I can catch up to Mr. Hannagan and explain that Tony’s delusional and should under no circumstances be taken seriously.” Natasha mused out loud.

“Oh come on! You’d rather go back to Russia for the rest of your life? I get you have your ways of getting in and out of the country undetected, but you and everyone else know it’s a death sentence as soon as you step foot in that country.”

Everyone went silent again, letting Tony’s words sink in. Of course, Natasha knew what was waiting for her back in Russia, but this could only add fuel to the fire.

“That’s not the point Tony. You didn’t think about either of us before getting us involved in this
crazy plan. And why Steve?” Steve scrunched his eyebrows in offense. “No offence, but really? Captain America and the Black Widow? Not a chance anyone would buy that we are getting married.”

“Well besides Clint, who is already married, you’re closest to Steve, like I said before. Not to mention the influence he’s got on this country. Nobody would even believe for a second he’d commit a federal offense. He’s America’s Golden Boy.”

“That’s exactly the problem! If they don’t think he’s committing a crime, they’ll think I’ve manipulated him or something. And he has committed a federal offence, several actually.” Everyone laughed at that, while Steve averted his gaze.

“Yes, because Mr. Morals over here would corrupt himself without a push.” Tony cocked an eyebrow at her and she smiled.

“You do know how he got into the army right?” Everyone thought about it for a moment.

“Yeah he was about to be 4F’d, but Erikson signed him on anyway.”

Natasha cleared her throat and looked up at Steve.

“And how many would that have made?”

Steve rubbed the back of his neck.

“Five.” He mumbled.

“In how many parts of New York did you forge?”

“Four.”

“And how did you get to the HYDRA base where the 107th was being held?”

“I went AWOL with Peggy and Howard’s help. We also stole a plane and broke a few more laws concerning the front lines.” He was bright red in the face from shame.

“And the truck we took to the base in New Jersey? Oh! And Fort Mead.”

“We borrowed it! I’ve never had anything but the best intentions while doing those things!” He defended.

“This only proves my point more about not being caught! If they didn’t arrest him before they won’t now.” Tony emphasized.

“That so is not the point! They didn’t arrest me because it was the war. We all did some dubious things in that time.”

“Anybody else find it funny he still won’t call it steeling, or illegal?” Clint laughed. Steve just rolled his eyes at the archers comment.

“Look, will you two technically have to get married and stay that way for a short period of time? Yes. But neither of you are in relationships nor will you probably be anytime soon. So no ‘cheating’. And you two can claim to have an open relationship or whatever.”

Steve and Natasha just stood scowling at him.
“Well, it’s not the most fool proof idea, but…it could work.” Everyone was shocked by Clint’s admission.

“Okay Clint’s in, Bruce?”

The doctor looked to be doing some sort of calculation before he shrugged.

“Judging from my calculations this actually has a chance of working. Still not, more than will, but enough that with all of us…yeah I think it’s worth a shot.”

Steve and Natasha blinked at him.

Tony clapped his hands and turned back to the last two Avengers. “Red, Cap?”

Steve looked sheepishly at Natasha, who just wanted to be anywhere but there.

“Oh, come on Cap! Let me put it this way…If I had brought this idea up with you before, you’re telling me you’d say no and let her go back to the mother land to face certain death?” Steve pulled his lips into a tight frown as he closed his eyes and shook his head. Eventually he sighed and let his arms slap against his side.

“That’s a yes.” Tony cheered.

“Only, and only if Natasha wants to do this.” He countered. “Nat?”

Natasha looked up at him. She knew why he was agreeing to do this, and that was something Natasha refused to acknowledge. She wasn’t going to let him either.

“No. I appreciate it, but lying is what got me here and I’m sure as hell not going to use it so I can stay here. I can handle my own, it won’t be the first time I’ve had to.” Tony made to interject, but Natasha didn’t let him. “No Tony. And that’s final. When his assistant comes to drop off those papers I’m getting us out of this, understood?”

They all nodded their heads, telling her they understood and it was good enough for her.

“Now if you’ll excuse me, I have some accounts to close and an apartment to find.”

With that, Natasha got on the elevator and headed to her floor to start packing.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Natasha finally gives in to the fraudulent marriage idea and the other our New Avengers are completely confused and equally amused.

Chapter Notes

DISCLAIMER ADDITION: I quoted from CA: TWS. Yeah that's about it for this addition see original for rest of disclaimer.  
Next instalment! Thank you all for the positive feedback I love hearing what you guys think and you all have been nothing but kind and supportive thank you:) Hope you guys enjoy the chapter. 
I do want to give a slight WARNING, while it's not technically self-harm Natasha does inadvertently hurt herself due to a night terror. Nothing bad or gory but just wanted to give a warning. 
Also, I listen to music when I'm writing or doing anything so I found that one of my favorite songs just happens to fit this story fairly well and you'll start to notice the theme throughout the story. The song is Future Looks Good by One Republic.
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UPDATED December 17, 2018

“Only my godson would think of such a thing.” Peggy huffed. Natasha just shrugged her shoulders.

“Yeah well, he meant well.” He really did, but sometimes he took things a little too far. Like now for instance.

“Always does. But you just told me you said no, so what made you change your mind?” Natasha looked up to meet Peggy’s eyes and sighed.

“Not what, who…”

Later that same evening…

Natasha was in her room packing what little she actually had. She never kept anything that would be important. She was never one to be sentimental, yet she couldn’t find it in herself to return Tony’s ACDC t-shirt she’d taken from the laundry one day, because she just needed to get out of her soaking wet one, or Clint’s sweatpants she’s had for the last who knows how many years. The one though she found she couldn’t go many places without, was Steve’s sweatshirt he’d given her one night when they were watching a movie because she was cold.

She would find herself wearing it on those particularly hard days and nights when she couldn’t do more than sit on her couch and watch TV because her past was haunting her. There was just
something about him that gave her a sense of security. It amazed her how the pullover made her feel more at ease, how he himself made her feel at ease during these times. She always felt silly about it. It was like a child’s security blanket.

Still though…

She set the sweatshirt aside, as she continued packing. These were dangerous thoughts, but she couldn’t help herself. She’d be lying to herself if she said she didn’t want to just curl up into herself and hide. Hide from what she was bound to encounter in Russia. Hide from what she knew she might never get to see again. Hide…from the one person she didn’t think-**knew**-she couldn’t be without. But then again, she had always known she’d have to one day, she just didn’t think it’d be this soon. Natasha finished packing a few more of her things and decided to go to bed. Her mind was tired from thinking.

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Her dreams were filled with the screams of her victims. The shouts from her trainers and handlers, reminding her what failure would bring her. The taunting voices of those who would love nothing more than to take her, remake her, use her. The warnings, the promises of everyone she’d ever encountered during her stint at the Red Room and at SHIELD. So many voices, like shards of glass cutting her skin, burning, searing pain like fire. Those voices soon turned to faces and bodies tearing at her, each looking for vengeance. She screamed as she was torn, but all she could think was I made this, this is all me.

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Natasha woke up, voice raw as Steve came running into her suite. His was just across the hall of the floor they shared, so he always came. No matter how much she used to protest, he always came.

“Nat, hey, hey it’s okay.” She willingly went into his embrace as he whispered soothing words into her hair. She hasn’t had a nightmare this bad in a while, well at least not one that’s caused her to wake up screaming. “Nat you’re bleeding.”

Natasha looked at him confused and then looked down at her arms as he cradled them in his hands. Sure enough her forearms were bleeding from being clawed at. She looked to her hands to see blood and skin under her nails. She had done this to herself without even knowing. Tears started to stream down her face as she choked out a sob.

Steve quickly went into the bathroom and took out the first aid kit. Kneeling down in front of her with a damp towel as he began to clean off her arms. She had gotten herself pretty good, but nothing major that wouldn’t heal. Maybe a new scar or two, but nothing like she had once done. He bandaged her arms and looked over at her bed. Her sheets were stained, but nothing the washer couldn’t fix. Still there was no way in hell he was letting her stay by herself. Steve picked her up and took her back to his room. He shifted her in his arms to pull the covers back and settled down.

Natasha was clinging to him, afraid to let go, like reality would slip from her if she did. He wrapped her up in his arms and the **three** blankets he had because despite his furnace like body, he was **always** cold. She couldn’t help the wracking sobs that came out. She could feel Steve tightening his hold on her, as he ran a hand up and down her back trying to calm her. After a while she finally came down, but her breathing remained raged and her body still kept shaking.

“You’re not leaving.” Steve finally said trying desperately to keep his voice even.

“I have to.” It came out weak, barely above a whisper.

“No, you don’t. This is your home, whether you’re willing to admit it or not it is.” **I’m your home.**
“This isn’t playing pretend Steve. You think this will stay quite? Because it won’t. Knowing Hannagan he’ll jump at the chance to make it public. You deserve a chance to be happy, not bound to me because I needed a green card. Not to mention this will ruin the way people see you—”

“First of all,” Steve said cutting her off.

“I got that. Second, when in the hell have, I ever cared about how people see me?” Steve asked her, hurt evident in his eyes.

“If they start hating me because of my supposed choice in women then they must not have had much of a high regard for me to begin with. Third and final,” He sighed, cupping her face, his eyes softening.

“I gave up on the chance of having a normal relationship ever again the minute I sunk the Valkyrie and I certainly don’t need to be in a relationship to be happy. I appreciate the concern Nat, I do, but this right here, the Avengers…you guys are my family and that makes me happy. So I’ll be damned if I let some stupid law interfere with that.”

Natasha watched with tear rimmed eyes, as Steve ranted. She didn’t know why she was surprised by this, it was Steve after all and yeah, he was right. She didn’t want to go back, but in her experience lying has never led anywhere good, though she still does it, but still…

“You good?” She asked him when he was finished. Steve looked down at her still glassy eyes and nodded.

“I understand you don’t want to lie Nat, but it’s for a good reason.” Natasha knitted her eyebrows together and leaned away from him.

“Did that really just come out of his mouth?”

“I’m sorry are we re-enacting Freaky Friday instead…?” They both chuckled, because yeah, it did sound pretty weird coming from him.

“It’s going to snow.” He said, and she quirked an eyebrow at him, because it was now the beginning of August.

“It was something my Ma used to say, whenever something completely out of the ordinary happened. Like when me and Buck would come home completely free of cuts or bruises. Or actually didn’t get into any trouble at all that day.” Steve explained.

“I have never heard someone say that, but it oddly enough makes sense.”

He drew her back into his embrace and she relaxed once again laying her head on his chest. She had almost forgotten why she was here in the first place.

“Thank you…for cleaning me up.” It might not have been more than a whisper, but in the large room it sounded much louder.

“You know I always will.”

He kissed the top of her head and they both settled down to get some more sleep. Within a few minutes she was asleep again, her mind more at ease simply knowing he always kept his promises.

Natasha woke up the next morning to an empty bed, guess Steve went for his run. She got up and made her way back to her own quarters to get ready for the long day ahead. She unraveled the bandages Steve had placed and examined the scratches on her arms. They had stopped bleeding
thankfully, but long sleeves would be a good idea for the next few days. She checked herself once more and noticed she had gotten herself in a few more places, but other than that she was fine.

She turned on the shower so that it was scolding hot and stood underneath the spray. She let the water soothe her as she tried not to focus on the night before. Her nightmare kept flashing through her head, a constant reminder of her sins. *God, she really needed to get a grip.* She went through the motions as she finished up her shower. Natasha was brought out of her thoughts by a knock on her bedroom door.

Grabbing her robe, she opened the door to find Steve standing in front of her. Natasha wordlessly let him in and went to her closet to get something to wear. She came back out dressed in jeans and a long sleeved shirt. Steve was sitting at the end of her bed, looking around her now bare room. Not that it was what one would consider homey before, but now, now it was just plain depressing. She walked over and sat down next to him, hands neatly folded in her lap.

“So, are we doing this?” Steve turned his head to the side to look at her. Natasha tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. *Are we?*

“Steve.” Natasha sighed and ran a shaky hand through her wet hair, her fingers getting caught in small tangles as she went. Steve stood, going over to her vanity he picked up her comb and started brushing out her hair. “You don’t have to do this.”

“Do what? Brush out this rats nest or marry you?” Natasha glared at him, but huffed when she saw him smirk.

“Both, but mainly the marry part.” Steve put the comb back and took a seat back on the bed.

“I know, but like I said last night, I don’t care about the reproductions—” Natasha let out a bitter laugh. “Nat, why are you really disagreeing to this?”

He moved her face so she would look him in the eye. *Damn those baby blues.*

“Hannagan was right. Not like I could run away from my past forever. This will only cause more problems. My enemies will become yours, and if they come after you because of this…” She didn’t have to say anymore for Steve to get the point.

“Your enemies became *all of* our enemies when you became an Avenger and vice versa. You are family, Nat and family fights for each other. Stop looking for something to go wrong in this and just trust us, trust *me.*” He gave her a soft smile wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

“I owe you.” Steve let out an annoyed sigh as he pulled away to look her dead in the eyes. “You are my friend, you don’t owe me anything. I thought we already established this?” Steve seemed serious, but that’s just not how she did things.

“No, *you* established that. You are my friend, but that doesn’t mean I don’t owe you.” Steve just shook his head at her. She could be so damn stubborn at times.

“Stop basing your friendships on debts, Nat. If I counted every time Bucky pulled my ass out of the ally as kids, I’d owe him my life three times over.” Natasha frowned at him as he back peddled “Okay that was probably not the best example, but what’s that saying? ‘Do as I say, not as I do’.”

He wasn’t wrong. She was looking for things to go wrong, but she couldn’t help it. It was just part of who she was. It would only put her more on edge if this actually went without a hitch. And okay *maybe* it wouldn’t hurt to at least give it a try. After all, Tony already lit the fuse.
“Nothing will go wrong, I promise you. So, what do you say, marry me?” Natasha shook her head as he pulled out a candy ring pop from his pocket. *Such a dork.*

“Oh okay.” She relented. Natasha could never find it in herself to say no to him. “But let’s make one thing very clear, I’m not a housewife, nor will I ever be!”

She snatched the candy from his hand as she headed for the door. Steve laughed at her as he followed.

“Well I’m not marrying you for your cooking that’s for sure.” She turned around and punched him jokingly in the chest. Her cooking really did suck, but there was no need to bash it.

“My cooking is just fine.”

He couldn’t keep the grin from his face as he kept laughing.

“Whatver you say dear.”

She rolled her eyes at him and kept walking, praying he wouldn’t notice the slight blush that crept across her cheeks.

They walked down to the kitchen to find Sam, Tony, Rhodey, and Bruce already sitting down for breakfast.

“Morning.” Steve greeted as Tony held out his plate.

“Food.”

Tony really wasn’t more than a five year old in the mornings, or well more accurately ever, but especially in the morning. Natasha watched as Steve pulled out a box of Lucky Charms and set it down in front of the boy genius.

“Food.” Steve pointed at the box giving Tony a coy smile before pouring himself and Natasha coffee.

Natasha just laughed as Tony pouted. He shot her a glare as he took the box of cereal and returned to his seat.

“Yeah nope, housewife is definitely more you.” She joked, getting a chuckle from the soldier.

Sam narrowed his eyes at the two Avengers in curiosity.

“What?” He asked, looking between them and the others. But before he could get an answer Tony’s ears perked up.

“You’re going through with it? Really?!”

It always amazed her how Tony could go from pouty five-year-old to an over excited Labrador retriever in less than a second.

“Going through with what? What’s going on?” Rhodey asked, as he looked up from his tablet and looked around. Bruce had set his paper down, a smile gracing his features.

“Oh thank God!” They looked over to see Clint, Wanda, and Vision enter the room. Clint gave her a
tight hug, clearly happy he wasn’t going to have to say goodbye to his best friend. All four new
Avengers stared in confusion at everyone’s overjoyed and relieved demeanors.

“Okay, I’m lost. Going through with what?” Sam put down his coffee and waited for an answer.

“Well, apparently I’m marrying Natasha and totally not committing fraud and whatever else her
immigrations officer can charge myself and Tony with.” Steve said nonchalantly as he drank his
coffee.

“What?!” The four lost people shouted.

“Tony what did you do?” Rhodey glared at his best friend.

“So, I may have told her officer, Mr. Hannagan, that he couldn’t deport her and may have thrown in
‘You really want to deport Captain America’s girl?’ for some added emphasis.”

Rhodey couldn’t believe what he was hearing, while Sam just started laughing.

“Oh this oughta be good!” He was enjoying this, while Wanda was clearly just as mad as Rhodey
and Vision wasn’t understanding what was going on.

“You’ve got to be joking. He believed you?” Rhodey asked in disbelief.

“Well not at first no, but then I was like really? Why would I tell you this if I were lying, because that
would mean I’m implicating two friends…Regardless he bought it enough, but there’s still an
investigation to be had and they’ll have to get married by the end of October for this to work.”

“This is ridiculous! One slip up anywhere and we could all go to prison.” Wanda was right, but there
was no way Natasha was going back to Russia.

“We all took a vote last night, but Red I thought you said no?” Tony turned back to Natasha who
tightened her hold on her mug.

“I did, but…you already got the ball rolling and Steve’s okay with it, so…it’s worth a try.”

Tony pumped his fist in the air.

“You know, if someone would have told me that being trolled by Captain America on my morning
run would lead me to now helping him and the Black Widow dupe immigration, I would’ve
laughed.”

“So…you’re a no?” Tony asked.

“And miss the chance to witness a real life rendition of The Proposal? Hell yeah I’m in.” Everyone
looked curiously at him. “What? It’s my mom’s favorite movie and since I’m her favorite son I watch
it with her—wait…tell me you didn’t get this idea from watching it a few days ago?”

“Don’t be ridiculous! Wan? Rhodey? Vis?” Tony rocked back on the balls of his feet as he waited
for an answer from the remaining Avengers.

Wanda sighed and exchanged a look with Vision, who just nodded in agreement. Tony smiled, and
they all looked to Rhodey. The man threw his hands up in defeat and shook his head.

“Yeah alright. When do we start?” Tony clapped his best friend on the back.

“Today. His assistant is supposed to be dropping off the paperwork this morning.” As if on que the
elevator dinged, and FRIDAY announced their arrival. A short, middle aged woman with graying brown hair stepped out.

“Captain Rogers, Ms. Romanoff?” She asked while looking up through her glasses.

“Hi-” Natasha was cut off by the slamming of a huge stack of papers on the counter.

“Here are the files and paperwork needed to be filled out, signed and delivered back to the New York Immigrations Office by five o’clock this evening. Along with the documents, we have provided information on our investigation process, along with what we will be looking into and for. If you fail to provide any of this information or are found guilty of trying to commit a fraudulent marriage, you will be denied citizenship, thrown into prison and deported. Do you understand?”

Steve and Natasha shook their heads in agreement as the woman shuffled through the stack and pointed.

“What you need to sign and fill out is clearly highlighted and flagged. You are allowed to make copies for your personal files, but you must notify us if you do so and we suggest that you do so.” She picked up two thick book out of the pile.

“This is the information on the investigation and this is everything we will be asking and looking for. As you already know, you do have a deadline for the marriage and that deadline is November 2. Our investigation will end when we see fit, but will not exceed more than a few days past that date. Just because our investigation will have ended doesn’t mean we will not be keeping watch. Understood?”

“Yes.” They said in unison. The woman gave a curt nod, before turning around and walking back to the elevator, leaving them slightly more afraid than before.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Paper work and feels!

Chapter Notes

I am so, so, so sorry! I swear I have been working on this since the last update, it's just my other story took precedence, but today I was finally able to review and finalize this chapter! Yay!

I'm not gonna lie the response this story got shocked me and yeah I'm slightly afraid I've lost people, but eh. It's not the end of the world. This chapter is smaller than the rest and I think I might keep it that way since it's faster to review and write that way. I've rewritten a few times and even skipped it to work on further chapters which aren't due for like three more, I know I skip around.

Anyways thank you so much for reading! Feel free to comment! I love hearing your thoughts! I'm also considering having you guys vote on something's that I'm having trouble deciding like colors or maybe even a...dress? hint hint, wink wink. If I do it will be through my Tumblr: gomustanggirl16 is my handle so you can follow for updates on work and more information on those works:)

DISCLAIMER: I don't own these people, Marvel does. Plots mine though. As are mistakes because I don't have a beta and am still trying to fully figure out what that is. Anyways I don't think I quoted in this one but see other disclaimers in this story. Oh! the questions are not mine, neither is the legal jargon Tony's talking about. I got that off multiple internet sites.

Ok enjoy lovely people!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So...What did you think the real reason was that Steve really wanted you to stay?” Peggy said while stirring her tea that the nurse had brought her.

“You know the answer to that already.” Natasha said as she took a sip of her own tea.

“Indeed I do, but what I want to know is do you?” Of course Natasha knew, but that wasn’t the point.

“It doesn’t matter.” She responded.

“Oh, but doesn’t it?” Peggy raised an eyebrow at the younger woman. Natasha just shook her head and continued the story.
“Anyways we started sifting through the documents Mr. Hannagan so kindly left for us…”

Steve and Natasha sent the NA (New Avengers) to start training for the day. They groaned claiming that they could “help”. One glare from Natasha got them moving. The rest of the team gathered around the sofa in the common room as they started sifting through all of the documents. There was a lot of paperwork and Natasha was starting to doubt her decision as she read the pieces of paper. Pepper came bounding out of the elevator with Maria at her heels, clearly having been informed of the situation.

“Stop! What the hell do you guys think you’re doing? Are you crazy?” Oh yeah Pepper was pissed.

“What does it look like? Filling out paperwork. Wait, who called you?” Tony replied calmly, as he continued copying the documents onto Jarvis’ systems.

“Natasha and good thing she did.” Tony glared at Natasha who just kept sifting through the stack of papers.

“Did you honestly think I was going to leave this all to you?” Natasha glared back at the inventor.

“You guys can’t do this. This is illegal, if you get caught-”

“We’re well aware of the consequences and have collectively decided that it’s worth the risk.” Steve answered, much to Pepper and Maria’s shock.

“Is he seriously ok with committing an illegal act?” Maria asked.

“Yes.” They all said. Maria shook her head in disbelief and looked to Pepper.

“Look if you’re not comfortable with this then feel free to stay out of it, but we could sure use your connections.” Tony was right. The connections Maria and Pepper both had were long and far, and would be instrumental in helping make their case. The women exchanged a look before sighing and joining the others.

“What do you need me to do?” Maria asked. Tony went back to copying as he answered.

“Damage control. Something tells me we won’t be able to keep this quiet and Hannagan won’t be able to either. Nor will he want to. I need you watching out for when this does come out and when it does get ahead of it.”

“Done.” Maria said as she got up and started taping away at her phone.

“So what are the requirements anyways?” Pepper asked as she sat down next to her boyfriend.

“Yeah that’s where this gets severely complicated. Natasha has a work visa and a form of a green card, but the only reason she wasn’t band sooner was because of SHIELD. With them gone, her visa became unavailable and her green card was revoked due to her leaving the country to help defeat Ultron. She has till the end of October to vacate the country. Now, marrying Steve will allow her to regain her green card and since she’s lived here for some time it makes it easier, well a little easier at least.”

“Meaning?”

“Meaning she won’t be shipped back to Russia and have to wait out the process there, it can be done
here in the US at the Immigrations office here in New York. Steve would normally have to petition them and show proof of marriage, problem is I said they were engaged.”

“Wait-so she still has to leave?” Pepper asked.

“Not necessarily. If we move to fast it will look like fraud, I said you had just gotten the ring and were assuming she said yes. While you have till November 2 to be married there are a lot of other complicated dealings we’ll have to take care of. You’re applying for a marriage green card that in three years will get Natasha citizenship. Now normally that’s done after the marriage not before. Hannagan agreed to investigate when I brought up the point of you two getting married before the hourglass runs out. I said you two were committed and he agreed that it might count for something.”

“What are you proposing Stark?” Natasha asked, praying it wasn’t an impossible feet.

“We fight that you two have been living together, because technically you have. We use that as a push to overlook that detail. You two share a floor here, you two are the only two Avengers who live here permanently. The only reason the rest of us are here is because I thought we needed to at least get together every once in a while. That and Clint’s kids were driving him crazy.”

“That might work, but still what happens if they say no?” Pepper asked.

“He gave us the paperwork and said he’d start an investigation. So I’m taking that as a yes.” Natasha nodded her head in agreement to Tony.

“Ok, but he’s not dumb. My bet is he’s allowing this just to make the blow ten times worse.” Clint said. Everyone nodded.

“And that’s why I called Pepper and Maria.” Natasha added. “With the two of them involved we have a better chance at winning. We let Maria handle the back lash, it’s what she does best. Pepper’s one of the world’s most powerful CEO’s and businesswoman.”

“I know how to negotiate and win people over. Smart.” Pepper agreed picking through some of the documents left for them.

“If we play our cards right, Hannagan will have nothing on us.” Steve said.

“Ok, let’s see what we’ve got.”

They got to work going over the documents and contracts. Looking at the fine print and reading between the lines. After about a half hour of silence Clint spoke up.

“This investigation is going to be intense. He’s doing a home visit then questioning all of us and anyone with a personal connection to you two. I think it’s safe to say we’ve got our part down, but the question is do you two?” they all looked at Steve and Natasha for an answer.

“We’ve got this.” Came Steve’s voice, again surprising everyone. Clint nodded.

“Alright. Then question time!” Steve and Natasha raised an eyebrow at the archer. “What? You think we’d let you two get away without making sure you’re prepped? No. Knowing you two, you’d wing it, probably get it right, but still.”

“He’s got a point. Besides they put the questions up online. Might as well take advantage of it.” Bruce supplied. Natasha glared at them. This was not something she wanted to do, but reluctantly agreed.
“Fine. What are the questions?” Clint scrolled threw the page on his tablet and furrowed his brow.

“What color are the curtains in your bedroom?” Steve looked over at her and she shook her head.


“I couldn’t even tell you that.” Clint said.

“Moving on.” Tony said taking the tablet. “Ok, what’s your home address?”

“Confidential. And he already knows.” Natasha said begrudgingly.

“Ok, then what brand of…” Tony turned red and started giggling like a school girl. “Ok yeah why do they need to know these?”

“What’s the question?” Pepper said taking the tablet. She blanched at the screen. “Ok then…”

Natasha was getting annoyed.

“What’s the damn question?”

“What brand of contraception do you use?” Steve turned bright red, both of them wide eyed.

“What they hell?! Why do they care?” Natasha snapped.

“They don’t. These are just questions they think normal married couples would know.” Bruce supplied. “Here’s an easier less awkward question-”

But before Bruce could ask, Natasha grabbed the tablet from his hands.

“Or you could just let the two of us figure out the questions on our own?” They all mumbled and nodded. “Thank you.”

A few moments of awkward silence passed before Natasha glared at them. She’d meant that as a way of saying ‘Get out of our hair.’ They all seemed to get the hint and scrambled for the exit, leaving the spy and soldier alone. Natasha sighed and leaned back on the couch.

“They’re just trying to help.” Came Steve’s voice. Natasha turned her head and looked at him.

“I know.” She said through gritted teeth. Steve took her hand in his and gave it a gentle squeeze.

“They mean well and were going to need them. Hannagan won’t give up easily, but we’ve got this. Remember what I said earlier?” She did. She sighed leaning her head on his shoulder.

Natasha wasn’t sure how long they stayed like that. She could have stayed there forever, but it was over all too soon.

“I uh…I have something for you.” Steve said hesitantly causing her to furrow her brow in confusion. “I’ll be right back.”

She nodded slowly wondering what he was now suddenly nervous about. After a few minutes he returned carrying a small old black velvet box. He sat back down handing it to her. She knew what it was…well kind of. She’d seen it before whenever she went rummaging for a t-shirt to wear on laundry day. It was a ring box that she knew for sure, but she’d never actually opened it. She fingered the box, staring at it.
“Steve…” he shook his head.

“It would look a little weird for you to not have one next time Hannagan decides to make an appearance wouldn’t it?” It would, but it wasn’t like she didn’t have a few from past missions stashed away. This wasn’t meant for her.

“You should be saving this.” *For the one you really love.* Steve rolled his eyes at her.

“Nat I’ve had that thing for nearly eighty years…well almost. I had to get it reset after I woke up, but-”

“Exactly. Give it to someone who really deserves it.” She handed the box back to him. He stared at the box then back up at her. He looked at her with something she couldn’t quite decipher.

“We both know that’s bull. No sense in letting it sit in a box for another deep freeze. And it’s not like you’ll have to wear it all the time, just whenever Hannagan’s around.” Steve added trying not to seem…*wait was he offended?*

“It takes the value out of it.”

“I don’t see it that way.” Steve’s gaze bore into hers, sending a slight shiver down her spine. He still had that look in his eyes and then it clicked in her mind as to what she was seeing. Before she could object again FRIDAY came through the speakers.

“Captain, do not forget you are to meet with the recruits out on field five in five minutes.” Right they had their monthly physicals today and it was Steve’s turn to oversee them.

“We’ll talk later?” she nodded as he stood up to leave, he folded the box in her hands and left without saying another word.

She stared back down at the box in her hands trying to decide whether or not to open it. She took a deep breath and flipped the open the lid. Her breath caught in her throat.

Inside sat a small round cut diamond in a delicate white gold setting with small diamonds set into the bands length. But what really caught her eyes were the two Celtic knots on either side of the diamond. It was beautiful…

Natasha gently closed the lid and hung her head.

*What did she get herself into?*
Yes those are actual questions they ask.
Natasha was sitting in her office working on getting out overdue reports, or at least she was trying to. She couldn’t stop thinking about that damn ring and the implications behind it. It was driving her crazy! She huffed and pulled open her desk drawer. She leaned her head in her hand as she stared at the little black box. God why did he always have to be so…infuriating! She tapped her fingers on her desk before grabbing the box and flipping it open again. She didn’t know why it was bugging her so much. It wasn’t like he was actually asking her to marry him…except he was. But not really. Not for real. *Was he?* Natasha shook her head. Of course he wasn’t! He didn’t love her, why would he?

*…Could he?*

Natasha groaned and laid her head on her desk. It wasn’t meant for her. It was made from his mother’s ring. Surely Sarah Rogers hadn’t intended for her son to give it to someone like her let alone as a tool to pull wool over the government’s eyes. Natasha was dragged from her thoughts by a knock on her door. She whipped her head up, nearly dropping the box. She fumbled for it, catching it and stuffing it back in the drawer. She looked up to see Wanda standing in the doorway, eyebrows raised.

“What are you doing here?” Natasha asked, already regretting the spiteful tone to her voice.

“Handing in my report for last week’s mission. What was that?” Wanda asked pointing her finger towards Natasha.

Natasha schooled her features as the young woman closed the door and sat down in front of her.

“What was what?” Wanda smirked and crossed her legs, hands folded in her lap.

“The black box you not too subtly tried to hide from my view. You know the one you were staring at before?” Natasha’s expression faltered slightly. *How long had she been standing there?*
“It’s nothing.”

“Didn’t seem like nothing.” Wanda countered coolly. *Damn this girl was getting good.*

“Well… it was.”

“Was what?”

“Nothing! Just drop it will you?”

“I don’t know? You seem to be the one with butter fingers.” Her smirk turned into a grin. Natasha sighed. “By the way you dropped this.”

Wanda held up the ring with her red tendrils. Natasha’s eyes widened and she opened the drawer to see the box laying empty. *Damn it!* Natasha made to grab it, but Wanda let it fall into her hand and pulled away.

“Wanda.” Natasha warned.

“Natasha.” Wanda held up the ring between her pointer and middle fingers as she inspected it. A sappy smile graced her lips as she looked back at Natasha.

“Did Steve give this to you?” Natasha glared at the girl, not willing to give in, but gave in anyways. The girl could read minds, and it was blatantly obvious who had given it to her.

“Yes.” She mumbled. Wanda’s eyes got big and she squealed slightly. Natasha took the opportunity and snatched the ring back, praying it wasn’t damaged by being flung from its box. It felt weird to actually hold it in her hands.

“I don’t know what you think is going on but nothing is.” Wanda did her best to school her features as she said,

“I never implied there was. I just think it’s sweet.”

“Well it’s not.” Wanda raised an eyebrow.

“Oh? And why’s that?”

“Because, it wasn’t meant for me.” Natasha said. The bitterness coming through.

“Last I checked he’s literally the world’s most available bachelor. At least according to People Magazine and your constant trying to set him up. I assume it’s for whoever he chooses.” Wanda countered.

“It was made from his mom’s ring. And it’s not for just anyone.”

“I see. Still I thought his agreeing to this had to do with no other love interests?”

“Doesn’t mean he’s chained to me for eternity. Just till this whole thing is settled. Not even then. This belongs to the woman he loves.” Wanda gave her an exhausted look. “And that’s not me.”

“Why couldn’t it? Have you tried it on yet?” Natasha’s eyes widened.

“Have you met me? And no I haven’t because-”

“It doesn’t belong to you.” Wanda responded dryly, dismissing Natasha with a wave of her hand.
“He gave it to you. You. And yes I have met you. I don’t know why you think so little of yourself.”

“I’m not having this conversation with you.” Natasha said, wanting nothing more than for this conversation to end. Wanda resigned.

“Fine, fine. If you won’t listen to me, listen to that ring, that might I say would look great on-” Natasha sighed loudly rolling her eyes.

“If I try the damn thing on will you shut up?” Wanda frowned.

“Rude, but yes.” Her frown turned into a grin again.

She huffed and looked down at the ring. Slowly, she slid it onto her ring finger; Wanda’s grin growing bigger by the second. When the ring was on Natasha let out a little gasp. It fit perfectly; and ok maybe Wanda was right…maybe it looked good. Maybe even felt…right. Natasha stared at the ring on her figure completely entrapped by the simple piece of jewelry.

“Well would you look at that…it even fits.” Wanda said straining to see past Natasha’s desk. Natasha met her gaze and scowled.

“Out.” Natasha got up and ushered the girl from her office.

“Alright! But seriously-” Natasha closed the door, ignoring Wanda.

She could hear the girl giggling on the other side of the door; making her feel a little less guilty for shutting the door in her face. Natasha pushed off the door and walked back over to her desk. She sat down and stared back down at the ring. She moved to pull it off, but found herself reluctant to. Damnit! It wasn’t supposed to make her feel like this! Whatever this was. It was just a ring, nothing more. Not for her at least.

There was another knock on her door and she found herself groaning for what must have been the umpteenth millionth time that day.

“Come in!” Steve popped his head in. She noticed he had a worried look etched into his features. Uh-oh. “What’s wrong?”

“Hannagan’s here, for his look around or as Clint worded it ‘he’s here to snoop around our underwear drawers.’” Natasha rose from her desk quickly to meet him. “You’re gonna need-” He looked down at her hand and back up at her, eyebrow raised in questioning. It was then Natasha realized there was no reason for her to already be wearing the ring. Shit!

“Uh never mind.” He turned and walked out of the room. Oh God. She was borderline mortified. He glanced over at her when she joined him, he had that glint in his eye again. She wanted to smack herself. This couldn’t possibly get any worse.
They reached the common room and found Hannagan rummaging through the cabinets.

“Can we help you?” Steve said. Hannagan turned to look at them.

“Oh Ms. Romanoff there you are. And no, Captain, just starting my investigation.”

“In the pantry? What could possibly be of interest to you in there?” Natasha inquired coldly.

“You told us you would be here tomorrow.” Hannagan smiled.

“Yes, well I had time today and thought why not?” Steve’s tightened his jaw.

“Yes, well, this is the teams shared space. I’d be careful, they get territorial about their food.”

“Well then if you’ll kindly show me to your shared space that is assuming you two live with each other-”

“We do.” Natasha cut in. “It’s upstairs.”

She started walking as Steve waited for Hannagan like he did when they were escorting a suspect.

They walked upstairs to their shared floor. It was a decent space, with a common room and kitchenette between the three bedrooms the floor had. When Natasha entered she was surprised to find their floor had suddenly become more...lived in.

Not much had changed, other than there were now throw pillows and a blanket on the couch and two picture frames of the two of them hanging on the wall. The first one was a series of photo both pictures they’d taken at Coney Island. They looked goofy, Natasha with her tongue sticking out the side, Steve with puffed out cheeks.

The second one was of them in the local bar. She’d almost forgotten about that, well that’s not true-she’d been trying to forget about that.

It was St. Patty’s day. She’d drunken a few to many and let herself get “tipsy”…
“Well I say this has been an eventful St. Patty’s day. You ready to go back?” Steve asked her as she downed another shot.

“Don’t be a downer, just because you can’t get drunk.” She said. She was only slightly tipsy, but she was tipsy none the less. She pouted and he laughed at her. His laugh was like honey to her ears.

“I’ve had my fair share of drunken St. Patty’s trust me.” He said smirking at her. She smirked back at him.

“Oh I’m sure, but the days not over yet.” He quirked an eyebrow. It was three in the morning.

“Oh really? What makes you say that?” she hoped off her bar stool and situated herself between his legs.

“It’s not St. Patty’s day till I get a kiss from an Irishman.” She declared. Ok so maybe she was more than tipsy. To her surprise he held himself together fairly well.

“Is that so?” their noses were barely touching. She could feel his breath fanning across her cheeks sending a chill down her spine.

“Yes.” She said, her lips ghosting over his. She thought he was going to close the gap, but he turned his head pressing a soft sweet kiss to her cheek… When she opened her eyes he was gone. As if he wasn’t even there to begin with. For a little while she thought she’d actually just imagined it. Guess not.

Thus technically making it (if you counted cheek kisses, which of course she did) their third kiss. She could still feel the ghost of his lips on her cheek. She was going to kill whoever had taken the picture and she had a pretty good idea of who it was.

She brushed a piece of hair from her eyes and cleared her throat as she tore her eyes away from the picture.

“This the only residence?” Hannagan asked as he walked around the room.

“The main one yes.”

“And where are the others?” Natasha scowled at him.

“Classified. For emergency use only. Independently owned.”

“In the states?”

“Yes.” They both said in unison. He hummed tapping away on his tablet.

“I’ll just take a look around.”

“For what?” Steve asked. Hannagan smirked.

“Why for evidence or your relationship of course.” To her amazement, Steve held fast to his glower, giving nothing away. He gestured for Hannagan to continue.

“How many rooms?”

“Three.”
“Main?”

“Down the hall to your right.” Steve supplied.

“Was that originally yours or Ms. Romanoff’s?”

“Mine.”

“And where was hers?”

“Across the hall. Not really used, unless I need a quick shower.” She caught his eye making sure he got the double innuendo. He hummed and started looking around. If there was anything to be opened he opened it. Flipped through books, magazines, even the TV.

He moved to the bedrooms, looking into hers first. She peeked her head in to find it was empty. All three boxes gone. The only things left were nonessential like extra perfume, her more couture gowns she’d only wear for a mission. She glanced at Steve who just shrugged. Hannagan hummed and moved past them and into Steve’s room.

Again nothing had really changed, except a few more of her things were set out. Clothes in the hamper and shoes by the door. Most of her things tended to be over there already, but she’d cleared a few out the night before. Natasha watched as he looked at the book shelves. Something caught his eye and she watched him go for one of Steve’s sketch books. She could feel him tense beside her and held his hand gently rubbing circles with her thumb.

It was an unspoken rule they had. She didn’t poke through his things and he didn’t hers. Though she’d be lying if she didn’t say she’d always been curious. Hannagan raised an eyebrow as he flipped through the pages. She saw his expression change as he closed the book and placed it back on the shelf where he’d found it, somehow satisfied by what he’d seen.

“I think I’ve gathered enough Intel. Seems as though you two are in a relationship…Seems. That’s it? That can’t be it.

“That’s it?” Hannagan chuckled and pulled a piece of paper from his jacket pocket. Natasha took the paper from his hands.

“You’re subpoenaing our security footage and extra beds?!” Steve took the piece of paper from her, eyes wide in disbelief.

“You’ve got to be joking. The footage I get, but the beds?” Hannagan shrugged.

“Just a precaution.”


“Regardless of how you see it Ms. Romanoff, a judge has agreed and you are to provide us with the footage and any footage from now till the wedding. As for the beds my men will handle that.”

Natasha and Steve walked into the hallway to find serval men doing just that. It had attracted the attention of Sam and Pepper who stood watching Tony have a stroke.

“Now that you all have a better understanding of just how seriously we take these things, I expect not to run into any more obstacles. Have a good day.” Hannagan tipped his invisible hat and followed the movers out the door.
“He can’t do that…can he?” Sam asked hesitantly.

“He just did.” Steve bit out.

“He might as well just move in!” Tony yelled.

“No!” the group said.

“He’s testing us.” Natasha was beyond pissed off.

“He’s going to make an example out of you.” Pepper added.

“And the courts are letting him. They’ll jump at the chance to send me back.” Natasha sighed and ran her hands through her hair.

“Yeah well we’re not going to let them. They want proof. We’ll give it to them.” Tony spoke, a smug look plastered on his face. Natasha crossed her arms.

“And I suppose you’ve concocted some master plan for this as well?” Tony smiled.

“Why Red you should know by now I always have a plan. Leave this to me.” Steve looked hesitantly at Tony.

“Do we want to know?” Tony shook his head.

“Relax. I’ve got this. By the way nice ring.” Natasha stared confused before remembering she still had the ring on. *Was everyone determined to blow this ring out of proportion?* She’d had enough.

“Everyone out!” the others scurried from the room, not wanting to face the Widow’s rage.

Natasha collapsed onto the couch burring her face in her hands. She felt the couch dip beside her; a warm hand coming to rest on her back.

“It’ll be fine.” Natasha huffed.

“He’s not going to stop.”

“And neither are we.” Steve pulled her into a hug, smoothing his hand down her arm. She tucked her feet up under her as she relaxed into Steve’s arms.

“I just hope whatever Tony has planned it doesn’t involve anything else illegal.” Natasha grumbled. Steve sighed.

“You and me both.”

Chapter End Notes

So what did you think?
What’s Tony got up his sleeve?
Ok this is like the third time I’ve tried to post this then didn’t, but sorry if it seems eh. I’ve been stressing over this chapter for some reason and finally said f*** it! seriously I think its fine just short and to the point. were reaching the end of the beginning so...you'll see.

Thanks to everyone who voted! The dress will be revealed soon

Ok I'm going to shut up now. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Also a very special thanks to evanzski for the cover art on Tumblr! I absolutely love it! Check it out here.

The next morning…

Natasha woke up to the sound of something breaking. That was never good. Last thing she remembered was watching Criminal Minds with Steve. Steve. She must have fallen asleep and since Hannagan took her bed-asshole-Steve would have taken the couch.

She slid out of bed, grabbing her “granny shawl” as Sam had dumbed it, and wrapped it around her shoulders. Walking from the bedroom she found Steve and Tony trying to navigate a mattress through the hall with Clint directing.

“What are we mattress smugglers now?” She asked sarcastically. Tony chuckled.

“If Hannagan thinks he can solve anything by stealing a few mattresses and some security footage than he’s crazy.”

“Says the man whose crazy plan started this.” Tony huffed as they set the mattress against the wall.

“Relax. I said I’d handle it and I will. Now if you’ll excuse us.” She gave them a tight smile as the two men picked the mattress back up. Clint walked up next to her handing her a cup of coffee.

“He thinks he found something, didn’t say, but hopefully it’ll help.” She hummed taking a sip of her coffee. “Anyways I wish I could stay longer, but I need to get back home. Last week before school starts back up and I promised the kids we’d go ‘camping’ one last time.”

Natasha sighed. She really missed the kids, and between school and this she wouldn’t get to see them for a while. She hugged Clint, but before they pulled away he whispered something.

“By the way, ring looks great.” She looked down to see she’d fallen asleep with the ring still on. She cleared her throat, cooling her features, and her embarrassment.

“Tell Laura and the kids I said hi. Also…” She punched him in the arm.

“Ow! Ok I deserved that.” He said rubbing his arm.
“Your damn right. Also could you…” He nodded.

“I’ll let her know, but she’ll still want to hear the full story from you.” Yeah she wasn’t really looking forward to that phone call.

“Thanks.” He kissed her cheek before walking to the stairs. He paused at the door and turned around.

“By the way, for what it’s worth, Steve’s a great guy. Don’t let that stand in your way.” She frowned at his back as he disappeared.

*What the hell was that supposed to mean?*

After her encounter with the “mattress smugglers’ Natasha got to moving her things back into her room. She didn’t dare unpack anything though; it felt wrong somehow. Like she was placing all her bets on this actually working. She walked out into the kitchen to find a note from Pepper.

*Natasha,*

*Meet me downstairs when you’re done. We have lots to do and little time. Also I need to see your ring, don’t ask.*

*-Pepper.*

Natasha groaned. *Did everyone know about the ring?*

She walked back into her room to procure the box and then downstairs to meet Pepper. When she walked into the common room she saw her sitting on the couch. Pepper had bridal magazines spread out on the table and different brochures and pictures, but nothing in overabundance which was a miracle in and of itself. When Pepper noticed her she smiled and patted the seat next to her.

“Did you bring it?” Natasha rolled her eyes and handed her the box. Pepper opened it and gasped, a girly grin plastered to her face.

“Oh! It’s gorgeous, simple, and self-explanatory, man’s got good taste. Knows you very well.” Natasha frowned. *Why does everyone think the ring was hers to begin with?*

“It’s not meant for me, therefore not designed for me either.” Pepper looked confused.

“So whose ring is it?”

“It was his mothers, but he had it reset when he got out of the ice.” Pepper nodded.

“Ok, but clearly his mother gave it to him to give to whoever so…” Was she doomed to relive this damned conversation for eternity?

“I’m not having this conversation again.” Pepper chuckled.

“I only ask because according to Clint you still had it on after both he and Tony pointed it out. I won’t count Wanda since you had to go straight to meet Hannagan afterward’s, but still. That’s what? Eight hours yesterday, because you spent the night doing reports and watching TV, then slept at least another eight hours, and when did you take it off after Clint left?”

Natasha scowled.
“Two.” Pepper hummed.

“That’s twenty hours you were wearing the ring nonstop. Tell me, if you don’t like the ring-”

“I never said I didn’t-” Natasha cut herself off before she could give the other woman anymore ammunition.

“You were saying?” Natasha snatched the box back; this time making sure the ring stayed in its place.

“New subject.” Pepper sighed.

“Fine, but this isn’t over. I just got off the phone with Tony and Steve, they were able to get the judge to take back the subpoena.” Natasha perked up at that.

“What? How?!"

“Turns out the judge who signed the subpoena is over eighty years old and barely handles cases anymore. The other judges are trying to ween him off the stand, but since he’s a federal judge he can stay as long as he wants. Long story short several other judges agreed the order was nonsense and filed for an appeal. That and they subpoenaed you and Steve when technically Tony owns the footage and the beds.”

“Thank God.” Pepper nodded.

“Yeah, Hannagan’s not going to be happy we found his source of loopholes. Besides that, we need to discuss the whole wedding part of Tony’s wonderful plan.” And the happy was gone.

“Can you just do that? I mean you really don’t-” Pepper frowned.

“Nat, you are one of my best friends, hell I even consider you to be like a sister, but I will not let you get out of this that easily.” Natasha sighed and leaned back against the armrest of the couch.

“Look I know this isn’t something you want to do, or think you don’t want to do, but look at this way…if you help me then I won’t splatter everything in pink and tulle and glittery jewels and turn this thing into a princesses dream.” Natasha’s face fell at that. She wouldn’t.

“You wouldn’t.” Pepper put on a coy smile.

“You really want to take the risk? End up wearing a giant Cinderella style ball gown with glass slippers and woodland creatures.” Natasha stared her down, but Pepper didn’t falter. Damn she was good.

“Fine. But let’s make one thing clear, the only reason I’m doing this is so I don’t end up looking like I just escaped a Disney movie.” Pepper smiled.

“Great! Ok where do we begin?”

I’m going to regret this.

Chapter End Notes
BTW: the granny shawl is based off my granny shawl. My mother. only thing I will say.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Peggy's back, Pepper's determined and Natasha needs more wine.

Chapter Notes

Wow ok so I keep forgetting to mention this BUT THANK YOU!!! This story has nearly 3,000 hits and nearly 100 kudos and all your comments! You all are fantastic!

So yes we are getting to the dress part. Almost not this chapter. Next, kind of. The one after that. I had to split it, because it got long and would have been like over 3,000 words and long and I'm trying to do short chapters so I can crank them out. I got a lot done yesterday morning and the day before so yay! but tomorrow the likeliness of me being able to have a lot of time to write is slim. So I'm hoping to get those chapters out soon. My minds been going like a thousand miles an hour lately and writing has gotten done, but also disregard the number I put up for chapters. Yeah, these middle chapters keep coming up longer than I thought they would and I keep like splitting them, so yeah. But I really don't think you guys care because you are eating this story up so...anyways, this will be like a set up to the emotional drama that is to come, because it's Natasha and she refuses to screw her head back in straight so this is going to be great!

Ok so I think I covered everything for now...Just enjoy! and let me know what you think!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Peggy raised an eyebrow.

“Hannagan really hit you two with a subpoena?” Natasha nodded.

“Yup. You said when he was assigned to me that he’d become an issue and he has.” Peggy hummed.

“That I did.” Natasha raised an eyebrow. A silence settled between them and Natasha huffed in annoyance.

“You want to see don’t you?” Peggy smiled.

“Well of course I do! Hand.” Natasha sighed doing as she was instructed. Peggy’s smile brightened.

“My, my. It does suit you well my dear.” She nodded giving in a little.

“Yeah, yeah it does.” Natasha looked at the hand that held hers wondering what a cruel fate it was that in reality they should look no different, buy yet one was still so youthful while the other had
withered away.

“So.” Peggy said squeezing her hand, drawing her back to the present. “How bad was the process of organizing a wedding?”

Natasha laughed.

“Oh god…”

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Natasha sat on the couch staring blankly at Pepper, as she droned on about the preparation that went into a wedding. What was normally twelve months of preparation had to be squeezed into three? Her mind was spinning. The preparation and planning of a mission didn’t even require this much work.

“So that being said-” Pepper paused and looked back at Natasha, sighing. “When did I lose you?”

“Oh somewhere around number of guests and invites.” Natasha faked a smile causing Pepper to frown.

“Ok new strategy.” Pepper said, clapping her hands together. “How about I just tell you what needs your approval as needed and we’ll go from there.”

“Sounds like an excellent idea.” Pepper rolled her eyes.

“Alright, we’ll work in order of importance. That means we start out with calling and booking a reception hall and church if you guys so choose so please talk to Steve.” Natasha gave her a small nod. “And then which is most important…a wedding dress! We really need to get on that because technically that should have been found, bought and almost done being altered like six months ago.”

“So?”

“Sooo, it really limits your options. Designers typically require between nine months to a year in advance to get you the dress you want.” Natasha shrugged.

“Ok still not getting what all the fuss is about. It’s just a dress.” Pepper actually looked offended.

“It’s not just a dress. It’s the most important dress you will ever wear in your life. This is your wedding dress.” Now she was just exaggerated.

“Just because you paint it white and call it a wedding dress doesn’t make it any more important than a dress off the rack at Macy’s.” Pepper shook her head.

“You are not wearing a dress of the rack at Macy’s.” Natasha leaned in.

“White dress. No different.” Pepper scowled.

“You are getting a wedding dress whether you like it or not. There is a difference you just can’t see it right now.”

“Why can’t I just pull out one of my couture gowns from my closet?” Pepper’s eyes nearly bulged from her head.

“You are not re-wearing a dress! Wanda help me out here please?” Natasha turned around to see Wanda walking into the kitchen.

“Help with what?”
“Natasha doesn’t see the point in getting a wedding a dress.” Natasha couldn’t understand why this was such a big deal. And besides Wanda’s not the type to-

“What do you mean she doesn’t see the point? It’s not a wedding without a dress! While we had to improvise in Sokovia we at least took the time to save extra money to buy a new dress if it was the only thing we could buy!” Wanda said sitting on the floor in front of the coffee table.

“You have got to be kidding me.” Natasha responded dryly.

“Oh come on Natasha! Have a little fun, turn down the Widow for a little bit and let yourself enjoy this.” Wanda said, giving her knee a shake. “I know you want to.”

Natasha frowned. Would she like to maybe tune out the Widow for a little while? Yes, but that wasn’t who she was. She wasn’t a person who got to enjoy things like this.

“You’re thoughts are very loud today.” Natasha’s head snapped to Wanda who gave her an apologetic smile. It was easy for Natasha to forget how easily Wanda could tune into thoughts whether she was trying to or not. “Sorry. But regardless it can be fun.”

“She’s right.” Natasha looked between the two women shaking her head.

“Fine, one day, no more than that. If I don’t like what I see then just let me wear what I want.”

“Good cause I already made an appointment for two days from now.” Natasha sighed. Of course Pepper would have already gone ahead and done it anyway. If Natasha were dealing with herself she would have done the same thing.

“Fine. Just tell me what else needs to be done?” Pepper pulled up a check list on the holographic screen, picking up where she’d left off.

Steve walked into the common room to find Natasha sitting on the couch with a bottle of wine and “kill me now” written on her face. He sat down beside her and glanced over the table to see everything Pepper had brought.

“All this for a wedding?” she nodded taking a sip of wine.

“And then some. Which reminds me we need to approve the guest list, pick a cake and menu, take engagement photos, pick out wedding rings, pick a venue for the ceremony and reception, and decide bridesmaids and groomsmen. Oh and we all have to go to a bridal shop in the city and get fitted. And that’s all within this week alone.” She downed the rest of her glass and refilled it.

“Wow. Um that’s—that’s a lot.” She chuckled.

“Oh you haven’t even seen the guest list.” He furrowed his brow.

“How bad’s the guest list?” She took another gulp of wine and answered.

“Five hundred and counting.” Steve’s eyes widened and he downed the rest of Natasha’s glass.

“Five hundred!”

“And counting.” He sunk back down into the couch.

“Who the hell is coming to this thing?” she thought for a moment, grabbing the book Pepper had put together.
“Foreign and domestic dignitaries, politicians, senators, the Prime Minister, the President, secretaries, generals, possibly the Queen, anybody we’ve pissed off and are trying to regain their trust again, if their important and have a title or run a country their invited.”

“Uh, that’s a lot of people, Nat.”

“No shit, Rogers!” she was way beyond frustrated and Steve could tell.

“Ok, we just need to get this more reigned in. I mean, no one knows anything yet so there’s no point in inviting a thousand and one people that we don’t need to.” She frowned.

“You don’t think I haven’t already tried that?” She picked up the bottle only find it empty. “Damn it you drank the last of my wine.”

“Sorry,” Steve replied dryly. He sighed trying to think of a solution to this problem. “I’ll talk to Tony, see if he can’t get Pepper to take some people off the list.”

“Thank you.” he watched her carefully and could tell there was something else bugging her, but knew if he tried to prying right now he’d get his head bitten off.

“Yeah, don’t thank me yet. What else does she need us to do?” She laughed at him, getting up off the couch. If they were going to sit there and go over the list she was going to need more wine.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are always welcomed!
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Laura joins the group. I love this woman and so will you. Natasha is not mentally prepared for this. Hehe.

Chapter Notes

Ok here is part one of two for the dress chapter! This came out of left field and originally I had this as a fight between her and Steve and then I was like no. I like the fight I like the added what if, but no. It would mess the story up and then I was like duh! Laura to the rescue! But also that's only half the fight the other half is the light half and that's still two chapters away. SO little insight to how my mind works. Hint it's complete and utter chaos. I also realized I used the line about staying together though without knowledge so kinda a disclaimer add on kinda not.

Ok lets get to it! Because I'm determined to get the next chapter on here! I have it ready it just needs another quick run through and then hehe! This fic makes me so excited.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After she and Steve went over the list and satisfied Pepper with their answers, the next two days passed without much fuss. They trained and went about business as usual. It was almost enough to make her forget about the wedding…almost.

Natasha turned over in her bed stretching when she heard a knock on her door. She hadn’t slept much in the last few days. The nightmares had calmed somewhat, but the stress of everything was enough to keep her from sleeping. The door creaked open and to her surprise someone came bounding in, jumping on her bed.

“Aunty Nat!” Wait…why was Lila here?

“Lila! I told you not to scare your aunt.” Came Laura’s voice from the doorway.

“I knocked first.” Lila giggled.

“What in the world?” Natasha sat up looking over at Lila, then at Laura.

“Morning!” Lila wrapped her arms around Natasha’s neck, hugging her tight.

“What are you two doing here?” Natasha aske once Lila released her.

“Pepper called us and after some discussion with Clint, we thought two days in New York on the DL wouldn’t hurt.” Laura responded.

“So you packed everyone in a car for a road trip?” Laura laughed.
“No. I packed me and Lila in a car and left Clint with Cooper and Nate to have a boy’s weekend.” She wasn’t going to lie, she was really glad Laura was here.

“Thank you.”

“Please you’re practically blood, and when’s the next time I can say I helped you pick your wedding dress?” And the joy was gone yet again.

“Right. That’s today.” Lila frowned when she heard the dread in Natasha’s tone.

“You don’t seem too excited.” Natasha faked a smile.

“No, I am. I just don’t like all the fuss that’s all.” She wasn’t technically lying, but Lila was seven. She couldn’t possibly comprehend what was actually going on.

“Well it’ll be fun! Come on you need to get dressed!” Lila hopped off the bed trying to drag Natasha with her.

“Mmm, but my beds so comfy.”

“And it will be there when we get back.” Natasha raised an eyebrow. For seven years old, she was pretty quick.

“Ok, ok!” Natasha relented. “Give me twenty minutes.”

“Yay!” Lila said skipping back over to Laura.

“Why don’t you go downstairs and see if Wanda’s almost ready?” Lila nodded and headed out the door. “So…”

“So…” Laura sat down on the bed next to her.

“You ok?” Natasha sighed.

“No, but I will be. Just letting it all sink in that’s all.” Laura hummed and patted her hand.

“It’ll be fine. I know it’s not how you’d like to be going about this, but for right now it’s all we’ve got. And at least we’ve got something.” Natasha looked down at her hands.

“You know he gave me his mother’s ring?”

“Clint said he’d gotten you a ring, but not that it was his mother’s.” she nodded.

“Yeah…” Natasha took a deep breath shaking her head. “Laura I don’t know if I can let him do this.”

“Why? Because there’s a very real possibility he likes you as more than a friend?” Natasha let out a bitter laugh.

“Well yeah! That’s kind of like using his feelings or some shit.” Laura frowned.

“You aren’t using him…well not like that! Not without his knowledge…Oh! You know what I mean.” Natasha huffed.

“That’s still using him.”
“Regardless he cares about you and I know you care about him.” Natasha shook her head.

“No, not like your insinuating.” Laura sighed and Natasha knew she was in for it now.

“I’m not insinuating anything, Nat. Just that you two have this relationship this friendship and it’s great. You two are there for each other so let him do this. Let us all do this. You have spent your life fighting by yourself. We are your family and family fights for each other. Nat he didn’t give you that ring because he loves and I’m not saying he doesn’t love you. I’m saying he’s promising to help you. He gave that to you not because he’s given up or whatever, but because he feels that you are worth the fight, worth the risk.” Natasha looked up at her unsure about where this was going. She’d obviously been talking to Wanda.

“Don’t read into it. Sometimes that is your greatest downfall. Don’t let what you think might be going on in his head distract you from what he’s saying. If there’s one thing about Steve that’s a grantee, it’s that he always says what he means. So don’t look at it as a way to fool people. As it being someone else’s. Look at it and know that you have someone who feels that you are worth it. Because you do; you have a lot of people who feel that way.”

Natasha looked over at her nightstand where she kept the ring and when she still said nothing Laura said one last thing.

“Stop lying to yourself Nat. You said it yourself. Lying only brings pain, so why do you keep hurting yourself with excuses? Because whether you have feelings for him or not, you care about him. Pretending you don’t or that he’d be better off without you in his life regardless of the situation, is only hurting yourself and if you think he’d be better off, your wrong. You two bring out the best in each other, leaving will only hurt you both.”

Natasha sighed closing her eyes. Maybe Laura was right. Maybe she was thinking too much into this. When it came down to it, this was about staying together and honestly she knew how much she’d come to rely on him. Natasha shook her head. Laura always seemed to know exactly what to say and when to say it.

“Ok…how do you do that? Honestly it should be a super power of something.” Laura laughed.

“I think I’m good. It’s only the truth Nat. So are we doing this?” Natasha nodded. “Good. I’ll let you get ready. You’ve got ten minutes before your niece burst from excitement.”

Laura got up and walked out of the room leaving Natasha to get ready. She dressed and walked over to her nightstand, pulling the drawer open, taking out the ring and slipping it on. Instead of the heavy feeling she’d felt the first time she’d put it on, she felt light.

Chapter End Notes

Comments make me happy, so please feel free to leave them :}
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

I don't even know...Like I got some Say Yes to the Dress in there for the purpose of the fact that I love Randy. *shrugs*

Chapter Notes

So...
This is the most I have ever updated a fic in one day. For real.
Ok so as you can tell by the summary, I was watching a Say Yes to the Dress episode months ago when I got this idea for the chapter and when this fic was in its baby stages. So yeah this happened...but I mean who doesn't love a little Randy? So yeah I based Dan off Randy and I have no idea if there's a chick named Tina if there is ok if not ok. I also named Dan after my moms best friend from High school dudes sassy as all hell and hysterical.

Also there's a mention about Columbia in here and I vaguely remember seeing something about this on Pinterest. I think it may have been a head cannon or something for Marvel, but I know it's not mine originally so...I hope me citing it is ok. I wasn't about to dig through my board on Marvel because I have an obscene amount of pins.

Ok Uh...I don't know what else. The picture are from Pinterest and also Thank you to everyone who voted! The dress ended up being even more perfect and you'll see why cause I mention why...

WARNING! the why to the above is about this. It also pertains to the warning from chapter two. Nothing big in my opinion more or less about some insecurities, but I just want to put it out there anyways.

Ok enjoy this chapter! Get some tissues maybe and lock yourself in a closet or get some popcorn or whatever. Your about to get some girl bonding time!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Good someone knocked some sense into that head of yours.” Natasha frowned.

“Yeah, yeah I know.”

Peggy shook her head smiling.

“You know, I still remember my first dress the one I never actually wore was satin white with ruching, very early nineteen-forties, then the second was a tulle A-line with a lace illusion neckline, that drove my mother crazy! And the typical fashioned short sleeves of the time and I had these gloves that covered my wrist and half my hand. They kept falling down, drove me absolutely bananas! The Tulle skirt was honestly something I would have never picked, but it was easy to hid a
gun in and Ana Jarvis was able to fashion slits in on either side so I could rip the tulle of if need be.”

Natasha watched Peggy’s smile grow more and more as she talked.

“You know seriously fashioned your dress in case someone tried to attack?” Peggy raised an eyebrow.

“You didn’t?”

“No, but I was also trained to work in anything not make it to my advantage, but your way works too.” Peggy chuckled.

“So…you got the ring issue somewhat solved, but how did finding a white dress go?”

Natasha played with her nails.

“Well…better than I thought it would…”

Natasha, Wanda, Laura and Lila all piled into the car Happy had brought for them and drove into the city to meet Pepper and Maria. The entire time Lila watch out the window buzzing with excitement. Thanks to Natasha’s low-profile—or what she had left of one—she still wasn’t one to be easily recognizable and neither were the other women. So Pepper was confident that they might be able to enjoy one lunch out.

They pulled up at the back entrance to be discreet and got out of the car and met Pepper and Maria inside the door.

“There you guys are!” Pepper greeted making sure everyone knew who was who, before they headed inside.

Once inside Natasha noticed there were other people around and automatically went into high alert as did Wanda and Maria. She looked around to see SI security guards stationed at the entrances as well as some of the security staff from the facility. She knew this was too big of a business to completely shut down, not to mention it’d look weird, but maybe this was a little too much for her comfort. The lady at the front desk informed them someone would be back to see them in a minute and they took a seat.

“Before you freak out—” Pepper said knowing just what Natasha was going to say. “—I know the owners of the store. Hence why I was able to get this appointment. I also know them well enough for them to never let anything slip. SI even handles their security. They get some of the most high-end clientele this city has to offer. So don’t worry. They have a no photography policy unless approved and it cannot be in an open area. They are very privet and every single employee sings an NDA upon being hired. I did my homework. Just relax.”

Natasha nodded, knowing she was right. Pepper wouldn’t do anything without checking and Maria wouldn’t let her. A man walked into the lobby, looking for someone and when he noticed their group a bright smile lit up his face. There was also a woman around Natasha’s age with him.

“Pepper!” Pepper stood giving the man a hug.

“Hi Dan.” He held her out at arm’s length taking her in.

“My, I swear you get better looking every time I see you.” Pepper waved him off.
“Oh you’re too much!” The man laughed.

“Why didn’t you tell me you were coming? I knew he was bound to propose-” Pepper stopped him.

“Actually, I’m here as a friend today.” Dan furrowed his brow.

“Oh, oops.” Pepper laughed.

“It’s fine. Natasha,” Pepper turned to her and she walked up to meet Dan. “This is Dan Wilks, his parents own the store and he’s also one of the top bridal consultants in New York. Dan I’d like you to meet Natasha Romanoff, she’s the one getting married.”

She could see the recognition in Dan’s eyes, but he gladly shook her hand anyways.

“Ms. Romanoff its honor. This is one of our lovely consultants Tina, she’ll be helping with the appointment today.” Tina shook her hand a little more hesitant than Dan had been. “Shall we head on back and get started?”

They followed Dan and Tina into the main area of the store and…white. It was covered in white. Wall to wall dresses. It was a lot of white.

“Wow.” Natasha turned to Maria who looked like she just walked into a crime scene. The store was massive.

“That’s a lot of dresses.” Lila commented as every ounce of glitz and glitter caught her eye.

“Yes it is.” Dan said proudly. “We have nearly two thousand dress in stock and more rotating in and out as the seasons change.” Did he just say two thousand? Who the hell has two thousand dresses?!

Laura looked at one of the tags on the dresses as the passed and gasped.

“That dress is thirteen-thousand dollars. I don’t think I paid even a hundred for mine.” Laura whispered to Natasha. Natasha didn’t really pay much mind. She’d worn things far more expensive…and subsequently ruined them. What could she say it came with the job?

They were led to a couch in the middle of the room, but as she scanned the room she realized no one was paying them any attention. Thank God.

“Ok so…am I aloud to ask who it is that you are marring or…” She actually hadn’t thought about that. All things considered they’d most likely find out, but then again…

“Your decision, they’re under contract and they’ll be handling the guys suits later so…” Pepper said looking at her. Oh.

“Steve Rogers.” Ok that was weird.

She knew her face stayed neutral, but on the inside she was slightly more panicked. She hadn’t actually said that out loud before. She saw the expressions of both Dan and Tina change from happy to slight shock.

“As in Captain America-Steve Rogers?” Dan asked slightly more hushed. She nodded and he hummed.

“Huh, ok. I know when it comes to style your known for that timeless look, and you’ve got a great body that will make everything look great. So what did you have in mind dress wise?” Nothing. She knew nothing about this. So she shrugged
“How about glitz sparkle?” she cringed and he seemed taken aback by that. She could understand why. Most things she wore for parties or social events were high end and had some shimmer to them, but she’d rather not.

“Uh, no. I think I’ll pass.” Dan hummed.

“Ok, satin, lace, chiffon?” she shrugged again and Dan seemed a little concerned.

“Open to try?” he nodded seeming to gain his confidence.

“You’re not particular as long as it doesn’t make you look like a disco ball?” she laughed.

“Yeah.”

“Ok we can work with that. Why don’t you follow us and we’ll get you set up and start trying some dresses on. Ladies you can wait here and we’ll get her out here in no time.”

Natasha got up, following them as they took her back to a dressing room. There were even more dresses on the way and she started to feel like she was drowning in them. When they got to the room, they informed her they’d be right back and there was a robe for her to change into. She got changed, making sure to keep what weapons she did bring hidden and sat down.

This was weird. And so not her.

Tina knocked on the door before popping her head in.

“Alright Ms. Romanoff we’ve got a few in different styles here to try and one that your party said you must try on, Lila was it, said you owe her?” Oh shit…she’d forgotten about that.

About a year ago she’d been watching Lila and Cooper and somehow the subject of marriage came up. Lila asked her if she would let her help try on wedding dresses. She’d laughed and said sure, thinking she’d ever actually get married and the girl would forget.

“Alright. What’d the girl pick?” she resigned. Tina walked all the way in and placed some dress bags on the rack. She knew instantly which one her niece had picked. You love your niece, you love your niece, you love your niece.

“This one. I take it you don’t like it?”

“Nope, but if I don’t try it on I will never hear the end of it…so.”

Tina laughed and helped her into the strapless white puffy dress. It was simple, plain white ruffled tulle A-line with a sweetheart neckline. She looked at herself in the mirror and cringed. Dear Lord that was a lot of dress; and for someone who wasn’t all that tall and had curves, she felt like she was swimming in it. I love my niece, I love my niece.
“So how do we like the style?”

“I’ve worn A-line before, but this is a lot, like towards ball gown. Simples good though.” Tina nodded and finished zipping up the dress.

They walked out into the show room and Maria and Wanda burst out laughing.

“Yeah, yeah. Take it in!”

“Oh I am. You look like a freaking Disney princess Romanoff.” Maria was enjoying this far too much. She also saw Laura was trying her best not to laugh.

“Sorry malyshka, not happening.” Lila started giggling.

“I know. I just wanted to see if you’d actually put it on. Wanda said you wouldn’t.” They all looked at the little girl with a smirk plastered across her face. Yup. Clint’s kid through and through.

“Well you have proven me wrong.” Wanda agreed as she tried to suppress her laughter.

“Shall we try something else?” Tina asked as Natasha stepped off the platform.

“Yes please.”

The next dress was a simple mermaid style with a lace see through bodice that stopped at her belly button and then came back again at the tops of her thighs where the lace overlay dropped to sweep the floor. It was sexy and alluring and…yeah, nope. She hated it, but knew she had to show the group.
She walked back and could tell they hated it to.

“Yeah you hate this. I can tell.” Laura said watching her body language.

“Next dress?”

“Yup.” They all said in unison.

When they were back in the room Dan stepped in real quick before she got changed.

“Ok so, I noticed you seemed a little uncomfortable. How do you actually feel about the see through.” She shrugged. Not like she hadn’t worn less.

“It’s fine.” Dan looked at her deep in thought. Then whispered something to Tina who then took the other dresses and walked back out.

“I want to try something else on you. Give us a minute.” He said before walking back out.
Tina came back with more dresses. The next one was a trumpet style with long sleeves, exchanging the see through for a champagne underlay with lace and dipped low in the front and had an open back. With her more olive skin tone she felt washed out by the champagne coloring and while it hugged the right places the drop of the skirt was too much.

“That’s nice.” Came Pepper’s reply.

“Reminds me of that mission we had in Columbia.” Natasha hadn’t even made it to the platform. She stared at Maria.

“Which time?”

“The one with the cartel, not where we ran it.” She’d forgotten about that one. Pepper looked at them wide eyed.

“I’m sorry you ran a cartel?” They both laughed.

“No, don’t be ridiculous. We ran Columbia.” The group looked at the two women and then focused back on the dress.

“Ok then…” Laura said. “That’s probably got an interesting story, but dress thoughts?”

Natasha sobered up and shook her head.

“Hate the color and lace even more. Also maybe no sleeves either.”

“Ok, good were narrowing it down. Next one.” Dan said.
Natasha tried a few more on, but nothing piqued her interest. They were all satin or just too much. She was not a person who had particular tastes. But on the way back to the dressing room after a failed strapless chiffon dress, Tina and Dan decided to have her look at the racks.

She was staring at the dresses on the rack when one caught her eye. It was a mermaid with all lace overlay, an illusion neck and open back with “off the shoulder” lace sleeves and a sweetheart neckline. It just wasn’t something she’d normally go for. It just wasn’t her. Dan must have been watching her because when he came back into the room he had the dress.

“Yes I was watching.” Dan commented.

“I know.” He chuckled.

“Ok so you obviously like this, though you’ve been straying away from lace and therefore sleeves.”

“I haven’t been straying…I just don’t like the dresses.” He frowned.

“You are a tough nut to crack, but I guess that’s the point. Here, at least try it on.” She frowned. She didn’t want to waste time trying on something she already knew she didn’t like.

Dan sighed and hung the dress up, dismissing Tina. He sat down in one of the chairs and motioned for her to do the same.

“Look, what I find with a lot of brides who have the body you have and don’t mind letting the girls out a little—”

“You mean with girls who have the reputation I do.” She corrected.

“Not how I want to put it, but yes. I have had hundreds of clients come in who go for sexy and daring, but every once in a while I find with women who’ve always gone the other way-tend to only like to wear that if they have to, but it’s not really them. You seem to be focusing on what you think people want you to wear.”

That caught her by surprise.

“Oh, and you’re basing this off of…?”

“Your outfit you wore today-for the most part-showed nothing revealing, though it was form fitting. The first and second dress you tried on you seemed ok with the open back, but with the first you wouldn’t look directly at yourself in the mirror when you were facing the front. Even then you wouldn’t look any further than the small of your back and when you first put it on you tried shimmying the under skirt down more. But what else caught my eye is you kept pulling at the sleeves on the second dress and when you came in your top had thumb holes in it. You don’t like your arms showing, more specifically your wrists.”

Ok he was freaking her out a little. She narrowed her eyes at him taking him in. He was good, very good.

“Where’d you learn to read people?”

“Honey it’s my job.” He smiled at her, giving her hand a squeeze. “Try it on. Please. What do you got to lose?”

She sighed, relenting and took the dress from Dan and as he walked back out, Tina came in.
Tina helped her into the dress and she was surprised to find it actually fit, unlike the others. The sleeves were just enough lace that they really only covered her outer arm, but wrapped fully around her wrist, where it buttoned together. The neckline dipped just low enough without being considered inappropriate and the backless only went to the small of her back. It hugged her curves in the right places, but softened after her tail bone giving her room to walk. And while it was white, the lace helped to soften the color to an ivory-cream.
All in all she actually felt *comfortable* in the dress. She turned around to face the mirror, taking a deep breath.

“You going to breathe or just keep holding your breath till you pass out?” she turned to see Dan had
come back in without her noticing.

“I’m good.” She laughed.

“Then maybe we should show your friends because their getting antsy.” She nodded and they walked out to the show room.

The women were busy chatting away when she came out, barely registering she’d come back. She stepped up on the platform and turned around to see Laura practically in tears. Pepper handed her a tissue as she looked back up at Natasha smiling brightly.

“You’re smiling.” Wanda observed. Natasha hadn’t even registered that she indeed had a small smile on.

“So what do you think?” Dan asked her.

She looked back in the mirror, taking another deep breath. She wasn’t going to panic, but also had no idea what she was feeling. She ran her hands down the fabric of the dress as Dan disappeared again and returned with a veil sticking it in her hair. She looked like a bride…and it was freaking her out a little.

“Stop thinking so much.” She looked in the mirror to see Wanda staring at her pointedly, eyes shimmering red.

“What is it with everyone and thinking that I’m thinking too much?”

“Because you are. You either like it or not and your aura changed when you came out. You like it! Stop ruining it because you keep thinking! How does it make you feel?”

“Like…” Natasha hesitated.

“Like what?”

“Like a bride damn it! Fine you win. I really like it.” Wanda smiled as the red disappeared from her eyes.

“So” Laura asked coming up to stand beside her.

“So…yes I like the dress.” Lila beamed.

“Even maybe love?” Natasha rolled her eyes. This whole thing was turning her into a sap.

“Maybe even love.” She said under her breath, shaking her head.

“Oh thank god! I thought we were going to have to drag her back here again.” Maria joked.

She heard them all laughing and talking excitedly about the dress. She looked back in the mirror and bit her lip…

_Pepper was right, there is a difference._

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Bonus Peggy’s second _wedding dress_
Side note Peggy's first dress is the one seen in Agent Carter Season Two I can't remember the episode. I liked the reference about Peggy's first wedding.

The second dress is my Great Grandmothers actually. If you couldn't tell I like using my families antics in my stories.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Small panic attack. Tim & Jan, ya'll are gonna hate Jan. Uh...Pancakes and Vision gets a little sassy. Yeah, I did that.

Chapter Notes

Soooo, yeah. Uh Steve and Nat have a small moment, not that kind of moment and Natasha's not sure how to handle this at all. and there's a really sad song playing right now! I really need to take it off my playlist. We're getting closer and I'm getting antsy, I know it doesn't seem like it, but were going to jump a little bit after this chapter, about a couple of weeks and that'll bring it to like a little over a month till the wedding and yeah. Eeep. Ok um, um, um.... I don't know. Yeah. I feel like I should have more to say, but I don't. This chapters longer, not like last, but close. I couldn't make it shorter, I tried and that thing I said I was debating I moved it to a better spot. so yeah.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The weekend was over way too soon, but Natasha definitely felt much better after spending time with Laura. The woman always had this way of making her feel more sure about herself.

Natasha walked out of her room to hear the TV on. It seems the team had invaded their floor again… and for good reason. It was Monday morning and that meant pancakes. When they’d first started out at the facility her and Steve found it difficult to get the group to wake up and start training. Then one day he made pancakes and it somehow drew them out and since Monday mornings were always the worst it became tradition for him to cook breakfast.

“Morning.” He said handing her a plate. Oh they smelled so good!

“Morning.”

“You get Tony’s message?”

“About St. Patrick’s? Yeah. Do I even what to know how he managed that?” Steve laughed.

“Partly because I actually know the head of the parish. He grew up on my street, he’s about ten years younger, but owes me from back in the day.” Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“I gave him art lessons for free, last I saw him he was oh, 13-14 maybe.”

“Huh, looks like your old age actually came in handy.” He shook his head at her.

“Yeah, yeah eat your cakes.” She took a bite happily all the while teasing him.
“Uh hey guys…you might want to hear this.” They got up and walked over to the couch as Sam turned up the TV.

“Rumors started circulating earlier in the weekend of the possible engagement of an Avenger and more specifically the one and only Captain America. While no official statement has been made by Captain Rogers or the Avengers themselves we have received confirmation from a representative of the group that the rumors are indeed true.”

Natasha sat down on the arm of the couch. It was out now…and it couldn’t be undone. It felt like someone was nailing the coffin shut.

The news casters kept going on about who the woman could be and how great she must be and it was a little more than disconcerting. This was going to be worse than she’d originally thought. They were expecting a perfect all American beauty with a perfect record, the whole shebang. Not a woman with a ledger dripping in red, once doing the dirty work of the KGB and Soviet Union.

She felt her chest tighten and realized she wasn’t taking in air again. She took a deep breath looking down at the floor. This was going to be bad, but they knew this was a possibility. Yet she had hoped that it would have stayed quite. If they got caught it was over.

*Remember what Laura said.*

She just needed to keep telling herself that.

God she felt trapped. *Why was she feeling trapped?* She was in a room full of windows and space! And now she couldn’t breathe again.

Natasha stood up from the couch and bolted for the nearest exit. She ran out the balcony doors, using the railing to stop herself. She couldn’t do this. *Nope.* There was still time to take it all back, they didn’t know it was her yet. They could say it was a breach or something or the representative wasn’t one of theirs or, or…

“Nat! Nat breathe.” She felt Steve grab her arms, supporting her. He turned her to face him.

“I-I can’t.”

“Yes you can. Follow my breathing.” She shook her head.

“No! We can’t do this!” He looked slightly confused. Clearly they were talking about two different things.

“Nat, please love you gotta breathe.” What did he just call her?

“What did you just say?” She asked trying to get air into her lungs. Steve’s eyes went wide.

“Nothing. Nat just please calm down.” She couldn’t calm down! She shook her head defiantly and he pulled her into his arms, her head coming to rest on his chest. “Just, listen to my heart beat and breathe Nat.”

She closed her eyes fighting back tears as she tried to calm herself. After about another five minutes, her mind finally calmed and her breathing evened, but her heart was still pounding.

“I can’t do this. I know why you want to, I get it I do, but if they find out we faked it all it’ll ruin everything this team has worked for. I’ll be the girl who used Captain America and you’ll be the laughing stock who let her and I can’t live with myself knowing you lost everyone’s trust.”
Steve pulled back looking down at her.

“You are *not using me*, Nat. You would never do that and I wouldn’t let you. Saying someone used someone else would imply the other person had no knowledge of what was going on. I know what’s going on, I suggested you do this. Stop worrying. Please. This will only get worse if you don’t stop. You aren’t sleeping, you can’t focus. I’ve never seen you so shaken. Please."

“I feel so trapped. I can’t.” He tightened his hold on her and he could feel her shaking.

“I know. I know you do, but…” he shook his head. “Just like you I can’t live with myself knowing we didn’t try. So please. They don’t know who you are, they don’t know anything yet; them knowing anything has nothing to do with keeping you here. You need to stop looking at the worst case scenario that hasn’t even come close to happening. You are looking so far ahead in the future when what could even cause that to happen, has yet to occur in the present. You will get nowhere in life if you continue looking so far ahead you can’t see what’s right in front of you.”

She looked up at him with tear rimmed eyes and he continued.

“It’s ok to look ahead, but looking at it only when looking back you will never get anywhere. You feel like your trapped because you’re trapping yourself, when in reality there is no wall there to trap you. Roadblocks yes, but no walls. Stop, breathe and take in what’s going on now.” He cupped her cheek brushing away the tears with his thumb then quietly asked her,

“What is going on now?”

She stopped, took a deep breath and looked around.

“We’re talking. The others are inside watching the news. We’re engaged. The public knows you are getting married, but not to who. Even if they did know it was me, they would only be concerned about why you would pick Me.” she laughed at herself shaking her head.

“Exactly. Now that you know that, it’s ok to look a little further.”

“They won’t be too excited. It’s out of nowhere, but they wouldn’t know any better about what’s really going on. This kind of thing doesn’t happen every day.” He nodded.

“That’s right. Just remember to look at what’s in front of you and you’ll be fine. How do you feel?”

“Still a little trapped, but not like before.”

“Good.”

“Thank you.” he smiled and kissed her hair, before pulling away completely.

“Always. Come on.”

They walked back out into the living room to find Tim and Jan were still talking about the engagement.

“Well whoever she is she’s a lucky woman.” Jan said making Natasha roll her eyes. She saw Tim listening to a tech as he whispered something to him.

“Huh. Did not see that coming.” Jan raised an eyebrow as the tech shrugged and walked away. She felt Steve settle behind her and put a hand on her shoulder.

“Did they release the name of the woman?”
“Uh yeah. Yeah they did.” Jan looked at him expectantly.

“Well?”

“In a twist of events it seems the good Captain has a bit of a hankering for tough women.” Jan’s eyes widened.

“Wait so we’ve heard the name before?” Tim was clearly having fun with this and Natasha couldn’t tell if that was a good thing or not.

“Oh yeah we’ve heard the name before.” Jan was growing more and more interested and irritated as she looked out into the audience who were undoubtedly looking it up on their phones as Sam, Wanda, Rhodey and Vision were doing now.

“Tim come on, who is it?” Tim looked at her before finally saying it.

“Natasha Romanoff.” Jan was shocked to say the least.

“He’s marrying the Black Widow?” There was spite in her tone as she bit out her words. Tim nodded.

“Yeah. Apparently the two have been together for quite some time now.”

“Sounds more like a practical joke to me.” Everyone in the living room froze. “Seriously what’s next are pigs gonna fly now?”

Steve made to turn off the TV but Natasha stopped him. When he looked at her she just shrugged.

“Out of everything we’ve seen in the last five years and you think that’s not likely?” Jan shrugged.

“I’m sorry, but that woman should be rotting in a jail cell not boning Captain America.”

“Did she just-” Sam asked.

“On live TV. Yup.” Rhodey confirmed.

“There just has to be something more to it.”

“You think she’s using him?”

“That or the sex must be good. I mean really? The woman built her reputation on sex and murder.”

“Yeah, but she’s also an Avenger.”

“Please that means nothing and you know it. That entire group of people have a record a mile long or have been accused or put on trial for some federal crime or another. She’s the worst out of the lot.”

“So you don’t think Captain Rogers actually might love her?”

“Oh no, if she wanted to she could make him love her, but as for any of it being real, not a chance. The day that woman actually finds someone to love her willingly, will be the day Hell freezes over.”

The room was dead silent.

“Well I guess Hell has frozen over then.” They all looked over to see Vision watching intently, with
a smug look on his face.

“I guess we have rubbed off on him.” Wanda affirmed. Their attention was drawn back to the screen, however, when they heard Tim speak.

“I’m sorry but I just don’t see it.”

“What?” Tim shrugged.

“What?” Natasha said, same time as Jan.

“Yeah the woman’s got a record longer than my electric bill, but I just don’t see Captain Rogers letting himself get manipulated. Not to mention if sex was all Romanoff wanted why accept a marriage proposal? The Captain can’t be that old fashioned and she could find someone else. It just doesn’t add up.” Jan looked slightly shocked slightly mortified.

“Did we pay him?” Natasha asked looking around.

“Not that I know of.” Steve said watching Tim closely.

“She could be knocked up.” Jan retorted.

“Seriously that’s what you’re going with? This isn’t the nineteenth century. Why not? Tell me it doesn’t make even the slightest sense to you?”

“It doesn’t. He could do better.” Tim shrugged.

“Twenty bucks says your wrong.” Jan laughed.

“You can’t be serious.”

“Oh I am.” Jan looked him over considering it.

“Fine. I’ll take your silly bet. But I want real proof. From people who know them. Not just hearsay from their mouths. Actual viable proof.”

“Ok. But their privet people so good luck with that.”

“Then how are you so confident?”

“Experience.” Jan’s jaw tightened.

“Whatever. What’s next?”

Everyone stared wide eyed at the screen. Natasha didn’t know what to think about that and clearly neither did the others.

“Tony just texted me. He said you guys are trending, check Twitter.” Rhodey read as Wanda had FRIDAY pull up Twitter’s live feed.

“That’s a lot of reposts.” Natasha said watching the numbers racking up.

“And that’s not even all the independent posts talking about you two.” Sam said.

“Look at that they’ve already given you two a pet name.” Wanda laughed as she read some of the posts.
This was…this was…she didn’t know what this was. But she did know this was going to come back and bit them in the ass…

Majorly.

Chapter End Notes

I love comments almost as much as bacon and that's saying a lot.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Uhhhhhh...*Smiles innocently*

Chapter Notes

So um, uh, yeah so this happened. Don't ask, I don't know where, well I do, but like yeah...

I honestly don't know how you all will react to this. Like I said it just happened and that thing I said I'd been slowly bring in finally comes up and I couldn't find a way to bring it in without Steve telling her and I felt like that would have been too direct and then Bruce...yeah he's helpful don't worry! But as for how this is explained...

Just, just read and find the quote.

WARNINGS: a panic attack and Steve's muscles.

*runs and hides under a blanket*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Steve and Natasha had barely touched solid ground when Tony came looking for them. They’d just gotten back from a 36 hour training mission and both were exhausted. She was not in the mood to deal with the eccentric billionaire today. The lack of sleep she’d been dealing with for the last several weeks coupled with the mission was taking its toll on her body and all she wanted to do was sleep. Now whether or not she’d actually be able to, was an entirely different question.

“What do you want Tony?” she snapped at him, making Tony take a step back.

“Yeash, somebody’s cranky.” She scowled at him, and Steve decided now was a good time to interject.

“Tony, we just got back and we haven’t even left the hanger yet. Can whatever this is wait?” Natasha could hear the tiredness in Steve’s voice and apparently so could Tony.

“It’ll take two seconds and then you two can go hide in a hole for the rest of the day for all I care.” Natasha sighed and waved for him to continue.

“Thank you. Ok so I know you both aren’t going to like this especially since it’s last minute, but I knew if I told you too soon it would cause issues, and when I went to tell you three days ago you guys had left for the mission.” Seriously.

“Tony what did you do?” Natasha was exasperated.

“I need you all at the Tower tomorrow by five so we have time to get ready and what not.” Steve narrowed his eyes.
“Get ready for what?” Tony cringed.

“Your engagement party.” It came out muffled, but both heard it loud and clear.

“Our what?” Natasha seethed.

“Look, you guys asked that the guest list be shortened and I did my best with Pepper and this is what came out of it. You got two hundred knocked off the list and this is how everyone everywhere deals with a condensed guest list, while making no one feel excluded.”

Natasha felt Steve’s body slump slightly. Of course this would be Tony’s solution. Why wouldn’t it be?

“If it’s any consolation this also helps deal with the fact that you two still have yet to make any kind of formal announcement. Seriously the press is riding my ass and it’s getting a little out of hand, so what we’ve gone ahead and done is invited several well-known, well respected reporters as well. This will give them their fix and you your break. You just gotta smile and look happy for a few hours and then go back to hating the world later. Please?”

Natasha frowned. It was true, they’d been avoiding the public eye even more since the news broke. People were jumping all over them looking for pictures or statements and it’s reached the point where no one on the team leaves the facilities grounds out of fear and annoyance. But at least it wasn’t any formal interview or photo session like what had been previously discussed.

Natasha looked over at Steve who just looked like he was willing to say anything to get Tony to disappear. He just shrugged. It’s not like they could avoid it forever.

“Fine, we’ll be there.” Tony smiled relieved to have convinced them.

“Thank you.”

“Go, before we change our minds.” She told him. He nodded and headed for the nearest exit. Unbelievable.

“That’s what they came up with.” Steve shrugged.

“He’s right though, it could be worse. If we can at least get the press off our backs than I say it’s worth it. Go on. I can take care of the post mission work up, go get some sleep.” Natasha nodded, so tired she didn’t feel like fighting him about it.

This was not something she wanted to be doing, but it would be nice to be able to leave the facility without being bombarded with questions. As is, the news spread like wildfire throughout and she couldn’t go anywhere without someone watching her. Even now as she passed a group of recruits they all looked at her scrutinizing her. While the amount of people who didn’t find their engagement odd or wrong were plenty, there were still more who would prefer she not marry Steve. Hell they’d even nicked named her “America’s Mistress” which doesn’t fit considering the fact that Steve wasn’t even involved with anyone at the time.

She’d hear people whispering when working or in the mess hall; people often stared at the ring on her finger that Wanda had insisted she start wearing around the facility. Her excuse? That it would look “weird” had she not. That was the day the news broke and since then Natasha had taken to wearing it on a regular basis, only taking it off in the field. It felt weird to actually not be wearing it now and she wasn’t sure how she was supposed to feel about that.

She’d garnered attention before, but nothing like this. Nothing that made people want to actually
know what laid beyond her mask. Made them want to know her story. She didn’t know what to make of it or how she was to treat it. But one thing she did know was that it shouldn’t make her feel like her chest was going to explode.

Not again.

Natasha ducked into the nearest room she could find, closing the door and making sure it was locked. She slid down the door till she felt herself hit the floor. Ever since the second night of this whole charade she’d had trouble sleeping. Not because of nightmares, though those came when she managed to sleep, she found she couldn’t fall asleep. She hasn’t slept more than an hour in weeks and her nightmares started finding other was to haunt her, i.e. through these sudden onslaught of panic attacks. They were becoming the norm and it was getting old fast.

She grabbed the chain around her neck slipping it off to grab the ring and slip it on. She didn’t know why, but she found when she wore it, twisting it around helped calm her mind, giving her something else to focus on. It had pretty much become the equivalent to that stupid sweatshirt. She tried to concentrate on moving the ring and counting random numbers in her head.

Ten, one, six, nine, two, eleven…

She took a deep breath and felt the tightness easy a little bit each time she counted.

“Natasha?” Natasha snapped her eyes open to see Bruce watching her. Apparently the room she’d locked herself into was actually his lab. Fantastic. He walked over and sat down next to her. “You ok?”

“Fine.” He raised an eyebrow. It was a weak answer as she was still out of breath.

“You sure?”

“Why wouldn’t I be?” he shrugged.

“So, when did they start?” She quirked an eyebrow at him, trying to fain ignorance.

“When did what start?” He frowned.

“The attacks.” Natasha sighed letting her head fall against the door.

“It’s fine Bruce, really.” He just kept looking at her and she shook her head. “The night this all started. It was a nightmare and now…”

“Now they’re affecting you whenever.” She nodded. For a guy who wasn’t ‘That kind of doctor’ he was pretty good at figuring things out.

“At least I’m not seeing things.” She said with a more hopeful tone. Bruce knew it was all a show though.

“You talked to anyone?” She quirked her lips.

“I’m talking to you aren’t I?” He shook his head.

“Not what I meant but, yes you technically are.” He noticed she kept fidgeting with her ring and he motioned to her hand. “May I?”

“Might as well since everyone else seems to want to.” He looked at the ring smiling and letting out a little laugh. “What?”
“Remembering something that’s all.” She raised an eyebrow.

“About?” He pointed at the two knots engraved into the setting.

“Steve ever tell you he got a tattoo?” Natasha’s eyes widened.

“No! He as a tattoo?” Bruce laughed.

“It was after we all moved back into the Tower. Tony was determined to figure out what the serum could do. I was a little curious myself, all things considered, and anyways Tony was wondering why Steve had calluses, but not a single scar. His theory was repeated exposure. Of course we weren’t about to just irritate Steve’s skin with a knife or whatever, so Tony thought why not a tattoo?”

“Oh God…”

“Oh yes.” Bruce said smiling.

“Steve agreed to it?” He nodded.

“It’s surprising what he’s actually willing to do. Anyway he was kind of curious himself, so we hired a really good tattoo artist and Steve gave the guy a drawing of a knot with a circle.” Natasha pointed at the ring.

“This knot.” Bruce nodded.

“Yeah, anyway about halfway through, the guy asks Steve what it meant to him. It was a weird question, at least to me and Tony it was. Steve explained for him the Trinity Knot, as it’s apparently called, meant past, present, and future. The guy nodded and said it made sense, but Tony and I asked for further explanation. Apparently in the Irish Celtic culture knots were a common symbol of no beginning or ending. The Trinity knot is one that no one knows what it really means, but the number three is sacred meaning the three stages of life.”

“Past, present and future.” She answered. Bruce nodded.

“Right. It symbolizes the three separate forms intertwined as one, the union of the three forms. It made sense for a guy like Steve. The tattoo itself was amazing.”

“Did it last?”

“No idea.” Natasha furrowed her brow.

“How do you have no idea?”

“Well we kind of did this a week before Ultron, then he became real and tried to kill us all so…it kind of just got swept under the rug. His skin would have healed and the tattoo is essentially a permanent stain so, I don’t think his body would allow stains but…”

She nodded.

“I just thought it was interesting is all.” She smiled at him.

“Thanks.” He looked back at her.

“For?”

“Sitting with me until I calmed down. And giving me something new to tease Steve about.” Bruce
chuckled.

“Anytime. It’ll be fine.” she nodded and Bruce helped her to her feet.

As she continued back to her quarters she found herself thinking about what Bruce had told her. It did makes sense for Steve, but why put it on an engagement ring? He never did anything without a reason, but then again it had been his mom’s and maybe the original had it…? Either way she was far too tired to contemplate the hidden meaning or lack thereof. As soon as her head hit the pillows, she drifted off into a dreamless sleep.

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Natasha found herself staring at Steve as he moved around their kitchen making Breakfast. She couldn’t stop thinking about the tattoo. The fact alone that he’d even gotten one to begin with perplexed her. And the fact that she hadn’t even known. Seriously she knows everything, well almost, but she would have noticed had Steve gotten a tattoo. She should have asked where-

“Ok I give up. Do I have something weird on my face or…?” she stood straight realizing she’d been caught and decided to go for it.

“Did it last?” He furrowed his brow.

“Did what last?” She smirked.

“The tattoo.” His eyes went wide.

“Who…”

“Not important.” She responded coming to sit on the counter beside him. “So, did it?”

He looked like a little kid who got caught with their hand in the cookie jar. “Oh my-! You can have tattoos! You have a tat-”

Steve covered her mouth with his hand.

“Yes it stuck, but technically Tony cheated.” She said something muffled and he removed his hand.

“How did Tony cheat?”

“He asked Thor to bring tattoo ink from Asgard.” Steve replied frowning. “So at least I picked things I wouldn’t care-”

“I’m sorry did you say things?” She was having fun with this. He cursed when he realized his slip up. She knew she was smiling a little too much. “How many?”

“Just one, but it’s fairly large.” She raised an eyebrow. Bruce hadn’t mentioned that.

“Can I see?” Steve rubbed the back of his neck, turning a little pink. “What? You get it someplace embarrassing?”

“What? No! How did this even come up?” she frowned.

“Oh come on! I’ve seen you in your underwear before.” He sighed.

“It’s not someplace embarrassing.” He defended.

“Then why won’t you let me see it? We are getting married and when Hannagan interrogates us he’s
going to want to know and married people sleep together so I should know where and what it is.” He sighed.

“Fine. For Hannagan reasons. But you can’t say anything to no one. Stark thinks it’s gone and so does Bruce and nobody else-”

“Yeah, yeah it’s a secret! You forget who you’re talking to?” Steve frowned shaking his head.

“Fine.”

He pulled his shirt over his head and Natasha gasped. It was not at all what she’d expected, though she really hadn’t actually known what to expect, but it certainly wasn’t that. Bruce had said it was the same symbol, but this one was far more detailed. Natasha gently traced the details with her finger tips, as she took in the design.

The tattoo itself was one of those 3D tattoos that made it look like someone had torn away the skin revealing armor like that of what a night or warrior would wear to battle. It started at the top of his left bicep where the Knot rested and flowed up over his shoulder and down to his chest stopping at his heart where another symbol rested. This one was far more interact than the knot.

It was similar as in it was also a knot of some type, but it was four connecting to make one. It was an intriguing choice for a man who wasn’t the flashy type. She could feel the beating of his heart as she traced the knots pattern, following its never ending lines.

“Interesting choice.” She told him still looking over the tattoo. He chuckled and she could feel the vibrations under her finger tips.

“You don’t like it?” she shook her head.

“No, I do…just a little surprising.” She looked back up at him and found him watching her intently.

“You have no idea what it means do you?” She shook her head.

“I know it’s Irish.” He nodded.

“Irish Celtic. It’s another knot, a warrior’s shield, cheesy I know, but…it’s a protection symbol. My dad had one on his arm so…I don’t know.” He shrugged and she watched something change in his eyes, something almost reminiscent. She knew he didn’t remember much about the man, so it must have meant something more.

“How in the world did you get this past me?” He smirked.

“I thought you knew for a while, but realized you would never let me live it down had you. I made sure that incase it did stay that you couldn’t see it when wearing a t-shirt.” She shook her head at him smirking.

“You’re a sneaky one Rogers.” He was about to say something in return when another voice interjected.

“I’m sorry are we interrupting something?” They both started and it was only then that Natasha realized how close they were. Steve quickly backed away from where he’d positioned himself between her legs and she hopped of the counter, whirling around to see Sam, Rhodey, Wanda and Vision standing in the doorway.

“No.” They both responded.
She was sure Steve’s face was bright red, and she could feel here’s tinged ever so slightly. The four faces turned from amused to shock and that’s when it dawned on her that Steve was still shirtless and everyone could see the tattoo.

“Is that a tattoo?” Sam asked, the grin returning to his face.

“No.” Steve said shortly, slipping his shirt back on.

“Really? Cause that looks a lot like a big ass tattoo.” Steve mumbled a curse under his breath. “Oh! Oh I see you tell her, but not your best friend.”

“Nothing to tell.”

“When did you get that?” Rhodey asked.

Soon the group had gone into full on interrogation mode as Steve finished getting breakfast ready. She watched it all from her place on the couch as she tried to calm the pounding in her chest. She hadn’t realized how close they had been, how intimate it was and she felt heat pulling in her stomach. There was something about the look in his eyes and the teasing tone that made her just want to-

Shit!

Steve's tattoo:

Ok so long explanation because my Photoshop skills are nonexistent and my drawling skills are eh.

This first picture remember the detail but not this knot.

Ok this knot for the where the knot is on the armor.
Ok do I still have you? Obviously the tattoo doesn't go as far down this is how I see it with the 3D.

But keep the style of the first! Ok so next part is the chest. Go back to the first picture and you see the third photo? Yeah that's similar to the shield in the last one, but use that one and this one, there are a few different ones but this is what I went with.

Put it in setting of the second photo and a little smaller and there you have it!

Also here's an added bonus of Steve's arms.
Thank you Pinterest and whoever designed these originally you are fantastic!

Chapter End Notes

I like comments they motivate me...no really like I write more for some reason.

Yeah sooooooo I uh thoughts?

I put the Trinity Knot on his shoulder since that's normally where the crest is displayed and I feel like that is where Steve's real armor lies, when he finally found a balance. :) Yeah this tattoo will keep coming back up along with Nat's ring. Paybacks a bitch that's all I'm saying. Hehe. Believe it or not I toned it down, I think I may just do an AU so I can have more fun with that and make Nat a badass warrior. Back to placement and I put the shield over his heart for obvious reasons. I am really afraid ya'll think it's too much, but there's more behind this tattoo cause well Tony's involved. And it will be like I said explained further, but he's also a big guy muscle wise so it's actually not that bad, the guys in the above aren't as big either, but now I'm nervous typing so...

Also I've personally never had a panic attack that I remember I think I used to get them when I was little, but I don't remember so the info I'm using is from other people and the counting I got from watching Bull on CBS. My mom said it actually works so...if you want to add something or correct something for me, please I'm still new to this whole thing so don't be scared.

Any thoughts or questions don't hesitate!

But I'm going to go back to my whole now, the Flyers are up five nothing and the second periods about to start.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

I could give you excuses as to why it's been a month since I updated, but life. What are you gonna do?

So here it is, were at the party! I went back and forth on how to do this, but ultimately went simple. I have a tendency to be a little ambitious at times hence why Heaven is taking me an eternity to update. Seriously I have nearly 120 pages of the same three chapters rewritten because I can't make up my freakin mind. and also a lot of random shit that just happened. But I've decided at the end of both this story and that one I'm making a "deleted scenes" post with all the random shit I wrote, but didn't add, but LOVED that sadly just didn't fit into the story. If movies can do it I say so can stories!

The above has nothing to do with anything sorry. Anyways this is like part one of two-three. It's short because thirteen is really long. Hehe. You'll like that one, it's a little-you know what I'll explain it when I get to it. It's done just needs some editing, so I'm getting back on track! Yay! Read some fic people!

Also I changed the rating! My mouth got a little more mouthy so... yeah. Hehe.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“He did what?!” Natasha actually laughed.

“Oh yeah, gotta say I was shocked and nothing surprises me.” Peggy looked like she was going to pass out.

“If there’s one thing that man is good at its surprising people. And can we go back to that part about you wanting to…”

“No.” Peggy smirked.

“Really? Because I think that is a very important-”

“It’s not.”

“Oh? Then why’d you mention it?” Natasha frowned and huffed.

“Because it may or may not have to do with what happened next…” Peggy resituated herself and smiled.

“Oh this ought to be good.”

They made it to the tower by five, each heading in separate directions. Wanda followed Natasha to her floor and balked at the sheer fact that Natasha had her own floor. Wanda was the only one who had yet to see the tower. Tony had already started on the facility by the time Ultron happened, so after there was no need to stay in the tower.
“Just when I think it can’t get any more outrageous it does.” Wanda shook her head as she followed Natasha back to her room.

“Yeah, this still doesn’t top some of the places I’ve been.” Wanda’s went wide.

“You have some stories.” Natasha smirked.

“Oh the tell all I could write on the hotels, mansions and castles alone…” They walked into Natasha’s bedroom and Wanda immediately collapsed onto the bed.

“So…We didn’t get a chance to talk this morning about the little moment we walked in on. Sorry by the way, you guys should really put a sign on the door.” Natasha rolled her eyes and set her bag down.

“You weren’t interrupting anything.”

“Oh really?” Wanda smirked like she knew something no one else did.

“Really.” Wanda sighed.

“Ok, then. But how about that tattoo?” Natasha laughed at that.

“Yeah I wasn’t expecting that.” Wanda raised an eyebrow.

“You’ve never seen it before?” Natasha rolled her eyes. “What? We weren’t there very long.”

“No I haven’t. Believe it or not we don’t make it a habit of getting undressed in front of each other.”

“Shame.” Natasha laughed.

“You need a date or something. Hey what about-” Wanda waved her hands stopping her.

“Oh no you don’t! Steve warned me about this. I am nineteen, I can get a date when and if I want one thank you.”

“Fine.”

“But seriously I did not peg Steve for the type. Also isn’t the symbol on his arm the one that’s on your ring?” How? Seriously how does every conversation keep coming back to the ring?

“Yes.” Wanda hummed.

“What does it mean? I mean is there any correlation or…?” Natasha shrugged.

“Don’t know if there’s a correlation, but it’s just one of those symbols that has multiple meanings. Besides it was his moms so chances are he kept it from the original.” Wanda nodded.

“Yes, but what does it mean?”

“In general the knot means no beginning or end, a unity between three things.” Wanda nodded.

“Makes sense, what were the things?”


“Yes it does, did he tell you what it meant on the ring?” Natasha looked at Wanda, trying to figure out what the girl was getting at.
“Actually Steve didn’t tell me, Bruce did. He told me about the tattoo and I asked Steve if it had actually stayed. He only told me about the Shield. He didn’t actually tell me anything or even acknowledge the other one, but I was focused on the one on his chest at the time so…”

“Hm…maybe you should ask.”

“Why? It’s not like it’s important.” Wanda hummed nodding.

“Right, because the rings not yours.” Natasha frowned putting her hands on her hips.

“No, because he would have tried to keep it like his moms and it probably meant something to her.”

“Then what’s the harm in asking?” Natasha shrugged. Wanda had a point, but still there was something in the back of her mind telling her not to.

“Maybe later, but right now we need to get ready. Pepper said she left the dresses in my closet.”

Natasha walked into her closet and found the dresses and matching foot wear. Natasha set out the two dress bags and opened hers. She relaxed when she saw her familiar black, it had long sleeves and open Chris-cross bodice that would show off her bust. It was simple, sexy, and elegant. Wanda’s was a simple dark red mini dress with black lace overlay that would hug her curves.

The women got ready in compensable silence and Natasha helped Wanda pull her hair up in a messy ponytail leaving loose tendrils framing her face and set to curling her own hair.

“Wanda can you go into my jewelry box and find a simple diamond neckless, nothing long, but not choker?” Wanda nodded and opened the jewelry box.

“Wow.” Wanda said looking through the box. “Where did you get all of this?”
Natasha shrugged, curling another strand of hair.

“Here and there. Some were gifts, others I honestly don’t remember and the others…well let’s not ask.”

Wanda raised an eyebrow, but went back to her search. It’s true, Natasha had been given many pieces of jewelry over the years, most she’s only warn once and never touched again, others as payment for one thing or another.

“How about this?” Wanda held up a box with a simple Straightline diamond necklace that would lay perfectly around her collar bone and it had matching tear drop earrings. It went with everything, this dress included.

“That’s perfect. Thank you.” Natasha said taking the box and putting the jewelry on. Wanda sat down on the bed watching, and Natasha could tell she had something on her mind.

“Natasha, might I ask you a somewhat personal question? You don’t have to answer it if you’re not comfortable with it.” Natasha looked at Wanda through the mirror, but nodded out of curiosity.

“How old were you? When you started training I mean.”

That caught her off guard. She’d been expecting something teasing or having to do with Steve, but not that. Natasha thought for a moment, before fully turning to meet the girls gaze.

“Well, when I got on SHIELD’s radar I was no older than you are now.” Wanda’s eyes widened a little.

“You’d already made that much of a name for yourself?” Natasha sighed.

“That must have been hard. Being so young…what made you do it?” Natasha tensed slightly and Wanda hurried to correct herself. “I mean-sorry! You don’t have to-”

Natasha waved her off. She was starting to understand now what this was about.

“It’s ok…I didn’t-Have a choice I mean. Well not at first. I was six, already on my own for a sometime by then and already picked up the habit of pit-pocketing for money. I robbed the wrong person, caught the attention of some not so good people and was offered a place to sleep and food. I took it, not really understanding what it meant. What it would cost. Years passed and I owed them. They took me off the streets, had they not I would have been dead by fourteen. Clint was the first one to show me I had a say, and I took it. Haven’t regretted it since.”

Wanda seemed a little taken aback by Natasha’s story and she walked over sitting down next to Wanda.
“We all do things for reasons we think justify the means Wanda. You did the things you did because you wanted better for your people for yourself. I wanted to live…I wanted to be remembered. And I was, now I’m paying for that. We all make mistakes, but you realized your mistakes Wanda and on your own at that.”

“Doesn’t always feel like it.” Wanda said, Natasha took her hand squeezing it. “I see how much bad I did…”

“And you don’t want people to criticize you like they are me?” Wanda shook her head.

“No…I don’t mean it like that-”

“Stop, your right. We make the beds we sleep in. You were young, you didn’t know any better. Don’t let them bring you down for those mistakes.” Wanda looked at her.

“So why are you?” Natasha’s face faltered. “You were a child too, even younger than me. So why do you let them bring you down?”

Natasha’s lips quirked ever so slightly.

“Your good kid.” Wanda smiled.

“I learn from the best, but really you should take your own advice sometime. It’s very helpful.” Natasha smiled slightly.

“Maybe…” There was a knock on her door. “Come in.”

Steve walked in dressed in a suit and tie. He looked very nice, giving them both a smile he tucked his hands in his pockets.

“You guys ready?” Wanda nodded.

“Yes I think we are. I’ll see you guys downstairs.” Wanda said getting up and walking out to the elevator.

Natasha stood walking over to the vanity to finish putting on her earrings and slid her ring on. Natasha turned to Steve and he smiled.

“You look beautiful.” She smiled slightly.

“Thanks, you don’t look bad yourself.” He smiled gave her his arm and she took it, walking to the elevator. The elevator arrived and they stepped inside, FRIDAY already knowing where to take them. When they arrived at the correct floor Natasha asked FRIDAY to hold off a moment and Steve looked down at her curiously.

“You ok?” Natasha took a deep breath nodding.

“Yeah, I just need a second that’s all.” Steve nodded in understanding.

“It’s going to be alright Nat.” Steve took her hand, lacing their fingers together and she exhaled.

“Alright, let’s get this over with.”

Chapter End Notes
Comments...they don't have to be about the story just even if you want to say hi. I do it. Hell I rabbit trail when I usually leave comments.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

The engagement party is here! Hehehe.

Chapter Notes

So...
This was not originally what I had in mind, but way better in my opinion! It turned out as two separate things half way through but I managed to bring them together.

Let's see this chapter has: angst, fluff, dirty jokes, alcohol-lots of alcohol, Shut Up and Dance-don't ask, and Hannagan. Yeah I was a little surprised at myself halfway through. But hey! And a surprise in store that I know you'll all love.

This chapter is really long, 3,934 words to be exact. I have no idea where half of this came from it just did. There are no warnings except for fan girling. Also pick out the movie flash backs. Also the Natasha asking for drinks was inspired by that episode of How I Met Your Mother where Lily finds out she'd pregnant, but Nat will not be finding that out I swear she has actual vodka in her glass.

DISCLAIMER: I don't own the song, I don't own the few repeat lines from the movies. I think I covered it.

Get your popcorn everyone! No tissues needed unless you cry when laughing or overly excited.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The elevator doors opened and the couple walked out into the hall greeted by Happy who was in charge of the guest list and press control. He smiled upon seeing them.

“Well look at you two.” Natasha gave Happy a hug. It’d been a while since she’d last seen him and since they’d last sparred, though he’d gotten much better than that first time.

“Hi Happy.” Steve shook his hand smiling.

“They’re ready for you two.” They thanked Happy before heading inside.

They heard Tony’s voice and everyone’s eyes were on them, clapping as they entered the room. It was weird being the center of attention. While she’d had people watching her in awe and entrapment before, it was never anything quite like this. They walked around greeting everyone shaking hands with the guests and the game of twenty questions soon began.

“How long have you two been dating?”

“Who made the first move?”
“Is this real?”

“Do you want kids?”

“How does it work?”

Her head was spinning and she excused herself, knowing if she had to stand there listening to another story of a foreign diplomat’s love life she might explode. She snagged a champagne glass off a tray as the waiter came by, downing it and trading it for a full one.

“You seem to be handling this rather well.” Natasha held back a groan turning around to see Hannagan standing behind her.

“Mr. Hannagan, what a lovely surprise.” Natasha responded with a half-hearted smile. Hannagan smiled.

“I wouldn’t dream of missing this Ms. Romanoff. Though I must say I’m surprised.” She raised an eyebrow.

“Oh? By what exactly?” He smirked.

“The amount of people you’ve seemed to have trapped in this little lie of yours.” Her mask held strong as she stared Hannagan down.

“The fact that you still seem to be holding strong to your theory that Steve and I aren’t actually in love baffles me. Though I suppose you’ve always been one to never follow the crowd.”

“No I haven’t.” She smirked ever so slightly setting down her glass.

“If you don’t mind, I think I’m going to go have a dance with my fiancée. Have a lovely evening Mr. Hannagan.”

“Same to you Ms. Romanoff.” Natasha walked off in the direction she’d last seen Steve and located him talking to some Prime Minister. He spotted her and smiled.

“Steve I was wondering if I might snag you for a quick dance.” The Minister smiled and Natasha took Steve’s arm leading him to the small dance floor.

“What’s wrong?” Steve asked once they started swaying to the music.

“Hannagan’s here.” Steve’s face faltered slightly.

“He just couldn’t help himself could he?” Natasha laughed.

“Never.” Steve chuckled.

“Did you at least see Thor, Jane and Darcy?” Natasha’s face lit up a little more at that.

“No! Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” Steve shrugged.

“I didn’t know myself until a few minutes ago.”

Thor always had a way of making any bad situation feel good and while she didn’t have much in common with Jane she knew the woman well enough to like her, but Darcy—that girl had a way of working her way into your life and before you knew it she was there. Not to mention she was great at distracting people…she might have to consult the girl later.
They danced for a little while longer, until Natasha heard the distinct sound of glasses clinking. The sound reverberated as more people joined. Steve looked at her funny, but she didn’t give him time to question it as she stood on her toes kissing him. Unlike the last time they’d kissed he caught on pretty quickly. It was short and sweet, but it shut everyone up.

“I thought public displays of affection made people uncomfortable?” Steve asked when they parted. She huffed a laugh.

“Apparently not when you’re getting married, then it’s encouraged.” She could see the slight flush in his cheeks and she had to look away.

Sadly she looked in the wrong direction, and found herself eye to eye with Wanda, Maria, and Darcy. All of whom were smirking at her. *Oh they were going to pay for that.* The song ended and she made some excuse to go the bar.

“What can I get you?” the bartender asked.

“Vodka straight and make it a double.” She looked over at the three woman frowning. “You three think you’re so clever?”

“Oh that wasn’t us.” Maria stated taking a sip from her glass.

“Though I would say you actually enjoyed it, if the look on your face said anything.” Darcy jabbed winking at the spy.

“I’m a master spy you can’t tell shit, Lewis.” Natasha defended.

“That wasn’t a no.” Wanda singsonged.

“That wasn’t a yes either.” Wanda giggled and the bartender handed Natasha her order and she took it in one shot.

“You know Tony put a limit on you right?” Maria informed her. Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“Seriously? He knows it takes me about two bottles before I even get remotely tipsy right?” Maria shrugged and waved at someone, walking off taking Wanda with her. Natasha shook her head. If she was to survive tonight, she was drinking.

“So, that kiss like anything that happened this morning?” Darcy asked. Natasha frowned.

“Who told you?” Natasha asked eyeing the other woman suspiciously.

“A woman never reveals her secrets, but if you must know FRIDAY. She’s quite the talker.” Natasha rolled her eyes, but remembered the real reason she wanted to talk with Darcy.

“How much do you know?” Natasha asked discreetly ordering another drink. Darcy leaned back against the bar taking a sip of her drink.

“Enough. Someone had to cover the press.” Darcy said slyly. Natasha rolled her eyes.

“Good, see the man in the old suite, balding-”

“Looks like a troll? Yeah I see him. Is that him?” Natasha nodded. “How would like me to proceed? Sadly your body guard took my good Taser, but I still have my fake cellphone one.”

Natasha raised an eyebrow.
“No, no, maybe another time, but right now I need you to keep an eye on him. Make sure he doesn’t try anything shady, and keep him distracted. Think you could do that?” Darcy smirked.

“Oh, I think I can do that.” Natasha smirked.

“Good. Enjoy the party, oh and Ms. Lewis.” Natasha said looking back around at Darcy.

“No spiking either, he doesn’t drink, already tried it once.” Darcy frowned sitting back against the stool and Natasha walked off joining Steve.

“I take it you found a way to take care of Hannagan?” Steve asked her when she walked back over to him.

“What makes you think that?” He raised an eyebrow at her.

“You’ve got that look on your face. The one you get when you’ve just done something dubious, but not illegal.” Natasha smirked.

“You know me so well.” She said sweetly, glancing up at him. *Shit his eyes were so blue tonight.* “But Hannagan shouldn’t be a problem tonight.”

Steve smiled.

“That’s all I need to know.” A press consultant walked up introducing himself and the two busied themselves once more.

After another hour and several trips to the bar later, Natasha finally started to feel herself relax a little. Darcy was doing her job and she was doing it well making her feel a little better about the situation. She looked out to the dance floor to see Wanda dancing with some prince from some country or another that Maria had introduced her to and Tony was spinning Pepper around with Thor following along as he swept Jane around the dance floor.

She found herself seeking out Steve finding him standing at a table talking to Sam. They’d gotten tied up talking to other people at some point and she felt kind of bad for leaving him high and dry to be interrogated. At least if they split it up, they could get through everyone else quicker. She saw Sam spot some pretty brunette and walk off after her, leaving her with Steve.

“Hey stranger.” Steve’s eyes smiled when he saw her.

“Hey, did we get them all yet?” Natasha looked around taking a quick count.

“I think we just about did, which is good too, because I can’t talk to or listen to any more people tonight.” Steve chuckled.

“Can’t say I blame you. I don’t know what’s worse the questions or the stories.” Natasha laughed.

“I have to say the marriage advice takes the cake.” Steve raised an eyebrow. Guess she was the only one getting the advice.

“Do I want to know?” She shook her head.

“No. No you don’t.” he really didn’t. The older generation attending were not afraid to over share and she learned a few things tonight she actually didn’t know that she *never* wanted to know.

Steve was just about to say something when the clinking started again. *They can’t be serious.* Steve
huffed a laugh shaking his head before dipping his head to meet her lips. This time though the kiss was slower, with more movement, lasting a little longer than the first and when they parted she felt Steve nip at her lower lip.

*Oh she was way passed screwed.*

This time she didn’t look away though and when she opened her eyes she found his bright blue ones watching her green ones, his pupil’s dilated slightly. She felt her face start to flush, but this time she let it. She knew he could see it, see the blush forming on her cheeks, but it was hard for her to care. Steve laughed nervously.

“They’re going to be doing that all night aren’t they?” Steve asked trying to lighten the air around them. Natasha chuckled.

“Yeah, yeah they are.” He gave her tight lipped smile that said *great* with a curt nod as he took a long sip of his scotch.

She didn’t know what to say or how to react to any of this. But one thing she did know was that she was going to need more alcohol, a *lot* more, especially if this was going to keep happening. And here, she’d been worried they’d be scoffed at, but no that’d be too easy!

She snagged the bartender from earlier and told him to bring her another drink and when he saw her glass empty to just bring her another one. He of course tried to tell her that Mr. Stark put a limit on her, but her glare eventually won out. The promise of extra pay probably helped to.

She was on her third refill and could feel the slightest bit of alcohol in her system, that’s when the next round of clinking began. *Did they really have to invite everyone who was ok with watching people kiss?* There was no hesitation this time as she reached up, putting a hand on the back of Steve’s neck, bring his lips to hers again. He wrapped an arm around her waist, his other hand coming up to cup her face. She felt him lick at the seam of her lips and let him in for a tease, before pulling away. She leaned her forehead against his, panting slightly. Steve seemed a little flustered for some reason though.

“I, um-sorry! I-” Natasha pecked his cheek, whispering,

“Nothing to be sorry about.” She smirked backing away to the bar, the bartender holding out another glass for her as she passed a smirking Pepper and Jane, before heading out to the balcony to cool down.

She knew she must have been bright red by then and she knew was shaking. Three times all in one night. Each time more hungry than the last, though it might have something to do with how much she’d had to drink already. And let’s not forget about this morning! No how could she possibly forget how close they’d been.

She took a sip of her drink, tipping her head back and letting the burning liquid slide down her throat. She wasn’t sure she could take much more of this, much more of him. More specifically his lips, or his tongue, or his mouth in general. Great now she was turned on…*Fantastic!* This was not part of the plan and what the hell was that kiss anyways? *Where did he learn to kiss like that?!

Natasha knocked back the rest of the vodka, knowing full well she shouldn’t, but at least it was helping her anxiety…kind of. Well it was for now. She walked back inside and up to the bar. The bartender frowned at her and she frowned back.

“Mr. Stark said I really shouldn’t let you-”
“Kid, I can be tipsy and walk on a tight rope. Stark just doesn’t want me to leave a bad impression on anyone, but I’m in a room full of politicians who are far more drunk, am I not?” he nodded.

“Then drink, please.”

He put a glass down in front of her and poured her drink.

“Thank you.”

Natasha turned around and leaned against the bar people watching. She spotted Thor talking with Bruce and Pepper and noticed he had his flask of mead pouring a little of the amber liquid into Bruce’s glass as the man eyed it suspiciously... Wait, Thor had his mead-Oh shit! She whirled back around and looked the bartender in the eyes.

“What have you been serving Captain Rogers?” The guy looked at her with confusion and fear.

“Just his usual scotch why?”

“How much?” he shrugged.

“A little less than you.”

“What’s the brand?” he looked really scared now.

“I-don’t know. Mr. Stark brought it over and told me it was the Captain’s favorite and that he was the only one to be served it.”

“Bottle.”

“But-” She glared hard and he pulled out the bottle and she saw the Asgardian engravings.

“Damn it Tony.” She also noticed the bottle was half empty.

“How many bottles did he originally give you?” The man shrugged.

“Three, this is the second.”

She frowned turning back around looking through the crowed, spotting the not so genius. He saw her coming, but had nowhere to run. She asked for a moment alone with him, and practically dragged him out to the balcony.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?!” She snapped. Tony stiffened backing up a few steps.

“I-don’t know what you’re talking about.” If looks could kill.

“You switched out Steve’s scotch for mead! What the hell are you trying to do?! Hannagan’s here!” Tony’s face went white.

“Red, Thor brought him the bottles. I gave the bartender the instructions, but Steve knows what he’s drinking. Had I known Hannagan was going to show I wouldn’t have said yes! I may be known for doing some dubious things, but not like that!”

Oh...

“So, how is that supposed to...?” Tony shrugged.

“I have no idea what he was like before. He knows his limits, but I’m not gonna lie judging from that
kiss I’d say he’s bordering tipsy. What?”

Natasha frowned turning around and walking back into the ballroom and away from Tony. At least that explained why Steve tried to apologize, he was getting tipsy. Tipsy! She knew she could handle being drunk with Hannagan around, but Steve was an unknown and that made her a little nervous. Speaking of…

“Hey, you ok?” Steve asked her. Natasha folded her arms and she could tell he knew she knew.

“He told you.” she nodded and Steve cringed.

“I’ve had mead before, but I will say this is a little stronger than what Thor carries in his flask, since Darcy has a habit of drinking from his and-” Oh, he was tipsy. She chuckled. “What?”

“I think you’re just a tad on the tipsy side.” He gave her a lopsided smile.

“Just a bit, not quite, but I will be soon. I always tend to talk more and then I usually just have no filter-” She had to put her hand over her mouth to hide her laughter.

The bartender found her and handed her a glass, but this time instead of her clear vodka it contained amber mead.

“Mr. Stark’s exact words were ‘Red calm down. I’ve got it handled.’” He handed Natasha the glass and walked off.

“Remind me to have Stark hire him full time.” Steve laughed a little louder than necessary, but it was cute and nobody else was paying much attention.

“If I remember I will.”

She took a sip of the mead and coughed a little, caught off guard by its strong bite.

“Too strong?” Steve asked cockily. She tightened her jaw narrowing her eyes at him. Was he challenging her?

“No, just not used to the taste, but it’s not bad.” She replied taking a gulp of the liquid.

“Ok then.” He smirked and it had to be hands down the sexiest smirk she’s ever seen. Steve Rogers could actually talk to women when he was drunk…huh.

“I’m not drunk, you on the other hand may be.” She looked at him surprised. She hadn’t meant to say that out loud. How much did she say out loud?

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” His smirk turned into a grin and she looked down at her glass.

“I think this stuff is a lot stronger than I thought.” He licked his lips a little before taking another sip.

“Yeah, just a little.” Steve winked at her before turning to talk to the diplomat from Spain. What the hell just happened?

Natasha watched him interact and started picking up on his more relaxed posture and also noticed he wasn’t as careful with his speech; his Brooklyn accent coming through more. The diplomat bid them both goodnight and Steve walked back over to her.

“I have no idea what he just said.” Steve said into his drink. Natasha chuckled.
“Steve he was speaking English.” He nodded smiling.

“I know! I wasn’t paying attention, but I think I might have agreed for us to come and visit.” She hummed.

“Spain is quite beautiful this time of year.” Steve furrowed his brow.

“That was the ambassador to China.” She opened and closed her mouth unable to come up with any words. Then mumbled into her glass.

“China is quite beautiful this time of year.” Steve laughed tucking her into his side and they stayed like that a while before something popped into her head. “I really want pizza.”

“Where the hell did that come from?” Steve asked looking down at her. Natasha shrugged.

“I was thinking about Chinese food, then I remembered that I’m not the biggest fan, but I love pizza rolls and then… yeah, I’m tipsy.” Steve had a grin plastered on his face.

“Well ok than tipsy, but after the party since Tony spent money on appetizers.” Natasha pouted slightly.

“Yeah dainty appetizers-Ooo cake balls.” Natasha plucked two off the tray and handed one to Steve.

“Cake balls, huh.” Steve said inspecting the dessert and she stifled a laugh as she finished chewing hers.

“Each your cake ball.” Steve chuckled.

“That’s what she said.” Natasha sputtered into her drink at his quick reply.

“Oh God, you are drunk!”

“Please if I can still walk straight, I’m not drunk.”

“I’m sorry you’re tipsy.” Natasha corrected laughing.

“I can’t eat this now.” He said trying not to laugh. She plucked it from his hand.

“If you won’t I gladly will.” She said with a husky tone as she ate the cake pop slightly dirtier than necessary. He tried to hold back his smile, but to her surprise he held her gaze and barely turned pink.

“You’re terrible.” She shrugged chewing on the stick. He shook his head downing the rest of his glass and walked past her and up to the bar.

Natasha finished off her glass of mead and felt slightly light headed, deciding to stick to her vodka. The mead was stronger than she’d realized, especially if she was speaking her thoughts. This could either be a good thing or a very, very bad thing. She shrugged and started up a conversation with Darcy and Thor. She hadn’t had much of a chance to talk with either of them all night. She saw Darcy looking over her shoulder and she turned around to see Steve laughing, his hand thrown over Sam’s chest.

“Is he drunk?” Darcy asked surprised and Natasha giggled.

“Tipsy.” Darcy raised an eyebrow a smirk plastered on her face.
“I take it your tipsy too?” Natasha nodded happily taking another sip (gulp) of vodka.

“Ok then, your engagement party. Just don’t lose any clothing in public.” Natasha frowned.

“This is vodka and a little mead, not tequila were good.” Darcy laughed telling her not to dance on any tables without her, before spotting Hannagan and walking away.

Natasha felt someone come up behind her and let out a little squeal when she felt that someone poke her in the side. She turned around to see Steve doing his best to stay serious. He was failing.

“You’re an ass.” He shrugged.

“Yeah, but I’m your ass. Wait, I’m not literally your ass. I don’t look that great-” Wow…he really didn’t have a filter. “Not that I’m hitting on you! I should just stop talking.”

“No please, we were getting to the six feet under level.” He looked a little scared and she smacked him playfully on the arm. “I’m kidding! Man even drunk you’re still uptight.”

“I’m not uptight. And I’m not drunk.” She laughed, leaning her head against his chest and he wrapped his arms around her, holding her there.

She heard the music stop playing and looked over to see Sam with a tablet. He turned on Shut Up and Dance and she laughed even harder. Tony looked at Sam with an expression that said ‘what the F man?’

“I’m sorry, but were too drunk for that shit man.” Tony just shrugged and took Pepper’s hand.

“May I?” Steve held out his hand dramatically and she rolled her eyes.

“I suppose.” She said finning annoyance. He took her hand, but she pulled back. When he raised an eyebrow she kicked off her heels. “They’re killing me.”

They danced and she actually felt good, carefree almost. It was nice to see him loosen up as well. Few people got to see either of them like this, just dancing, jumping around like they were teenagers singing along to the music. Like it was just them. She heard the clinking start again and then felt Steve’s lips on hers and everything melted away as he teased her mouth open deepening the kiss.

He tasted her, taking his time and Natasha couldn’t remember ever being kissed like this. So much passion, but yet so gentle, so sweet. She moaned when she felt his hand slide further down her back pulling her closer. She wrapped her arms around his neck, carding her fingers through his hair. Maybe it was the alcohol talking, but she didn’t want this to end. They parted, leaning their foreheads together, both panting as they tried to catch their breath.

“Thank you.” Natasha whispered watching his eyes. Steve looked down at her, brow furrowed slightly.

“For what?” she smiled softly.

“For looking out for me.” He gave her a crooked smile.

“Always.”

She leaned up kissing him again. It wasn’t deep, not like before, but it relayed everything she needed it too. When they parted she leaned her head against his chest letting him wrap his arms securely around her as they continued swaying to the sound of his heartbeat.
Comments are my life line!

Hehe what did you guys think of Drunk!Steve? My only experience with drunk people is limited so sorry if it was a little off, but I couldn't help myself and yes there were loose ends that will be taken care of in the next few chapters.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

So, we got ourselves some consequences and good old fashioned awkward moments ahead along with one that will make you hate me. *shrugs*

Chapter Notes

Wow! Were almost there guys I can't believe it! I was going to post this earlier this morning, but waited and added stuff for plot reasons. Anyways...enjoy!
Oh! anything with an * is a look up at the end.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I’m sorry, why are we here again?” Peggy asked raising an eyebrow at her and Natasha shifted uncomfortably.

“Really? Out of all that I just told you that’s what you want to know?” Peggy shrugged.

“Steve already talked to me so some of it I already knew, but surprisingly you are giving me way more details.” Natasha frowned.

“I’m getting there.”

Natasha groaned as she came too. Her head hurt like a bitch and she felt like she’d been hit by a truck. Why did she have to drink so much? What even happened last night? She thought a moment before hearing someone shift beside her, then it all-well mostly-came back to her. She blinked her eyes open chancing a look to her left.

Sure enough Steve was lying next to her, but she let out a breath when she saw he was still dressed in his dress shirt and suit pants. Thank God. Then more came back…

_Natasha laughed as Steve out her down on the bed collapsing beside her. She leaned up, sliding on top of him till she was straddling his hips. Steve raised an eyebrow and Natasha bit her lip._

“What you doing?” he asked her, voice slightly heavy. She leaned down whispering in his ear.

“This.” she purred, kissing her way up his jaw to his lips.

_She pecked his lips once, twice, three times before he treaded his fingers in her hair to keep her from moving away and his other hand following the couture of her curves. He groaned into the kiss and she separated his lips, her tongue waring with his as they tasted each other. The kiss was rough and hard and she found herself grinding down on top of him. He gripped her hips, urging her to press down onto him more._
He flipped them, pressing her to the mattress as he kissed down her jaw, the column of her throat, her collar bone and back to her lips. He tasted like mead and it was intoxicating.

He was intoxicating.

He gently started rocking against her and she moaned. Her hands left his hair to pull her dress up past her hips to give him more room. He took full advantage, his hands spreading her legs as he angled his hips to hers. He left her lips again to suck on her pulse point and she hummed.

They started kissing again, tasting, and teasing. His hands roamed her body, stopping at the places he knew she loved, making sure to leave his mark. Once he’d finished with those he moved to her special spots. Making sure to take special care as he massaged her drawing sweet mulling’s from her. He moved lower, hooking his thumbs under the sides of her panties to get her there. Her heart started pounding in her chest as he dipped his head kissing each side, slowly tenderly nipping at the skin making her arousal grow.

He moved back up, propping himself up over her, keeping her legs parted with his knees and he brushed his thumb across her swollen lips, running his fingers down her front. His finger catching on the lip of her panties pulling slightly as he ran his finger the rest of the way apply more pressure. She arched her back pulling the sheets and whimpering. He slid his fingers back up and she moaned as he followed the same trail back up to her lips.

He settled back on top of her hips to hips as he continued to kiss her, rocking a little harder against her. No, he was getting harder. When she realized that she gasped squeezing his hips with her legs. He groaned nipping her ear and bucking against her. She retaliated by squeezing his ass as she kissed his neck. He growled and they both stared into each other’s eyes panting.

Natasha felt more loved in that moment than ever before. She relaxed her grip leaning up kissing him slower. Steve kissed her back in equal as they exchanged small sweet kisses until eventually falling asleep...

“Fuck.” She breathed out.

“Hm.” Her breath caught as Steve came too. He blinked his eyes open and when he focused on her he was confused, then not, then turned bright red. “Oh God…”

What the hell was that supposed to mean?

Steve grabbed his head clearly feeling somewhat of a hangover.

“I got drunk didn’t I? Wait don’t answer that.” He groaned rubbing his eyes. “Look whatever I-”

Natasha closed her eyes holding up a hand. She was in too much pain to deal with that right now. Not to mention she really didn’t want to think about that.

“How about we just treat everything that happened last night, after we got wasted, like Vegas. It never happened.” He nodded seeming to relax a little.

“Like what happened?” He said with a coy smile and he chuckled clutching his head. He cringed. “Sorry, and also for whatever didn’t happen last night.”

She frowned.

“You’re terrible at this.” He nodded.
“I know, but…sorry if I made things…uncomfortable?” Natasha played with the string on the pillow.

“It’s fine. I wasn’t any better myself.” Steve chuckled.

“Wouldn’t be the first time you’ve tried to get me into bed while drunk.” Natasha’s eyes went wide as Steve’s popped back open, clearly not having meant to say that out loud.

“What?” Steve froze.

“I may still be drunk.” They both stared at each other as Natasha tried to wrack her brain. She’d done that before?

“How many times are we talking about?” Steve looked slightly terrified.

“Not many…twice” She glared knowing he was lying. She’ll admit there were a handful of times she’d let herself go since the Avengers, but she was never aware she’d done something like that.

“Steve how many times?” He scratched the back of his neck.

“Most.” Natasha covered her face in embarrassment. *Shit.*

“Why didn’t you say anything?” She asked not able to look at him.

“I don’t know. I thought you honestly remembered and it’s a bit of an awkward topic. It’s kinda how I learned to combat your jokes.” She cringed.

“I am so, so sorry.” He shook his head.

“It’s fine. It’s actually kind of funny because you lose all sense of subtlety. Especially after tequila.” She smacked him and he groaned. “God my head’s pounding.”

She shook her head deciding it was time to change the subject of this entirely awkward morning.

“We should probably—” Steve nodded.

“Yeah.” Steve made to get up and nearly plopped right back down, clutching his head.

“Good Morning Captain Rogers, Ms. Romanoff. Everyone is waking now. Breakfast will be ready in half an hour if you’d both like to shower and change.” FRIDAY told them.

“Is it me or is she irritatingly peppy this morning?” Natasha sighed.

“Nope. Not just you.” He said groaning as he walked to the bathroom.

_________________________________________________________

Natasha eventually crawled out of Steve’s bed and down to her own room to shower. God how could she have let herself go so far off the reserve last night? What had she been thinking? Was she even thinking at all? Clearly not. And that wasn’t the first time she’s tried to make out with him. Talk about embarrassing. She was so screwed. There’s no way pictures hadn’t leaked and that the press present didn’t catch any of it. While it made everything look more convincing, it sure caused some issues.

Not to mention was Steve not wanting to discuss it either, good or bad? Did he not actually feel what she thought he did for her? No, he diffidently did if his lips had anything to say. Oh God his lips…*Damn it!* This complicates things. But if he didn’t want to talk about it and at least tried to
make nice this morning than at least she didn’t have to worry about having that talk with him.

Natasha felt the water run cold and turned it off, stepping out of the shower and slipping on jeans and a t-shirt. She popped two aspirin before heading up to the common room. The elevator arrived and of course Steve was in it. He smile lightly at her as she walked in. The ride was silent and the elevator arrived. They walked out and Natasha went straight for the coffee.

Wanda was sitting at the counter texting while Jane, Thor, Darcy and Vision sat at the table enjoying pop tarts and silence. Thor gave them a small wave catching on to the hangover. Steve put some food on a plate and she noticed it was less then he normally ate so he was a little more hungover than she thought. She poured him some coffee and he put some toast on a plate for her. *Ok maybe she’s been drunk around him a few too many times.*

Wanda giggled and Natasha and Steve exchanged a look then looked at the young girl who had her face buried in her phone. That was definitely not normal.

“It’s nine am kid. What’s so funny?” Wanda looked up, looking only slightly tiered. She furrowed her brow.

“When did you two come in?” She looked at Steve who was a little on the worried side.

“Five minutes ago.” Wanda nodded.

“I see you’re not hungover.” Natasha said and Wanda just shrugged.

“Someone had to be sober last night. Which reminds me, Steve you may want to write an apology letter to the Prime Minister of England. Apparently you thought he was the Ambassador to China.” Steve’s face palled and Natasha hide her smile behind her mug.

“Ok so we were both wrong.” Steve said sitting down next to Darcy.

“Just a smidge. You two have horrible filters when your drunk. But it was cute so you can get away with it.” Darcy replied stealing a piece of bacon from his plate.

“So I ask again what’s so funny.” Natasha tired again looking at the girl’s phone. Wanda blushed a little bit.

“I may have met someone last night.” Wanda said quietly. Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“Oh do tell.” Wanda shrugged.

“His names Michael.” Natasha frowned.

“Michael what?” Wanda shifted slightly uncomfortable.

“I don’t know…he’s British though.” Natasha pulled her lips into a tight line.

“Age.” Wanda frowned.

“21, we talked about this, I didn’t feel like he would harm me. Besides Steve could probably snap him like a twig.” Steve looked up from his food at the sound of his name. Natasha sighed deciding to change the topic.

“Where’s everyone else?” Wanda thought.

“Sam’s MIA though in the building, Rhodey already left for a meeting he had at the Pentagon,
Pepper and Tony should be down soon and Maria’s on press duty. Oh and Bruce is in the lab still trying to figure out how Steve got wasted last night.”

Natasha nodded and heard the elevator ding. Pepper and Tony stepped out.

“Oh look the lov-ow!” Pepper jabbed Tony in the side. “I mean good morning everyone.”

Pepper rolled her eyes walking over to where Natasha and Wanda were sitting. She noticed the giddy look on Wanda’s face and nodded to Natasha for answers.

“She met a nice guy last night.” Tony’s ears perked up.

“Wait-back that up.” Wanda sighed.

“Wow you all are nosey for people who are supposed to be hungover.” Pepper patted her shoulder as Wanda hid her phone. “Nice try.”

Pepper shrugged.

“It was worth a shot.” The elevator opened and Sam and Maria stepped out chatting away. It seemed serious, but then Maria laughed and Sam had his ‘I’m up to no good’ smile on.

“Morning.” Sam drummed on Steve’s back and he groaned. “Hungover are we?”

“Yes, I think we’ve established that.” Steve said picking at his food.

“Someone’s grumpy.” Tony said into his coffee and Steve frowned.

“So who wants to know what our efforts garnered us last night?” Maria said holding up her tablet.

“Ooo! I do! I didn’t spend all night stalking Hannagan for nothing.” Darcy exclaimed.

“You stalked Hannagan all night?” Maria asked a little concerned. Darcy nodded.

“Yeah and you won’t believe the dirt I got on that guy. And it wasn’t all night, mostly until he mysteriously disappeared and Tony told me he had handled it.” The fork slipped from Tony’s hand.

“Uh oh.” Everyone stopped and looked to Tony.

“Tony…” Pepper warned. “What did you do?”

Tony smiled innocently.

“I uh…I may or may not have, kidnapped Hannagan and stuffed him into a closet. And he may or may not still be there.” Everyone stared wide eyed.

“Tony which closet?” Natasha demanded.

“I don’t know.” The genius said nervously.

“FRIDAY?” Pepper asked, massaging her temples.

“Mr. Hogan retrieved Mr. Hannagan from the 35th floor hall closet early this morning at around three am when he was doing his last sweep for stragglers. Mr. Hannagan was quite agitated.” Steve and Natasha exchanged a look.
“Oops?” Tony said smiling weakly.

“If he-”

“He won’t! I promise.” Natasha gritted her teeth, but Maria intervened.

“Ok!…besides Hannagan, last night went really well. The tabloids are buzzing with rumors about the party and it’s the number one talked about event on TV this morning. New channels and press alike are having a field day with what leaked photos found their way out.” Natasha looked at Steve who seemed just as nervous.

“Do we want to know?” Maria shrugged.

“The ones of you two are great, I’m talking like an idiot when I’m in them. They got a lot of the team together and a lot of you two.” Natasha frowned. “Remember? People was there?”

No she didn’t remember, but now that Maria mentioned it, it did sound familiar.

“Of course.” She lied into her mug.

Maria shook her head and pulled up twitter, Instagram and other sites that had glimpses of information on last night. There was a picture of Sam and Steve and another of her and Steve–kissing. Yeah this was never going away. There were also a lot of tweets from guests and press attending.

Just arrived at Avengers Tower for the party. Absolutely gorgeous. #romanogers #avengers

I have to say, didn’t know what to expect, but it wasn’t that. Captain Rogers and Ms. Romanoff are surprisingly growing on me. #romanogers #avengerstower #weddingofthecentury

These two are actually cute together! How? #capwidow

How’s right. How in the hell are people buying this? She played with the ring having forgotten she had meant to talk to Steve about the symbol, when a picture* of her and Wanda laughing as Natasha balanced champagne glasses on top of each other appeared and she had to laugh. She doesn’t remember doing that either.

“Please tell me I didn’t drink all that champagne?” Wanda laughed.

“No me and Michael went around collecting them. Some still had champagne in them.” Wanda laughed and Natasha made a mental note to figure out who this Michael guy was. The next one Steve was looking at her as she smirked happily at her handy work. There had to be at least twenty glasses stacked on top of one another.

“Well I guess as long as no one’s stripping we’re good. No one stripped right?” Natasha asked and Maria snorted.

“No, but I think at one point someone was auctioning off Sam.” Sam smirked proudly.

“Ok then. So nothing detrimental happened?” Steve asked and Maria stifled a laugh.

“Again no…but you and Tony aren’t allowed to do Karaoke ever again.” Steve and Tony looked at each other slightly afraid.

“Oh God…” Tony chuckled as he seemed to start remembering.
“As long as we didn’t do anything illegal or incriminating.” Steve said and Maria shook her head.

“No you’re good.” She smirked and Natasha was now suspecting there was something else.

“So then we have nothing to worry about, well besides Hannagan being shoved into a closet?” Maria nodded.

“It went really well. Stop stressing out. But I’ve been getting a lot of phone calls about people wanting interviews with the two of you.” Natasha frowned and Maria frowned back.

“No.”

“I’m not saying you have to but…” She left it open ended and Natasha filled in the blanks.

“We’ll think about it.”

“No you won’t.” Natasha smiled at Maria and the woman shook her head. “As long as I conveyed the information than my job is done. Where’s the coffee?”

For the most part breakfast went over well and Bruce eventually joined going off with Tony and Jane to do some sort of science experiment or another. Eventually everyone trickled out leaving Natasha and Steve alone with Darcy. Darcy smiled at the two of them setting down her mug.

“So what do you want to know first?” Darcy asked.

“What were you able to find?” Natasha asked and Darcy smiled.

“While he’s not very social he did ask around about you two, never said who he was, but he was looking. For the most part he kept to himself, but then at around eleven last night he got a call. The cell was a burner according to FRIDAY and a flip phone so she couldn’t hack into it, but I was able to steal his wallet earlier on and got his name, address and the access key to his office, that FRIDAY may or may not have made a copy for me.” Steve raised an eyebrow and went to say something most likely to deter her, but Natasha got there before he did.

“I don’t want to know, I never heard that. Anything else?” Darcy nodded.

“Yeah, he had a picture of some woman with a little boy in the picture. Didn’t recognize them and as far as I could tell he’s not married. But who knows. I’m planning on looking into it more later.” Natasha nodded.

“So you’re staying in town?” Steve asked and Darcy nodded.

“Yep till the wedding. As long as Jane’s here, I’m here and as long as Thor’s here Jane’s here. You get the gist.” Darcy finished off her coffee and stood from the table. “Anyhow, I’ll let you two know what I find, when I find it. This guy’s up to something I can smell it.”

“Thanks Darcy.” Natasha said and Darcy smiled.

“Anytime, just as long as I get to name the first born.” Natasha sighed and Darcy smirked telling Natasha it was a joke.

“See you later Darcy.” She waved getting into the elevator.

“So…what do you wanna do about those interview requests?” Natasha turned to look at Steve,
eyebrow raised.

“Nothing.” He frowned.

“I hate them as much as you do, but if Maria thinks it’s a good idea, then maybe one won’t hurt.” Natasha sighed. *He couldn’t be serious.* Who was she kidding, of course he was serious.

“Let me think about it.” He nodded, giving her a soft smile.

“That’s all I ask. Anyways I have to go meet Tony, but I’ll talk to you later?” Natasha nodded and Steve got up leaving her.

She really hated interviews. Wasn’t last night supposed to solve that issue? Apparently the only thing last night did was cause her more issues.

God she was screwed.

Chapter End Notes

That picture of Natasha make a champagne glass tower was inspired by a picture that my mom found from her trip to Vegas like...how old am I? seventeen years ago? She didn't remember doing it and one of her friends went round the casino taking peoples glasses without them knowing so she could make the tower. He's standing behind her in the picture as everyone's wondering how in the hell she didn't break any of them. She doesn't remember how many it was, but she had a lot stacked in the picture. I just looked at her and thought yup I can use this.

Also if you thought that went way too smoothly your right it did.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Don't murder me, please I beg of you. This is for plot, we like plot remember? Plot is good.

Chapter Notes

So like if you subscribed your going to be confused and if you just read last chapter and didn't know this was going to happen with me posting, sorry. And if you don't remember reading a last chapter earlier today you need to go back to the last chapter. Sorry for the confusion and you just may want to assume I'm going to do this again.

“Don’t!” Natasha said as Peggy opened her mouth, but closed it as she could see Natasha’s eye turn glassy. She nodded and Natasha continued, swallowing.

“A few weeks passed…”

“Wow…I can’t believe we only have three weeks left.” Pepper said as the seamstress finished pinning Pepper’s bridesmaids dress. Natasha hummed in response.

“Yup.” The seamstress finished and left the dressing room.

“You ok?” Pepper asked as she closed the curtain to get changed.

“Fine, just thinking.” Natasha responded.

As time wore down the hype of the wedding kept getting bigger and it was now being titled ‘the wedding of the century’. So far they’d done a few different interviews with magazines, but tomorrow they were scheduled to meet with Tim and Jan on their morning show. It all kept getting more and more real and it was starting to scare her a little. Of course she’d never tell anyone that.

What was also making her nervous was the lack of Hannagan. There was nothing. No freak out, no threats, nothing. It was like he didn’t even remember Tony locked him in a closet and she was waiting for the shoe to drop. The other thing that wasn’t garnering any reaction was Steve. It was like the kissing and closeness of the night of the party never happened. She knew she had said ‘let’s forget about it’, but she’d expected more and it was driving her a little crazy.

They’d made out on his bed, hell it’s probably a safe bet to say they nearly had sex! And nothing. Even worse she couldn’t figure out what the hell this feeling was. Sure she didn’t want to even mention it, but she’d expected more. Yeah things were a little awkward, but he was always good about separating himself from stuff like that.

“You two will be fine.” Pepper said stepping out of the changing room. “Just do what you two have
been doing and you’ll do great.”

Natasha nodded not really believing her, but knowing it was just best to agree and move on.

The next morning Natasha and Steve stood back stage of the Tim and Jan morning talk show waiting for it to start. So far it’d been a pretty crummy morning. She woke up late—correction she hadn’t slept and got one hour—and ran out the door to find it was pouring down rain and then they got caught in traffic.

And it didn’t help that Steve had been adamant about doing the show to begin with since he knew Jan and Natasha were likely to butt heads. But Natasha assured him it was fine. Now…now she wasn’t so sure, but it was too late to back down now.

They were both handed clothes and told to change and a few minutes later Natasha came out in a tight white sleeveless top with a black belt where the fabric flared and tight dark jeans with black heels. It was typical and very much her. She heard Steve’s door open and she turned around.

Shock.

Yeah that’s the right word. He was dressed in dark jeans and a tight black t-shirt with a black leather jacket. He looked…really hot and really sexy. Well shit. So much for those feelings having taken a back seat.

“Nat?” Hm. Oh shit she was staring.

“Yeah?” he laughed.

“You good?” she nodded.

“Never better. Interesting choice.” She said pointing to his clothes. Really? Interesting choice?

“I think they want me to seem less—”

“Less good boy America and more like someone who would hook up with a former assassin?” Natasha said. Steve huffed a laugh.

“I was going to say soft, but that works too…you look good to by the way.” he said with a soft smile.

“Thanks.” She fiddled with her ring and he reached out and took her hand, making her stop.

“I thought I’d be the one panicking outwardly today.” She looked up at him and sighed.

“I’m not panicking. Just want to get this done and over with.” He smiled at her.

“Yeah me too.” He still hadn’t let go of her hand. Though granted it would look weird if they weren’t attached at the hip. And now that image was back. Why? Why did she always do this to herself? Get herself caught in these situations with feelings and shit?

“Captain, Ms. Romanoff were ready for you.” They nodded and followed the stage hand to where they were supposed to enter.

“I really have a bad feeling about this.” Natasha said before schooling her features and sliding on her mask. She felt him tighten his hold on her hand and she let out a breath. This was going to be fine…it had to be fine.
“We’d like to welcome to the stage Captain Steve Rogers and Natasha Romanoff.” They walked out with the audience was clapping.

They shook hands with the Tim and Jen and sat down on the love seat opposite the two hosts. Steve put his arm around the back of the couch and she instinctively settled closer to him.

“So, not gonna lie we were a little surprised to find out you two agreed to meet with us.” Jan said, smiling sweetly. *Yup* she was going to be a problem.

“Well you just asked so nicely that we just couldn’t pass up the offer.” Natasha replied with a sweet smile herself. She saw Steve glance at Tim out of the corner of her and Tim look at him. They were both clearly expecting this.

“So!” Tim said distracting the two. “Congratulations on your engagement. Only three weeks left now, how does it feel?”

They laughed and Steve rubbed the back of neck a little guilty. She let him get away with it considering the statement.

“Thank you.” they both said and then Steve answered.

“A little surreal.” Steve said.

“Now how long have you two been dating?” Jan asked.

“A little over a year now.” Natasha answered, much to Jan’s displeasure.

“Why such the hurry to get married? I mean these days’ people like to date for years before taking the plunge.” Natasha could tell there was more behind that question.

“Well when you have the lives we do, it’s just best not to wait and in reality we’ve known each other much longer.” Jan hummed at Steve’s response.

“Captain I have to know, why her? You’re an all American hero with the good boy looks and charm and could have any woman, so why Ms. Romanoff.” Steve studied Jan carefully and shrugged.

“I’ve never been one to do what people think I should or think they know what I’ll do. Takes the surprise out of life I guess.” Jan raised an eyebrow.

“Yes, but still, it’s a little extreme don’t you think?” to her amazement Steve’s face stayed cool.

“Not at all.” Jan nodded slowly.

“So why then? What makes her so special?” Steve looked down at Natasha with a soft smile and she felt his thumb rubbing circles on her shoulder.

“She was the only one to recognize the man behind Captain America as being someone else. She didn’t care that I had some fancy name and a costume or that I helped save the world. It didn’t matter to her. She just wanted to know I knew how to follow orders and that I could keep up.”

That had the audience chuckling lightly and Natasha could feel the tension in the air dissipate slightly.

“I guess what we all really want to know is how? You two are obviously very different people, different backgrounds. It’s obvious you two work well in the field and in battle, but relationship wise it seems like it wouldn’t work.” Natasha chuckled at Tim’s question.
“When we first started out we butted heads on a regular basis. He drove me crazy and then one day I
don’t know. We kind of just started figuring each other out. It’s one of those things that you don’t
realize is happening then it all of sudden just is. I find myself looking back, wondering the same
exact thing…when I stopped letting his good boy morals get to me is when I think we finally clicked.
If that makes any sense.” She said the last part to Steve who laughed.

“So how long into your partnership was it before you two finally got along.” Jan asked and Natasha
saw Tim sigh.

“Oh I don’t know about six month’s maybe.” Steve said.

“I just remember getting home and finding her setting up a DVD player in my living room and she
just looks at me and says ‘what? Fury wants me to help you get acclimated I’m helping.’ I just went
with it. We ended up spending quite a few nights just watching movies and helping me catch up. It
became normal for me to just walk into my apartment and find her just sitting on the couch sifting
through a bunch of take-out menus. I still have no idea how she got in without using the door. I gave
her a key and she refused to use it.”

“That would have been too easy.” Natasha said making them all laugh.

“Of course it would.” Steve said shaking his head, smile bright and Natasha relaxed a little more.

“So you two became close fairly quick?” Tim commented and they both nodded.

“Yeah. I don’t know what it was, but it was easy to just be around him. I’m not a people person. I
like my space. He was easy to be around. He wasn’t nervous, didn’t give off the vibe of someone
who wanted to be anywhere else than there and knew when to push me and when to back down. We
can be in the same room, but didn’t have to be talking or whatever. He’ll be drawing I’ll be reading

“At what point during all this did you two start seeing each other as more than friends?” Steve just
shrugged.

“Honestly I don’t really know. Like Nat said, it was just one of those things that just kind of
happened. After SHIELD fell I think is when I started to realize that I didn’t really see her as a
friend, but more. I wasn’t looking for anything at the time which is ironic, but…”

“Ms. Romanoff.” Natasha tore her eyes from Steve’s and she ran a hand through her hair.

“We were on the run and hold up someplace safe and it was starting to sink in that the organization
wasn’t what I thought. I thought I knew whose lies I was telling, but…I asked him if he trusted me to
save his life and he said to me ‘I would now’. No one had ever said that to me…of course there were
people who I know have trusted me, but I don’t know hearing it from him…”

She cleared her throat and looked back at Tim and Jan.

“So then you two trust each other?” Jan asked and Natasha eyed her carefully.

“Of course. You can’t fully love someone without trusting them first.” Steve answered and Natasha
felt him stiffen slightly. He felt something was off too.

“So then you are aware that Ms. Romanoff’s visa’s currently about to expire?” Natasha stopped
breathing, as did Tim and the audience.

“Yes.”
Jan was caught off guard and so was Natasha though not as much. Steve stared back at Jan with cold eyes.

“So this is a set up to keep her in the country?” Jan asked raising an eyebrow.

“No. When I asked her to marry me she had sent in her application for renewal months before. We did hear though after that there was a mix up, but we had already decided to get married. It was actually more convenient to just apply for the marriage visa so we didn’t have to work it out after words. They can be a pain after you’ve already re-applied.” Jan raised an eyebrow.

“But what I want to know is why you felt the need to share this? I mean it is public record, but still.” Jan’s face paled slightly and Natasha raised an eyebrow looking back at her.

“Someone look it up.” Jan ordered.

“Enough Jan-” Tim tried, but then one of the techs spoke up.

“He’s right, it is.” Jan’s face fell and Steve sighed sitting back.

“I’ve known Nat for five years now, been working with her for four, friends for three and half and lovers for over a year. So don’t tell me the only reason we could possibly be together is because she wants something or is using me. If you honestly think that I would let someone manipulate me than clearly you don’t think very highly of me. You don’t know either of us. You know what you think, what you can find. I suggest you start getting your facts straight before you speak. I am a reasonable person Ms. Jones, but I will not tolerate people like you who only care about tearing people down because you don’t think it’s actually plausible. I think we’re done here.”

Steve stood and it took Natasha a moment to actually process that it was Steve who just said that. But once she did, she got up with him leaving as quickly as possible.

Natasha ran out ahead of Steve and into the parking garage. How? How did Jan find out about her visa? This couldn’t be happening…

“Nat!”

She turned around to see Steve running towards her. She couldn’t deal with him right now. She could barely think. She turned back around heading for their car. She needed to get out of there.

She slid into the driver’s seat and started the car as Steve slid into the passenger’s seat.

“Nat. Hey, look at me.” she didn’t, she couldn’t. She put the car in drive and sped out of the garage.

“Natasha slow down, it’s ok.” Steve said, cautiously putting a hand over hers on the wheel. She only slowed slightly when she neared traffic shaking her head.

“No, it’s not ok Steve!” He looked so worried and she was panicking. Everyone now knew and now she couldn’t hide it.

“Natasha, it will be.” He said calmly.

“No! We should have never done this!” She yelled back, shaking her head. “Everyone knows now!”

She slowed to a stop and looked at him.

“Trust me please when I tell you its fine.” Steve tried again seeing tears stinging her eyes.
“It’s not fine. I knew this was going to happen and I let you tell me otherwise! I should have never listened to you! I should have just gone back-!” She shook her head returning her gaze out the windshield and continuing to drive.

“Natasha please just lis-Natasha!”

She looked over suddenly as Steve lunged towards her. There was a flash of light,

Then nothing at all…

Chapter End Notes

Please, forgive me. I originally had something a lot worse here. That I can assure you will never show up...please don’t hate me. But I still really want to know your thoughts.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Guilt is a powerful thing.

Chapter Notes

Ok I'm going between editing chapters and tweaking the last ones and writing the very end parts. So eep! Be on the look out for more than one chapter posting today!

Stars at the end of some of the sentences are explained at the end. I used some of my medical jargon that I learned so I guess you could say I was also studying for finals...loosely.

Also I used lame-mans terms so...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Her ears were ringing as she vaguely heard the sound of sirens off in the distance and someone calling her name, telling her everything would be ok. She blinked open her eyes; her vision struggling to gain focus. She heard more sirens and her hearing finally snapped back into range as her eyes cleared.

There was glass everywhere from the shattered windows, her car dented in. She started panicking and looked down to see Steve limply holding her.

“Steve?” Nothing. “Steve!”

He wasn’t moving and she couldn’t tell if he was breathing. She felt tears stinging her eyes again and moved slightly to hold his head still. She touched his side and felt something wet and warm and when she saw her hand it came back bloody. She started panicking even and tried to move, but her leg was pinned.

“Help!” Her voice came out croaked and she held him closer, putting pressure on his wound.

“Natasha!” She turned her head to see Tony stepping out of his armor and run over to her side of the car. “Hey…it's ok-”

“Stop saying that please everyone stop saying that and just help him!” Tony seemed slightly taken aback, but she couldn’t think straight. He looked into the car and when he saw Steve his eyes went wide.

“I need ETA on Medivac! Caps down! Someone check on the other drivers!” Tony yelled into his coms. “Hang in there, ok? We're going to get you two out of there, but I need you to focus. Natasha is he breathing?”

She shook head.
“I don’t know, I can’t tell.” Tony looked her over nodding. She heard Sam come and wiggle his way over to Steve’s side and his eyes widened.

“Oh shit…” Sam breathed out looking at Tony.

“You were para-rescue help.” Sam snapped back into focus and nodded to Tony.

“Natasha, don’t move. I need you to tell me if you’re hurt and where?” She shook her head.

“I-I don’t know. My legs pinned. Just please get Steve out of here!” The paramedics finally arrived and gave Tony instructions on where to pull the car door open.

Natasha looked away shielding Steve’s face from the sparks spurred as Tony cut the door off.

“She’s pinned and so is he.” A woman said to Tony as another EMT found his way over to Sam.

“Doors destroyed, we’re gonna have to move him out drivers side.” He told his partner and she nodded. Tony came in with his gloves and slowly unpinned her leg.

It was only then that she finally felt the pain and bit back a cry and the woman had him pause.

“Ok she’s got a crush injury*, be careful if you go too fast circulation won’t correct, but could cause Compartment Syndrome*, so go slowly.” Tony nodded and slowed as the woman cut her seatbelt.

“She’s good, bring the gurney over!” she felt her head start to spin as the adrenalin started wearing off.

When Sam and the woman tried pulling her out she tried pushing them off. She wasn’t the one bleeding out. Why weren’t they helping Steve?

“No, no!”

“Natasha we can’t help him until we get you out. You need to let go of him, we’ve got him.” Sam said voice steady, as he gently pried her from Steve.

She lost her grip and he pulled her from the car carrying her from to Medivac. She watched the car grow distant and people yelling orders as Sam laid her down on the gurney. He kept saying something, but nothing was registering with her. She saw her vision cloud and she tried blinking it away, but it kept getting fuzzier and her mind felt boggy. She blinked once more seeing Sam mouth ‘it’s ok’ before slipping back into unconsciousness.

Natasha heard a steady beeping as she inhaled deeply the smell of antiseptic and bleach. She blinked her eyes open and when her eyes finally focused she looked around, now seeing she was in a hospital room.

“Oh thank God.” Natasha turned her head, wincing in pain. Pepper stood from where she was sitting and came up next to the bed. “Hey, it’s ok.”

“What…what happened?” Pepper gave her an unsure look before saying,

“You were in an accident. A truck didn’t stop when you were turning, hit the passages side and sent you into a head on with traffic coming the opposite direction.” Then it came back to her.

“Trust me please when I tell you its fine.”
“It’s not fine. I knew this was going to happen and I let you tell me otherwise! I should have never listened to you! I should have just gone back-!”

“Natasha please just lis-Natasha!”

The screeching of the tires as she looked over to Steve seeing only a glimpse of headlights in the rain before he covered her. The sound of metal being crushed, glass shattering, the air bags deploying…

Steve’s limp body laying over her.

“Steve.” Steve had covered her. “Where’s Steve?”

Natasha tried sitting up, but Pepper put her hands on her shoulders, sitting on the edge of the bed.

“He’s in the other room, but…it was bad. He still hasn’t woken up yet, but it hasn’t been twenty four hours yet, so…” Natasha felt tears stinging her eyes.

“This is all my fault.” Pepper’s face sunk.

“This isn’t your fault Nat, you had the right away.” Natasha shook her head and Pepper pulled her into her arms. “You did nothing wrong.”

Natasha knew that wasn’t true. Even if she’d had the right away, they would have never been there if it weren’t for her. None of this would be happening if she had just accepted her fate.

“I killed him.” Natasha mumbled.

“No.” Pepper said firmly. “He’s going to be fine, Nat. Only a little surgery was needed, but he’ll be fine. He always is.”

There was a knock on the door and Pepper looked up to see Clint pop his head in. Pepper nudged her and when she saw Clint she lost it. Clint took over as Pepper stepped outside. He laid down beside her and she finally let go.

“Shh. It’s ok Nat.” he pulled her tighter against him kissing her hair.

When she’d finally gained some composure the doctor came in to check on her along with two detectives with the NYPD. She told them what she remembered and they simply replied with a ‘we’ll be in touch’ before leaving. Clint said he didn’t believe they’d charge her, since she was within her rights, but it did nothing to ease her mind. The doctor said she was fine, but they had to relieve some pressure from her leg due to it having been pinned and she had apparently dislocated her knee so she had to stay for the next day or two as precaution*. Besides that all she had were a few bruised ribs, whiplash and stitches on her forehead. All because Steve had taken the brunt of the crash from the passenger’s side.

But she wasn’t fine. None of this was fine.

“Where is he?” Clint hesitated.

“He’s in recovery, so you can’t see him right now, and you can’t walk on your leg right now.” She shook her head.

“I want to see him.” Clint nodded.

“And you will, the minute he’s out of recovery, but right now, you both need to rest.” She knew there was no use in fighting with him. He wouldn’t keep her from seeing Steve unless it was really
best right now. So she relented and a few minutes later fell back asleep.

She woke up the next morning groggy from whatever sedatives they had slipped her.

“Morning.” Natasha turned her head to see Wanda sitting next to her this time with a warm smile.

“Hi.” Her smile turned slightly sad as she reached out and gave her hand a squeeze.

“He’s alright. Moved from recovery and Intensive care. He’s only a few doors down and breathing on his own. I was there earlier, he’s still asleep, but I can feel him.” Natasha felt a little more at ease after hearing Wanda’s words. Out of everyone, she knew Wanda would be the first to know if something major happened.

There was a knock on the door and the doctor came in. He took a look at her injuries and seemed satisfied telling her if by this afternoon the slight fever was still gone then she could go home, but she had to stay off her leg for the next week at least. She nodded and he also went over Steve’s injuries since she was listed as his next of kin. She didn’t know Steve had put her down as his next of kin, but it made sense.

He had two broken ribs and several bruised from the air bags and force of impact, causing a pneumothorax in his right lung that required a CT to drain the blood that filled his plural cavity; and swelling on the brain due to hitting his head most likely on the steering wheel, but he was unsure. The good news was it had decreased in the last few hours. The doctor overall seemed hopeful saying with that Steve’s serum he should be up soon and that it looked worse than it was.

He also said if she had help she could go see him. Wanda agreed to take her and a nurse came in with a wheelchair to which she’d made a face at, but gave into using anyways.

It definitely looked worse.

She covered her mouth to hold back the cry as Wanda helped her stand. Sam stood up from where he was seated next to Steve and motioned for her to sit, but she shook her head backing away. Regretting wanting to see him. She felt a hand on her back and Clint pulled her into his arms holding her tight.

“Nat…” they all looked back and she felt Clint squeeze her arm, telling her to look. She looked up to see Steve’s blue eyes. He looked so relieved to see her. “Come’er.”

He held out his hand, moving over slightly so she could lay down next to him. Clint helped her move over to Steve’s uninjured side. She didn’t care about anybody else at that point as just gently laid her head on his chest.

“I’m so sorry.” He held her a little tighter as best he could, kissing her hair.

“It’s ok…everything’s going to be ok Nat.” She felt hot tears staining her cheeks as she listened to his voice and the steady sound of his heartbeat.

Steve had to spend the next three days in the hospital before he was cleared to go back to the Tower. Tony decided with the wedding so close and the press swarming that it was best for everyone to just stay at the Tower. She didn’t argue with him about it. But she also hadn’t left the hospital, even after she was released. She wanted to distance herself, but she also didn’t want to leave him. She was so lost.
Tony landed his chopper on the heli-pad on the roof so they didn’t have to go through the crowds of people. When they got back to the Tower Darcy was there waiting for them.

“I found out what that burner was.” She held up a tablet, with Jan’s phone records on it. “Guess we know where she’s getting her information from.”

“So it was Hannagan.” Clint said, seething.

“Yup. Looks like he decided to retaliate after all.” Darcy confirmed. Her features softened.

“Hey…” She said looking at the soldier and spy. “How are you guys feeling?”

Natasha just shrugged. She had learned that Darcy had made her visa info available for public view without notifying the public when she got the feeling Hannagan was planning something. Steve hadn’t lied or been flying by the seat of his pants. She was still a little pissed that no one had told her, but it saved them. Even seemed to seal the deal more and the accident only seemed to rile more feathers from the public towards Jan.

But Natasha still was struggling to comprehend the public’s reaction towards her or the situation, but somehow it kept turning back around. That did nothing to ease her mind. She’d said some harsh things to Steve that she wished she hadn’t and regardless she still felt at fault.

Darcy nodded and told them she was still keeping an eye out and that if they needed anything to let her know. Right now all Natasha wanted to do was go to her room and hobbled to the elevator barely saying two words to anyone.

Natasha was sitting in her room a little while later when she heard a knock on her door. She looked up to see Steve. He gave her a soft smile and when she didn’t say anything he came all the way in. He sat down next to her and tucked her hair behind her ear.

“I know nothing I say will make you feel better, but…don’t let him ruin this for you.” She bit out a laugh.

“Which one?”

“Both.” She looked at him from the corner of her eyes. The swelling had gone down on his face and his bruises were now a greenish yellow.*

“He’s on to us, has been. He was so close and he’s not going to stop.” She said shaking her head. Steve sighed sitting back against the head board, taking her left hand and holding it up so she could see the ring.

“Do you know what this means?”

Uh…yeah. But were they really going there? She looked at it and noticed he was holding it so she could see the Celtic knots on either side.

“The knots?” he nodded. “They’re the same as the one on your arm.”

“Yes, but do you know what they mean?” she thought back to her conversation with Bruce. How he told her it was about some type of unity, but she shook her head.

“I don’t know it’s a ring so…” Steve sighed bring the ring back more towards him.

“When I was growing up, my Ma wore this around her neck. Then the setting was really only the
few diamonds on the side, but they were embedded in a ring of these Celtic Knots known as Trinity knots.” Seriously? Where was he going with this?

“In the culture I was raised in, this symbol was widely used. It was imbedded in the cross above our front door, hell I found myself drawing it. If you were Irish born you had it somewhere. The thing about this symbol is it has a lot of different meanings, but one common theme. In religion it can mean father, son, Holy Spirit. Other’s its mind, body and soul. Life, death, and rebirth. Past, present and future. All have one common theme.”

“The beginning, the middle and the end.” Steve smiled and nodded.

“Exactly. For my ma, and for me, she found it as a balance. We go through life always searching. For her it was a symbol of her finding balance when she found my dad. Then when she had me. It’s about having piece in the life we live Nat. Anyone who holds this symbol close to their hearts will tell you that. While it means something different to everyone that’s what’s always stayed the same. My ma always believed the three points stood for past, present and future. I believe we learn from our past in the present to help make a better future for ourselves. That’s what this means for me. I feel that when we find the balance between them we find peace.”

She didn’t know what to say. He’d told her before not to look too far into the future…was this part of that?

He tilted her chin towards him, so she would look at him.

“You are at war against yourself and your past and I want you to have the same peace you helped me find after the ice. Stop focusing on what this could do and start looking at how it can help you.”

“But if figuring out the future is what it’s supposed to help me see, than I see this destroying you-”

“It’s not about my future, Nat. It’s about your future. Let me worry about me.” Ok now she was confused.

“You told me at the start of this to stop looking at my future.” He shook his head.

“No. I told you stop looking so far ahead, while looking back.” She threw up her hands.

“Then I see this going up in flames.” Steve sighed.

“Nat…you need to see what’s here now, in the present, before you can look ahead.” He wasn’t making any sense. How was she supposed to learn from her past now, without looking at her past?

“I still don’t understand Steve. Please, I know you’re trying to help me, but…somethings just can’t be helped.” His face fell slightly and he gave her hand a squeeze.

“I know.” He shook his head. “Just…try? Please.”

She took a deep breath nodding.

“Ok.” He kissed her head getting up and leaving her.

She stared down at the ring even more confused by it now than before.
Stars in order:
Crush Injury: typically resulting from blunt force trauma such as smacking your head on the windshield, or two objects squeezing your leg pinning you, results in things like fractures, concussions, death and Compartment syndrome.

Compartment Syndrome: Nasty thing, doesn't happen often, but when it does you need to take care of it or you will die or lose a limb. It's the cut off of circulation due to a build up of pressure in the layers of muscle and tissue. It typically will not show up immediately and takes hours to appear or shows up slowly over time. You will know if you have it because your i.e. leg will swell like a balloon. It's treatable, but often requires surgery to release the pressure or amputation for sever cases. Hence why they kept Natasha.

Relieve pressure: sometimes, not a lot, when you dislocate something like that swelling build from blood or fluid and you have to relieve the pressure by cutting into the area and yeah. not a lot though and my trauma knowledge is limited and not my degree so...

Pneumothorax: Collapsed lung and no I can't just put that, I like my medical jargon. So basically one of the broken ribs punctured his plural cavity and air fills the pleural space.

CT: Chest Tube. that confused me so much last semester, because she asked on the final what a CT was and like no one knew which one she was talking about and I put the wrong one! Basically this drains the blood that has collected in the plural cavity.

Plural Cavity: this is the space between your lungs in the pleura which is the two membranes lining the cavity. When air enters it compresses against the lung because it is denser. Why? because our bodies only use O2 and everything else in air never even makes it to our lungs and O2 by itself isn't that dense.

Swelling on the brain: there's really not a medical term for it when it appears in this setting they just say brain edema, but pretty much see crush injury.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

So slight difficulties with guilt at the beginning then Darcy and the gang to the rescue with some of the MCU women having some fun. ;)

I only see one of my friends getting married in the future and sadly she just broke up with her boyfriend for the dumbest reason possible, but for now I shall plan these things in my writing.

I'd like to thank Pintrest for helping me with ideas, your great. Also some familiar references that I just couldn't help myself. I will not post pictures of these things that pintrest helped in because a) I didn't save them because I didn't want them spamming me with the ideas and b) well...there's no b but it's so self explanatory that you don't need pictures.

Enjoy the last chapter before everything goes to hell! haha! JKJK...maybe

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Peggy frowned removing her covers.

“Peggy no.” Natasha scolded and Peggy looked at her pointedly.

“Peggy yes.” The two women stared each other down.

“Fine.” Peggy huffed relenting and waved for her to continue.

Natasha looked around seeing nothing but darkness then suddenly a harsh light appeared as Steve lunged forward towards her. Except he wasn’t trying to save her, he was trying to stop her, begging her not to pull the trigger. She looked down her arm to see her finger poised on the trigger of her gun, her arm pointed point blank at his chest.

She tried letting go, begging herself to let go, but she couldn’t. It was like the gun was glued to her hand, like someone else was controlling her fingers. She yelled into the abyss for it to stop when she felt her finger slowly pull back on the trigger. She tagged at her arm to no avail. The trigger clicked and she watched helplessly as Steve fell to his knees, his bright blue eyes dim as his body slumps the ground. Only then is she finally able to let go, after the damage is done and Steve is gone...

Natasha woke up tears streaming down her face. She thought it was hard finding rest before, but this was so much worse. She didn’t even try sleeping anymore, she didn’t want to and now she barely even left her room, let alone her floor. Jan had since been fired for taking bribes and Natasha had been found not at fault for the accident. Both she and Steve had since recovered, but he was being put under so much scrutiny because of her and it hurt so much knowing she was to blame for his pain.

She didn’t know what to do anymore. She wanted to distance herself, but she kept finding herself on his floor just watching the rise and fall of his chest as he slept to reassure herself he was ok. He’d wake up not even startled by her presence and just wordlessly push the covers aside to make room
for her. She’d slide right in tucking herself as close as possible to him and he’d put an arm over her waist.

While he never said it, she knew he wasn’t sleeping either. The way he held her when she’d show up in his room. The way he’d wake up and call her if she wasn’t there any more to make sure she was ok. They way he’d always just be there…

“Hey.” Steve said groggily as she crawled into bed next to him. He pulled her back flush against his chest, burying his face into her hair. She felt him relax and so did she a little more as she felt his steady heart beat against her back and his breath on her neck.

It’s ok. He’s ok, the public is weirdly ok…this could work.

One Week

Natasha was sitting on the couch in her living room reading when she heard the ding of the elevator. She looked up from her to see Lila and Cooper come running out of the elevator. She set her book down and accepted the hugs from her niece and nephew as the jumped onto the couch.

“What are you two doing here?” She asked looking at them then up at Laura and Clint who handed her baby Nate as he started bouncing happily when he saw her.

“Come here traitor.” She said kissing his chubby cheek.

“We were thinking and decided this was something the whole family should be present for. After all you are family.” Natasha looked at them both in surprise.

“I thought we agreed it was-” Laura waved her off.

“We can’t keep sheltering them at the farm. Now I’m not going to publicize my children, but one day someone’s going to find out and we both decided we’d rather it be under our control. Besides this should take some of the heat off you, all things considering.” Were they seriously outing themselves for her?

“You can’t-”

“Nat, it’s not like we’re going to pull a Stark and give them our home address and everyone’s signing an NDA. It’s time.” She did have to admit, it did make her feel better having them there.

She also knew the risk Laura and the kids would face with Clint having a similar background, now nothing near hers, but still…

“Thank you.” They both smiled.

“What else is family for?” Natasha smiled and situated Nate on her lap before listening to Lila and Cooper tell her about all the exciting things they saw on their way to New York.

It had definitely made a difference. People were buzzing about who Laura was when someone had caught a glimpse of her and Natasha going to the bridal shop and when they realized who she was the press had another field day. They all knew Clint’s history from the SHIELD dump. Regardless though, they’d gone back to buzzing about the impending wedding like Jan never even happened and she wondered slightly if Wanda had something to do with that, but even she wasn’t that powerful.
“Auntie Nat, can you help me?” Lila asked as she held up a picture of Princess Leia’s hair.

It was Halloween night and the kids were excited to go out trick or treating. They were doing Star Wars and it was really cute. Thor came down dressed in a full Chewbacca costume and she bit back a laugh as he used all speak to do a perfect impression of the furry guy. Cooper was Luke and currently practicing the force with Wanda and Clint was dressed as Darth Vader. The two battling was adorable and Laura chuckled while putting a fidgety Nate into his Yoda costume. Tony came down dressed as Obi-Wan Kenobi with Steve as Han Solo and Sam as Lando Calrissian. Vision and Rhodey were purely along for the ride and free candy.

“Alright you’re all set.” Natasha told Lila as she placed the last bobby pin into the girl’s hair.

“Thanks Auntie Nat.” Natasha smiled as Laura took a picture.

“Alright you guys ready to go swindle some candy?” Tony asked taking Nate from Laura. The kids jumped and headed for the elevator. “You guys sure you don’t wanna come? I’m sure we could find extra costumes?”

Natasha laughed and shook her head, while Pepper gave him a kiss before shoving him towards the door.

“We’ll be fine.” Tony raised an eyebrow, but decided to leave it.

The elevator doors closed leaving Natasha, Laura, Wanda, Pepper, Jane, Darcy and Maria all to themselves.

“Thank God I thought they’d never leave!” Darcy said pulling two large tote bags out from under the counter.

“Oh…what’s going on?” Natasha asked cautiously as Darcy smirked.

“This maybe a wedding under false pretenses, but it’s still only two days away from your last night as single and till we can finally bid Hannagan goodbye!” oh no...

“No-” Laura held up a hand.

“Before you say no…Darcy already checked with me.” Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“I’m not getting out of this am I?”

“Hell no.” Darcy said throwing her a pink ‘Bride’ sash, feathery crown and…was that a condom corsage?

“We won’t go out on the account of press, and sadly the stripper was canceled.” Darcy glared at Pepper.

“I’m sorry, but knowing our track record we’d somehow end up accidentally killing the guy and have a whole new problem on our hands .” Darcy rolled her eyes.

“So were just going to watch Magic Mike and Magic Mike XXL on the big screen.” Natasha bit back a laugh as Darcy pulled out one of those long squishy kids’ toys from the nineties that should in no way have been sold to kids and dick shaped ring pops on top of cupcakes. “Eh! Don’t hide it! See I told you she’d be up for it!”

Natasha shook her head smiling.
“Ok, ok! I relent, but I’m not wearing a feather crown with—is that a penis instead of and I?” Darcy grinned nodding.

“Deal.” Natasha just gave her a thumbs up as Maria tried sticking the crown upside down on Wanda’s head.

The women sat around Natasha’s suit a few hours later laughing as each woman went around telling stories and goofing off. Pepper walked back in with another trey of margaritas as Maria started telling them about the worst/best date she’s ever had.

“Oh God…” Maria started. “Well…there was this one guy .”

Pepper raised an eyebrow.

“And?”

“He took me to this restaurant that had this blue French horn hanging on the wall. I said it was weird and I like it. Long story short we end up leaving the restaurant having stolen the horn.” They laughed.

“He stole a blue French horn for you? Right off the wall?” Jane asked and Maria nodded.

“Yup. I still have it actually. It’s sitting on my mantel.” Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“That’s where that came from?” Maria shrugged.

“What I want to know is why you kept it and why it’s sitting on your mantle?” Pepper asked.

“What else was I supposed to do with it? If I went back Fury would have had to reassign me so…”

“So you use it as your own decoration now?” Wanda supplied. They all laughed and Pepper “oh”d and looked at Wanda smirking.

“So…wanna tell us more about your date with Michael?” Natasha’s brow furrowed. She hadn’t heard anything about any date.

“What date?” Wanda smiled slightly guilty.

“I didn’t say anything because you and Steve we’re still recovering, but Michael asked me out and before I could figure out an excuse this one over here told him that I’d love to.” Wanda said glaring as best she could at Pepper while trying not to laugh as the other woman at a ring pop.

“Still doesn’t answer the question.” Jane said and they all hummed.

“It was nice. To my surprise he took me to this neat outdoor garden rooftop place in Manhattan. It ended up being barbeque, for someone who’s not American he sure loves it. But I don’t know…it was nice. Weird, but he was easy to talk to.”

“So you wouldn’t be opposed to another date if he asked?” Wanda picked at her nails telling Maria and everyone else that he’d already asked.

“Well he asked that night and I may have said yes…but I don’t know! He’s only here temporarily for work and I don’t know if it’s worth all the trouble only to have it end so quickly.” They all stared asking if she was crazy.
“Of course it’s worth it! Do you like him?” Pepper asked.

“Well I wouldn’t have agreed to another date if I didn’t!”

“Then it’ll work itself out, besides it’s not like you have to marry the first guy you ever date.” Darcy said sipping her drink.

“True.”

“God…” Jane said, dramatically. “Do you know what I really hate?”

“What?”

“Disney princess movies that make it seem like these woman just up and marry the guy after two seconds!”

“Technically Anna was the only one who really did that…well almost.” Natasha answered and everyone raised an eyebrow. “What I have a six year old niece you learn a lot in those long marathon movie visits.”

They all laughed.

“Actually she’s right and technically Aurora was betrothed so it’s kind of a good thing she fell for the prince otherwise she would have gotten her head taken off.” Maria said casually.

“Yes! It’s a really good thing no one does arranged marriages in most countries anymore. I mean who marries someone when they’ve haven’t even experienced dating.” Darcy asked and they all noticed Natasha was very quiet.

“You don’t count. I mean like never ever having been on a date ever.” Natasha just took a sip of her margarita and everyone stared wide eyed. “Wait…you’ve never been on a date?!”

“Technically by definition I have…but they weren’t real on the account they were marks and missions.” The women all looked at each other and Pepper set down her glass.

“I’m sorry are you telling me, that you used to try and set Steve up on dates because he quote ‘needed to get out there’ without ever actually going out on one yourself?” Natasha looked down at her glass.

“Yes.” She mumbled, “But in my defense I’m not exactly the type of woman people want to date. Kind of comes with the name.”

“Point, but lame excuse.” Darcy said and Natasha rolled her eyes.

“What else have you ‘technically’ done, but haven’t?” Natasha thought through a mental list and it was long much to her own surprise.

“I’m going to go by how long it’s taking you to answer that it is a very long, very depressing list. We’ll just have to plan a day when this is all over to do it.” Darcy said simply, stinking her finger into the frosting on a cup cake.

“I think we should do presents ?” Pepper said and everyone smiled making Natasha slightly nervous.

“I don’t need-”

“Uh, uh. None of that.” Wanda said handing her a box. “Open.”
Natasha raised an eyebrow. She didn’t trust a single one of them. Even Laura could get creative when she wanted to, but hell she was curious and a few drinks in so…

“Fine.”

She pulled on the bow untangling it, only to find it came out of the center of the box. Ok now she was really nervous. She pulled more until a line of panties started coming out of the hole. She tried pulling her lips into a line to hide her smile.

“Panties tissue box style?” She laughed looking at Darcy who just pointed to Wanda who pointed to Laura who just shrugged.

“It was her idea surprisingly. Keep going.” Natasha tried her best to scowl as she finally reached the last pair and noticed they had something printed on them. She frowned holding them up.

“And who do I have to thank for this?” They were navy lace with silver writing stating Mrs. America on the front. They all tried hiding their smiles behind their drinks and Natasha shook her head. It was clever, she’d give them that.

“You are aware he’s never seeing these right?”

“You keep saying that, but your face tells me you’ve already come up with at least three ways to put them to use.” Laura teased and Natasha stuffed them back into the box.

“No…five.” They burst out laughing and Natasha shook her head. “But it’s not like that!”

“Oh really? Come on, it’s not like it’s going to break some universal law to admit you like him even a little. No one would blame you.” Jane said and Natasha shook her head.

“It doesn’t matter.” Well that did not cause the quiet reaction she as hoping for.

“Oh come on! The man is clearly head over heels for you!” Pepper said and Natasha sighed.

“Yeah and it almost got him killed.” She said quietly causing the room to go silent.

Laura looked to the others and they all wordless got up giving them a minute. She sat down beside Natasha putting an arm around her shoulders.

“Honey, you would be saying that regardless if that truck had hit you or if you two got sent on a mission and something went wrong or if he choked on his food.” Laura told her and Natasha took a deep breath.

“Every time I close my eyes I see his face, I see the blood, but it’s not the truck who hurt him…it’s me. I know this can’t be it. Hannagan won’t stop till it’s all gone and I don’t know what to do.” Laura sighed rubbing her arm.

“I know. I wish there was something I could do, but there isn’t and I’ve sadly run out of things to tell you. It hurts to see you like this, but this is something you have to figure out on your own.” Natasha nodded and Laura pulled her into a hug.

“Seriously who ordered the underwear?” Laura chuckled.

“It was more of a group effort, but I do have something for you though.” Laura pulled out a round gift box and Natasha raised an eyebrow. Laura shrugged.

“I figured you might not have your something borrowed yet since I know you have your something
blue, new, and old…” Natasha shook her head smiling lightly as she opened the box.

“Oh Laura…” Natasha pulled out a delicate floral hair piece with a veil attached. She recognized the hair piece as the one Laura had worn for her wedding to Clint, but the veil was new. “I can’t take this.”

“I know, that’s why it’s your something borrowed. I added a different veil, but…” Laura smiled taking the veil and sticking it into Natasha’s hair and guiding her to the mirror on the wall. Natasha took a deep breath.

“Thank you.” the women hugged and Laura smiled, eyes glassy. “You’re not going to be crying the entire time are you?”

Laura shook her head swiping at her eyes.

“No, only a little bit I promise.” Natasha knew that wasn’t true, but that was one of the things she loved about Laura. “But you may want to keep looking because those panties were a matching set.”

Natasha huffed a laugh shaking her head.

“Pst!” The turned around to the other five women peeking in around the corner. “You good?”

Darcy whisper shouted and Natasha nodded.

“Great!” She pulled out a bag of balloons smirking. “So who wants to see who gives the best blow job?”

Who remembers these?!?!?!?!

Chapter End Notes

Hehehe. I broke out laughing last night when I found those ring pops! and how about those toys? Like I tried asking my mom if she remembered them and I just couldn’t spit the words out and my brother caught on but he wasn’t doing any better than I was. And the balloons have cartoon men on them. btw.
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

ONE DAY!!!!!!!

Chapter Notes

I'm freaking out? Are you guys freaking out? Also if your at work, I suggest finding a sound proof closet to read this in. You have been warned. Other than that, I also added another movie reference or two in this chapter because I couldn't help myself. Also I'm not Catholic so if I get anything wrong sorry.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

One day.

She was getting married in one day.

The team assembled at St. Patrick’s to prepare for the big day and do a vague rundown of where everything was to be set up, security, processionals, and bride and grooms dressing rooms.

“Welcome! You must be Nina.” Father Michael greeted Natasha.

“Natasha.” Father Michael looked up at Steve confused.

“Nina that’s what I said Steve. I think you’re losing your hearing!” He joked and Natasha looked up at Steve and he just shook his head.

“You had to get us the oldest priest in New York?” Natasha whispered to Steve.

“He’s not that old…and besides he’s doing us a favor.” He said shrugging.

“So Nancy dear the bridal room is upstairs and to your right. I think there’s some decorative piece on it or the like that Mother Grace put on it. And the grooms’ is down the hall more.”

“Now I’m Nancy.” Steve rolled his eyes.

“And here is the auditorium where the mawiage ceremony will be performed.” Natasha stifled a laugh.

“Don’t say it.” Steve warned and Natasha nodded smiling.

“We’ll have your beautiful bride enter from here along with the bridal party, but we’ll go over that in the run through. Now Nadia how many in your bridal party?”

“Just three.” Father Michael nodded and Natasha leaned into Steve. “Well at least it’s Russian this time.”
“Ok, now Nadine dear…” Steve just smiled looking dead ahead instead of at her. The old man had to be messing with her. “Will you have anyone walking you down the aisle? Father, mother?”

Natasha gave him a polite smile.

“No, my parents aren’t living.” He gave her a sad smile.

“Sorry to hear that dear, but if you change your mind just let me know. Ok moving on!” For a nearly ninety year old man who couldn’t hear he could sure walk fast as he took them through the rest of the church.

They did a walkthrough of the processional and by the time she was standing at the altar with Steve and Father Michael she was shaking. Steve gave her hand a squeeze and instead of it making her feel more at ease, like it normally would, it just seemed to intensify everything. It was really starting to hit her now that by this time tomorrow she would be walking down that same aisle saying I do for real. It was a little nerve wracking…ok a lot.

They were left looking around the massive church and she felt Steve come up behind her.

“What’s going through that head of yours?” She shrugged.

“It’s fine. Just nervous I guess.” He moved so he was face to face with her and placed his hands on her shoulders giving her a light squeeze.

“I know, but after tomorrow this will all finally be over and we can go back to whatever semblance of normal we had before. If you could even call it normal.” She shook her head.

“I know, but I just…” She took a deep breath looking up at him. “I feel like I’m standing on a thin sheet of ice that with one wrong move it’ll crack and everything will fall through and I have no idea where it’s safe to step.”

“And that’s why you’re not alone.” He said giving her his signature smile pulling her into a hug. “You’re not along now, you never were and you never will be.”

She nodded feeling a little more reassured and he stepped back pressing a kiss to her forehead as Father Michael came back out to go over a few more things with them before tomorrow.

“Hey, ready to go?” Steve asked and Natasha nodded.

“Yup, just one second. I think I left my bag upstairs. I’ll meet you outside.” He smiled and she walked back up to the dressing rooms to find her bag.

She came back downstairs and saw a man sitting in the front pews. She narrowed her eyes at him and he stood walking over to her.

“Hannagan.” He gave her a rueful smile.

“You know, I have to say…I honestly didn’t think you’d actually try and still go through with this.” She kept her face set in a glower.

“And why wouldn’t I?” she countered. He smirked pulling out his phone and hitting play.

“Look I just really want to thank you…you know for helping me.” Natasha listened carefully to her own voice. She sounded slightly drunk and she couldn’t tell where it was from.
“Nat, how many times do I have to tell you it’s fine?” Came Steve’s also slightly drunk voice.

“I know, but still. If this gets out were screwed!”

“It’s not going to get out, alright I promise. Why are we in here?”

“I don’t remember. I think I just wanted to make sure we weren’t heard with Leprechaun Hannagan out there stalking us.”

“Well I mean he isn’t wrong.” She laughed.

“No, but he doesn’t need to know that.”

Hannagan stopped the recording and Natasha felt her lungs stop working. He smiled proudly.

“You know us Leprechauns, we always get the gold.” Her face fell slightly. “I must say, I was furious with Mr. Stark for locking me in that closet, but I did fall for it so I’ll give it to him. But I guess I’ll have to thank him.”

She took a shaky breath and Hannagan stepped closer.

“I will say Ms. Romanoff, you put up a good fight, but the jig is up.” She glared at him.

“If you had that all along then why not just give that to Jan?” He shrugged.

“I had to have something for a backup just in case something went wrong with the plan.”

“You’ve held onto this for weeks. Why now?” He smiled.

“Because it’d be a shame to waste all your efforts to just brisk you away.” She frowned.

“What are you talking about?” He smirked.

“Isn’t it obvious? I may be sneaky in my efforts, but I do believe the Captain wanted to help you so…tomorrow you are going to stand up there and you are going to run. Leave him at the altar, I don’t care how you do it or when, just as long as it’s before the ‘I Do’s’.”

“And if I don’t?” His smirk turned into a grin and he held up the phone.

“All so you could escape the past.”

She kept her mask steady, but inside she felt everything crashing down as the ice cracked. Who knows what else was on that recording. The thought of Lila, Cooper, and Nate losing everything, of her family being punished, Steve being tarnished, all because of her…

“And if I do what you want?” His grin turned devilish.

“Then I’m sure you can make up some story about how you couldn’t do it. About how it was too much commitment blah, blah, blah, and everyone will assume you were just too ashamed about leaving him like that so you ran off. Whatever questions the public will have I will deny and your little family will be left alone.”

“And the recording?” He shook his head sticking the phone back into his pocket.
“I have to have some leverage to make sure you stay gone don’t I?” She shook her head. “I’ll leave you to mull over your decision. Good day Ms. Romanoff. I do hope you make the right choice.”

With his deal offered, Hannagan walked away leaving Natasha to drown and the only life saver left is the one that will cause her to burn.

Once she’d gathered what was left of her mask, she glued the pieces back on and met Steve out by the car. They drove in silence back to the tower, enjoyed a nice dinner with the team, and when the guys were trying to get Steve to go out she smacked his arm and told him he was only sounding like more of grandpa so he would go. The others asked her if she wanted to watch a movie, but she politely declined, making up some excuse about wanting a little down time and going to her room.

She walked through her floor seeing the mostly bare walls she never thought to decorate, the space that had really only the minimum and her room here only had the clothes she’d brought with her from the Facility. Even her room there was still packed up in boxes. She poured herself a shot of vodka downing it and gripping the counter as her walls started to crumble around her.

What had she done?

She wasn’t this person who let herself be used, and yet now she was without any other option. She furiously wiped at the tears on her face and walked back to her room. When she walked inside she saw a black rectangular wooden box sitting on her bed. She walked over taking the card from under the bow and reading it.

For the bride on the eve of her wedding.

It is tradition on Asgard that a bride be gifted a candle and on the eve of her wedding night, she is to light the candle. It is said to bring the bride good fortune for her marriage. I ask you to join in the humbled tradition and may you find peace in your decision.

Yours truly,

Thor.

Natasha opened the box to find that there indeed lay a beautifully designed candle with interact Norse symbols and an inscription engraved in its black base with white wax. She pulled the candle from the box reading the inscription.

“Never idle, never still, talk she must and talk she will.”

She’d never heard the saying before and figured it must be a translation from an Asgardian one. She brought the candle to her nose and inhaled its sweet calming scent, of what she guessed might be a mix of lavender, bayberry, and maybe a hint of eucalyptus. Natasha sighed setting the candle on her night stand and walking into the bathroom to shower.

When she came back out she finished tying her hair into a braid and sat on the edge of her bed. Her mind was still reeling and she didn’t know what to do. Her tears had dried and all she could think now was how foolish she had been to think this could ever work.

She looked over to her night stand and walked over picking the candle back up. While she didn’t believe in things like this, she had reached the point where she’d be willing to do just about anything to make this better. No matter how silly it seemed and if anything her room would at least smell nice.

She pulled out the matches from her draw, striking one she lit the candle, before lying down and
falling asleep…

Chapter End Notes

"Never idle, never still, talk she must and talk she will."
I have no idea who said this. I tried looking it up, but came up empty. I found it written in one of my great grandmothers journals, but she had it quoted so...IDK. But more on that next chapter.

What did you guys think? Should I be ducking right now?
Guyssssss! I finished it! It's done, this is part one of five for the ending! Grab your snacks dinner breakfast ice cream and tissues and settle in cause this is about to get good!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“And you know the rest.”

Natasha said looked away from Peggy as tears sprang to her eyes once again. Peggy hummed looking out the window next to her bed and Natasha followed her gaze. She looked out to see that at some point during her visit it had started to rain yet again. Natasha was silent as she watched the droplets of rain hitting the window, but as Peggy watched with her she spoke…

“The day I married Daniel, was a fairly nice day, but when it was time for me to go to the church we had a light rain shower. A sheet was placed around me and seemed to shield the rain from my gown.” Natasha’s brow furrowed as she turned to look at Peggy, her gaze never leaving the window.

“I have heard a saying, ‘Happy is the bride the sun shines on, sad is the bride it rains upon’. The little bit of rain gave us a little sadness but we survived sixty years together, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poor…’til death did we part.”

When Natasha said nothing, Peggy continued taking her hand.

“Rain is an old wives tale. It doesn’t determine your happiness. Only you can do that. You have let your past cloud you from seeing what’s been there all along. You have been so caught up in not hurting those you care about that you haven’t taken the time to see what’s in front of you. You need to see what has been there all along. The one constant person in your life who has given up everything because he loves you. You think that by lying to yourself that you are protecting him, but you’re not. You are stronger together than apart. Tell me…why didn’t you say anything to him about Hannagan’s threat?” Peggy spoke wholeheartedly with slight tears in her eyes.

“Because…I don’t know. I was just trying to protect him.”

“So by running away you’re protecting him? Natasha, you two have a bond that can surpass anything. He loves you, and you of all people know that a thing like love can be both your greatest downfall and strongest ally. He is your balance. You’re present.”

“Your enemies became all of our enemies when you became an Avenger and vice versa. You are family, Nat and family fights for each other. Stop looking for something to go wrong in this and just trust us, trust me.”

“It takes the value out of it.”

“I don’t see it that way.”
“By the way, ring looks great.”

“For what it’s worth, Steve’s a great guy. Don’t let that stand in your way.”

“Nat he didn’t give you that ring because he loves and I’m not saying he doesn’t love you. I’m saying he’s promising to help you. He gave that to you not because he’s given up or whatever, but because he feels that you are worth the fight, worth the risk.”

“Stop lying to yourself Nat. You said it yourself. Lying only brings pain, so why do you keep hurting yourself with excuses? Because whether you have feelings for him or not, you care about him. Pretending you don’t or that he’d be better off without you in his life regardless of the situation, is only hurting yourself and if you think he’d be better off, your wrong. You two bring out the best in each other, leaving will only hurt you both.”

“I feel so trapped. I can’t.”

“I know. I know you do, but…” he shook his head. “Just like you I can’t live with myself knowing we didn’t try.”

“You need to stop looking at the worst case scenario that hasn’t even come close to happening. You are looking so far ahead in the future when what could even cause that to happen, has yet to occur in the present. You will get nowhere in life if you continue looking so far ahead you can’t see what’s right in front of you.”

“It’s ok to look ahead, but looking at it only when looking back you will never get anywhere. You feel like your trapped because you’re trapping yourself, when in reality there is no wall there to trap you. Roadblocks yes, but no walls. Stop, breathe and take in what’s going on now.”

“This knot.”

“Steve explained for him the Trinity Knot, as it’s apparently called, meant past, present, and future. The guy nodded and said it made sense, but Tony and I asked for further explanation. Apparently in the Irish Celtic culture knots were a common symbol of no beginning or ending. The Trinity knot is one that no one knows what it really means, but the number three is sacred meaning the three stages of life.”

“Past, present and future.” She answered. Bruce nodded.

“Right. It symbolizes the three separate forms intertwined as one, the union of the three forms.”

“I know nothing I say will make you feel better, but…don’t let him ruin this for you.”

“Which one?”

“Both.”
“He’s on to us, has been. He was so close and he’s not going to stop.”

“Do you know what this means?”

“The knots?” he nodded. “They’re the same as the one on your arm.”

“Yes, but do you know what they mean?”

“I don’t know it’s a ring so…”

“The thing about this symbol is it has a lot of different meanings, but one common theme. In religion it can mean father, son, Holy Spirit. Other’s its mind, body and soul. Life, death, and rebirth. Past, present and future. All have one common theme.”

“The beginning, the middle and the end.”

“Exactly. For my ma, and for me, she found it as a balance. We go through life always searching. For her it was a symbol of her finding balance when she found my dad. Then when she had me. It’s about having piece in the life we live Nat. Anyone who holds this symbol close to their hearts will tell you that. While it means something different to everyone that’s what’s always stayed the same. My ma always believed the three points stood for past, present and future. I believe we learn from our past in the present to help make a better future for ourselves. That’s what this means for me. I feel that when we find the balance between them we find peace.”

“You are at war against yourself and your past and I want you to have the same peace you helped me find after the ice. Stop focusing on what this could do and start looking at how it can help you.”

“Nat…you need to see what’s here now, in the present, before you can look ahead.”

“And that’s why you’re not alone.” He said giving her his signature smile pulling her into a hug. “You’re not alone now, you never were and you never will be.”

Natasha took a shuddering breath.

“I’ll never have a future if I never let myself have a present and I’ll never have a present as long as I keep letting my past shroud my life.” Peggy smiled.

“Exactly.” Peggy said taking her hand once again. “The question is…will you let your world stay clouded by the rain or will you let the sun shine through?”

Natasha smiled.

“I think it’s time I take back what’s mine.” Peggy smiled squeezing her hand.

“That a girl. Now go get your sun and tell him to stop using metaphor’s he’s terrible at them.” Natasha laughed.

“You can tell him yourself. I’m sure he’ll be by soon.” Peggy smiled ruefully and Natasha eyed her carefully.

She hadn’t been here in at least a year and to be honest, she wasn’t even sure why she was here now.
“Natasha.” Donna was the front desk nurse, who always greeted everyone with a warm smile. Natasha was honestly surprised the woman remembered her.

“Well I don’t know about you, but I don’t plan on going anywhere anytime soon.” Natasha laughed for real at that, while Peggy gave her knee a gentle shove. “Start from the beginning.”

“My, my. It does suit you well my dear.” She nodded giving in a little.

“Yeah, yeah it does.” Natasha looked at the hand that held hers wondering what a cruel fate it was that in reality they should look no different, buy yet one was still so youthful while the other had withered away.

“So.” Peggy said squeezing her hand, drawing her back to the present. “How bad was the process of organizing a wedding?”

“I’m sorry, why are we here again?” Peggy asked raising an eyebrow at her and Natasha shifted uncomfortably.

“Steve already talked to me so some of it I already knew, but surprisingly you are giving me way more details.”

“’til death did we part.”

“Peggy…” Peggy smiled, cupping Natasha’s cheek.

“Go get your sun.” Peggy let go of her hand and Natasha looked up as a bright light flooded the room.

Chapter End Notes

You guys know I love your comments.

Yeah I did that.
Also Peggy's story about her wedding day came from the same journal I found the previous quote in. My great grandmother wrote about her wedding day on their 50th wedding anniversary. 63 years of marriage before my great grandfather passed. those were her exact words, all I added was Daniels name and the we instead of us and took out the date, so it didn't seem like Peggy was quoting.

She's been gone a little over a year now too and that's where a little bit of the inspiration came from. She reminds me of Peggy, very independent and strong willed. So...
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Sneaky Thor.

Chapter Notes

Ok! you need to get your headphones now, and play Future Looks Good by OneRepublic which I mentioned at the beginning was the inspiration, I did add the words but listening to it also is just uh....
ALSO: Lyrics aren't mine.

Woke up starin’ at this, starin’ at this empty room

Looked at a thousand different pictures that your mother took of you

You see I had this crazy dream last night, this man he talked to me

He told me everything that’s good and bad about my history

Natasha eyes snapped open as the last vestiges of the dream disappeared. She sat up looking over to her nightstand as the candle died leaving not even an ounce of wax. She looked around the empty room and saw the light droplets of rain hitting the windows.

It was her wedding day.

“Wait-how did…” There was a knock on her door and she looked over as Thor stepped inside, smiling bright.

“I see you have finally awoken.” Natasha looked at him curiously as he sat down on the edge of the bed beside her. “I take it you have a few questions?”

“Uh, yeah...just a few. Like what the hell just happened?” Thor chuckled patting her knee.

“The candle is tradition. It is gifted to the bride as an aid to help her see the truth. Whether she should go through with the marriage or not. Sometimes you relive your time spent with that person, others it brings back a loved one no longer present to help guide you in the right direction. It has aided in many a long marriage, even a royal one or two. I know you have been struggling with this so I had hoped that this might give you a sense of security.” Natasha’s eyes widened.

“You gave me a magic Asgardian LSD candle?” Thor laughed jovially.

“I guess you can say that, yes.” She shook her head trying to wrap her head around everything.
“But it was so real… I was at the church I was getting ready then I left. How…?” Thor shrugged.

“It’s supposed to be like that. While normally the bride knows what she’s about to see, she will not realize she has even entered the dream state. It is to make sure her decision isn’t swayed in the dream.”

“A little deceiving don’t you think?” He smiled.

“Aye a tad, but did it help?” She smiled nodding.

“Yes, yes it did. Is he…” Thor smiled.

“We were about to leave for the church. He’s on the common floor.” How long had she been out?

Never mind that, she had her sun to go get.

Natasha hugged Thor giving him a kiss on the cheek.

“Thank you.” He hugged her back.

“You are most welcome.”

Natasha jumped from her bed running out the door and to the elevator waiting impatiently for FRIDAY. The doors slid open and she told FRIDAY to take her upstairs. The doors had barely opened before she burst out of them and into Steve’s arms.

“Uhhh… Nat?”

“I’m so sorry.” She blurted out not letting go.

Steve looked beyond her to the rest of the team. She hadn’t even noticed. But he did notice while everyone seemed as shocked as he, Thor walked in smiling. He shook his head and pulled away slightly to see tears in her eyes.

“Nat, what is going on? Are you ok?”

“I couldn’t see it before and I’m so sorry. But then I had this dream and Peggy was sitting in her room at Willow Tree and it wasn’t even like a dream and she sat there asking me why I was running and I took her through what had happened these last months while she sat there giving that look she always used to give when the answer was so stupidly clear!”

Steve gave squeezed her arms lightly, a solemn look on his face.

“Nat, Peg died last year.” Natasha pulled away and started to pace as she rambled.

“I know! But it wasn’t registering with me, but that’s not the point.”

The others exchanged concerned looks as they watched her.

“Everyone kept telling me they wanted to help me and I kept pushing you all away especially you because I knew you had feelings that were beyond friendship and I didn’t want to hurt you because I’m me. And then this happened and then you gave me the freakin’ ring! And I had to keep telling myself it wasn’t mine, not meant for me, even though Wanda and pretty much everyone kept telling me you wouldn’t give me it if you didn’t want to and of course I knew that! How could I not!? But I couldn’t let you in, so I just kept telling myself it wasn’t for me and then Laura showed up giving me this speech about how you hadn’t meant it to say you loved me even though I thought there was something there and how you meant it as a promise to help me and I knew you had said that and of
course somehow that woman always knows! And then she got me to realize that ok you’re promising to help me which made me feel less unworthy or guilty for wearing the ring and we had a great weekend then that stupid news caster opened her big ass mouth and I couldn’t. Then, then you pull me aside and tell me to stop focusing on the future without anything even having happened in the present to cause it to happen later and ok yeah I need to hear that. And I still couldn’t see it, but it felt better and we were fine. Then Tony goes and plans that party and I panicked and ended up having a conversation with Bruce and of course because every time I start panicking I fidget with this ring he notices and of course it gets brought back up again. Then he tells me about the tattoo on your arm, because it’s the same symbol on the ring and he finds it funny and then tells me what you told them about its meaning and I still couldn’t see it! I was too focused on figuring out how you managed to get away with hiding a tattoo from me. Then of course I get you to tell me and I don’t even know!”

“Wait-it stuck!” Tony asked glaring at Bruce who just kept his eyes forward.

“Then the party happens and Wanda’s got me focused on the correlation between the two and asking and then she’s telling me to take my own damn advice. Which again I should have, but not the point. Then we’re being asked a thousand and one questions and all I can think is someone shoot me, please. And then Hannagan’s back and questioning us, and then were kissing because Tony managed to find everyone on earth ok with PDA and everyone’s looking at me and I can’t do that. Because me and admitting things don’t mix. And next thing I know we’re both drunk already having kissed one too many times past my limit for stability and somehow next thing I remember is Vegas.”

“What the hell are is she talking about?” Sam asked and Wanda just shrugged.

“We agreed, you ignored and of course that had me wondering if I was wrong about what you felt. Then we’re being asked to do interviews and Jan’s outright trying to expose us and you say all those things and I was a compete bitch and then you got hurt and I couldn’t take it…you got hurt because of me. And I lost it. I felt trapped again and no matter where I looked all I could see was you getting hurt because of me. I wanted to distance myself from you, but I couldn’t because I was terrified that something would happen to you again. I knew you were just as worried and I don’t know why but that made me feel a little better. I wanted to try and I did, but then Hannagan came back at the church and gave me and ultimatum. I wanted so desperately to turn back, but we couldn’t turn back and then Thor gave me this freaky ass candle saying something about Asgardian wedding traditions and told me to light it before going to sleep and then I was running away and Peggy.”

She was completely out of breath as she stopped pacing and looked back up at Steve with glassy eyes.

“I couldn’t see it before because just like Laura had told me I say that lying only brings pain and I’ve been lying to myself, hurting myself, letting my past cloud my present preventing me from seeing beyond…from seeing a better future. I couldn’t see the meaning behind what you were saying. You told me you found balance and peace, but you also said it was me who helped you and you only wanted to do the same. Laura told me that lying to myself, telling myself you’d be better off without me would only hurt us both because we bring out the best in each other. Because you help bring balance to my life and without it I’m forever clouded by the rain” She let her hands fall to her sides, taking a deep breath.

“…I guess what I’m trying to say is that I love you, and I don’t want to be clouded by the rain anymore.”

Steve cupped her face wiping away the tears with his thumbs.

“I love you too.” She smiled and he wrapped his arms around her holding her tight.
“Anybody else really lost?” Tony asked looking at the others. They nodded.

“I don’t care as long as this is over.” Sam said looking at the two.

“But I can’t marry you…” Natasha said pulling away and everyone froze.

“Uh, oh…” Bruce said watching.


“Hannagan…he has a recording. He’s going to release it if I don’t leave. I can’t let you all throw everything away for me.” Steve’s face fell.

“You leave Hannagan to us.” Clint smiled walking up to them. “You both deserve this, it’s time Hannagan learned what it means to be an Avenger.”

“Agreed.” Tony added.

“Aye.”

“We didn’t come this far for nothing.” Sam smiled looking at the others who nodded as well.

“So…do we have a wedding?” Tony asked and Natasha looked up at Steve.

“As long as Steve’s ok with it.” Steve shrugged.

“I mean, I think I’m a little more than ok with it.” Natasha smiled leaning up to kiss him.

“Eh! None of that!” Tony said putting his hand over Steve’s mouth and Natasha glared daggers.

“You wanna move your hand.” He frowned.

“While I’m not one for traditional I am one for superstition, and as is you’ve already broken one. Seriously were already pushing our luck as it.” Natasha frowned.

“I thought he just couldn’t see her with her dress on?” Clint said and Bruce shook his head.

“No, I thought it was not at all.” Tony sighed

“Regardless, you need to go back down stairs before Pepper has a stroke.” Natasha rolled her eyes and stole a quick kiss from Steve before hurrying back over to the elevator. “I saw that!!!”
They all left for the church to get ready for the ceremony and went their separate ways. Natasha watched out the windows of her room as the storm grew worse and wondered vaguely if this was some sort of sign, but as she remembered Peggy’s words she smiled determining that she would finally get her happiness no matter what.

As the thundered rolled and the lightning cracked Steve prayed this would work. He really did love her and would do anything for her, but he was also nervous. When Tony tried tracking Hannagan again they found his apartment to be empty with his cellphone on the counter and Hannagan nowhere in sight.

“You gonna keep stairing out that window or sit down?” Clint asked. Steve sighed sitting down next to the archer.

“Sorry.”

“Relax, we got this.” Clint said shaking Steve’s shoulders.

There was a knock on the door and when Steve opened it he found Sister Elaine and Sam standing outside the dressing room, both wearing sullen looks. Oh this can’t be good.

“What is it?” Elaine and Sam exchanged a look before Sam spoke.

“Got some bad news buddy. Uh…Father Michael he had to go home last night.” Steve’s face fell.

“Why do I have a feeling you don’t mean down the block.” Sam’s face crinkled.

“Ok…we have another priest right?” It was Mother Elaine’s turn to cringe.

“Well, you see…while we have other parish priests, they feel that it would be best to follow the laws of the church fully.”

“So in other words since Father Michael was willing to ignore Natasha not being catholic and this being a possible scam, nobody wants to end up in jail in case we can’t get our plan to work?” She
nodded and Steve gave her a tight lipped smile. Clint came up behind Steve and clapped him on the back.

“That’s ok, I just so happen to know a guy. That is if the parish is still willing to let us use the church?” Sister Elaine shrugged.

“As long as he’s legally ordained, you paid for the church so I don’t see why not.” Clint nodded.

“I’ll be back.” He ran down the stairs.

“Ok, problem solved!” Sam said.

“Problem not solved.” Pepper said walking upstairs looking slightly frantic.

“Why do I get the feeling we’re going to be hearing a lot of that today?” Steve said sadly looking at the woman. She sighed.

“I just got off the phone with the florist and they’re not coming.” Steve’s brow furrowed.

“Why not?” Pepper’s face hardened slightly.

“Apparently they have no record of us ordering the floral arrangements and do not have what we need to get them done in time. No one does.” Sister Elaine looked contemplative.

“You know what…we have a greenhouse that we could pick some flowers from and the rest we have foe flowers in the basement and attic that we can set up. I’ll get the others and see what we can put together.”

“Ok yes, thank you.” She waved a hand at them.

“It’s quite alright. We haven’t had this much excitement since the Pope came to visit.” She chuckled leaving them to go get what she could.

“Oh! That takes care of that, now we just need to check in on-” Pepper was cut off by a loud crack of thunder and a flash of lightning shaking the building before the lights flashed out. “I think I spoke too soon.”

“The church has a generator, it should kick in any second.” Steve said, sounding only a little bit doubtful. A few more seconds went by without anything happening.

“Oh, I don’t think that generator’s kicking in.” Steve frowned.

“You just had to say it, didn’t you?” He said looking in Sam’s general direction as his eyes adjusted. Steve took a deep breath closing his eyes before hearing the generator kick in and the lights turn on. It’ll be fine, the lights are on. Tony got them to work-

The lights flickered as half went out again and he hung his head. This was going to be a long day.

“What just happened?” Natasha asked looking around the room. Laura and Wanda exchanged glances, before each taking one of Natasha’s arms and guiding her over to the vanity.

“It’s nothing. The church backups have already kicked in. Everything—you know what, I’m just not going to say it.” Laura said grabbing a comb. Wanda nodded, pulling up the hair tutorial.

“It’s going to be fine right?” Laura asked Wanda. Wanda gave her a nervous look.
“I sure hope so.” Wanda replied turning on the curling iron.

“Tony?” Steve asked finding his way down to the basement.

“Marco!” Steve shook his head, exasperated.

“Can’t you just tell me?”

“Marco!”

“Of course you can’t…Polo.” Steve said sighing.

“Marco!” Tony shouted when he found Steve. Steve sighed.

“What happened?” Tony’s face scrunched.

“Well the church is old, the system is old, and when the power went out the generator wasn’t plugged in. I plugged it in and it worked and now it’s only half working and will most likely be shot by the I Do’. As is its struggling.”

“So we’ll have no power?” Steve said and Tony smiled proudly.

“Look at that! You have been paying attention to my lessons.” Steve groaned and Tony put a hand on his shoulder.

“Relax. This in no way affects the plan. We’ll just have to source our electricity from somewhere else.” Tony smiled, but Steve wasn’t convinced.

“Can we source it from the tower?” Tony thought a moment before shaking his head.

“It’s too far away and I’d have to run a ground line which we don’t have time for. Not to mention the systems too strong for this one.” Tony said patting the old breaker. Steve’s face fell.

“Ok what about a new generator?” Tony shook his head.

“The ones at the tower are bolted to the floor and half the city’s experiencing a black out.”

“So no.” Tony nodded. “What can we do?”

Tony shrugged.

“Save what we have by cutting off power to other parts of the building. This is a battery operated system, very old. But it has separate outlets meaning our best bet is to use a power strip.” Steve nodded.

“Ok do that for now then get back to finding Hannagan? I’ll go talk to Pepper and see if she has any ideas.” Tony gave him a thumbs up.

Steve found Pepper in the back offices with the nuns. She was starting to panic.

“Ok, so flowers are mostly good, but what’s going on with the power?” She asked him when he walked in.

“Long story short, systems old, nearly fried, and if we keep working it like we are we will have none by the wedding.” Pepper’s face fell. “But Tony’s going to cut the power to the nonessential parts of
the building for now.”

“But we still need a new light source.” Pepper said pacing, then she snapped her fingers. “Sisters, in the basement and attic I saw you guys have lots of battery operated candles and fairy lights, how many?”

They women thought.

“Oh the candles we use all the time. We just keep collecting them and buying them when on sale, so I’d have to say enough for everyone to hold on Christmas and then to line the aisle, so a couple thousand real and battery, mostly battery though. The fairy lights, same thing.” Sister Grace answered. Pepper nodded.

“Ok and the generator is it movable?” Steve nodded seeming to understand where she was going with this.

“Tony also said we could plug power strips into it as well.” Pepper eased a little.

“Ok than I have an idea. Have Tony get some help moving the generator up here and then go get ready. Guest will start arriving in an hour so we don’t have a lot of time.” Steve nodded happy that one problem seemed to be on its way to being solved.

Laura finished pinning up Natasha’s hair into a loose braided up do that left tendrils of red curls free and her bangs softly framing her face. She saw the lightning and thunder had finally passed, but the rain was still coming down in a steady stream. Most of the city lights had come back on, and Natasha found herself feeling more nervous about whatever plan they all seemed to have. But at the same time she felt something she couldn’t quite describe. It wasn’t quite nerves, maybe a little excitement, but it was almost giddy much to her surprise.

Lila and Wanda stepped back inside the room telling her that it was almost time. Pepper had asked the two for their help with finishing up decorations down stairs about two hours ago and she was a little relieved to see Lila beaming as she sat down on the stool so Wanda could do her hair.

Natasha finished touching up her make-up, deciding to go light and natural toned. Wanda finished curling and putting Lila’s hair into a half braided crown before handing the girl her dress and sending her to get changed.

“Alright are you ready?” Laura asked with a soft smile. Natasha nodded standing up and following Laura.

Wanda pulled the gown off the hanger as she and Laura helped Natasha into the dress. Laura finished with the last button on the back as Wanda finished her sleeves. Lila brought Natasha’s shoes over and determined to help her put them on because they were ‘tall’. Natasha chuckled letting the little girl help.

Laura and Wanda stepped back smiling bright as they took her in and she turned to look at herself in the mirror. Her breath caught. She really did look like a bride. The dress had been fitted perfectly and hugged every curve just right. Laura came around her back with the veil, securing the hair piece in place and fanning the soft material out.

“Oh Nat…” Laura said, face turning red as she tried not to cry. “You look so beautiful.”

“Don’t you go turning into a blubering mess on me, we talked about this.” Natasha joked. Laura took a deep breath, swiping her fingers under her eyes.
I’m good, it’s good.” There was a knock on the door and Laura answered the door opening it wider to let Clint slip in. He let out a whistle, smiling proudly.

“Nat, you look beautiful. Steve’s not going to know what hit him.” She smiled and hugged him. “You ready to do this kid?”

She laughed.

“Is he?” Clint nodded.

“He can’t stop smiling like an idiot and he hasn’t even seen you in your dress yet.” He held her out at arm’s length.

“Ready in five.” Pepper said popping her head in before ducking back out of the room with Laura, Wand and Lila. Clint looked back at her with glassy eyes.

“No. No crying, I already told your wife there’d be no tears.” He chuckled.

“No I won’t cry.” He shook his head smiling softly, squeezing her hand. “You know how proud I am of you right?”

Natasha blinked. Of course she knew, but they’d never really talked about it.

“You have grown so much over the years and I never once regretted not pulling that trigger. You have become this amazing woman who I am proud to call family. And now look at you. I still can’t believe you’re the same girl I pulled out of the fire. You’re marring an amazing man who loves you and that’s a miracle in and of itself.”

She punched his shoulder.

“Ass.” He laughed, holding out his arm for her.

“You ready?” She smiled taking a deep breath.

“As I’ll ever be.” She said taking his arm.
Natasha's hair
Steve's suit
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

Ready or not...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Oh call me any time that every time you’re losin’ it
And tell me anyone and everyone who makes you feel like shit
Because you know anybody, everybody else can lie
But honey I won’t see you with a, see you with a broken set of eyes

Clint led her down the stairs to the foyer and she realized everything was dark again.

“Why is there no light?” She asked and Clint laughed slightly nervous.

“Long story short, circuit’s blew, but don’t worry we got a generator, but it’s just for the inside. It’s good.” She nodded, noticing the flowers were also missing.

“The flowers?”

“Florist couldn’t make it.” She looked around, but seeing as everything else was in order she just nodded once more. Wanda walked up to her smiling from ear to ear.

“But were figured with the new decor these would be more fitting.” Wanda handed her a lantern with a candle inside. “We found dozens in the basement. Figured the parish wouldn’t mind.”

“Ok. As long as that’s all…” she saw Clint and Wanda exchange a nervous look, but decided not to ask. It was probably better this way.

Wanda lit the candle and Natasha saw Pepper and Maria also held candles as well. She saw Lila and Cooper all dressed up with Nate in a little wagon as they chatted with Sam, Tony, and Thor. She heard the music begin to play and took a deep breath as the processional began. Clint took her hand as they walked up to the doors.

Steve stood tall as the music began and the doors opened. Wanda was the first to come out with Thor, followed by Pepper and Tony then Maria and Sam. The doors closed once more as they joined him at the altar. He felt Sam pat him on the shoulder as the music switched and the Barton children walked down the aisle and over to sit with Laura. The music changed and everyone stood, the candles lighting up the once dark church.

The doors opened and the first thing she saw were the fairy lights hung from the rafters giving the cathedral and iridescent glow. The aisle was lit by more candles leading to the altar that was back lit by more fairy lights and candles. It was all so beautiful, but when her eyes found Steve’s, he was all she could see.
When Steve looked up he was taken aback. He saw a faint blush fan her cheeks and when her eyes met his it was like he was seeing her for the first time all over again. She took his breath away and he was positive he was smiling like an idiot.

Their eyes never left each other’s as Clint led her down the aisle. She blushed when she saw him smiling and it made her feel warm inside. They reached the altar and Steve walked down to her. Clint kissed her cheek and let go of her hand, smiling brightly. He patted Steve on the shoulder laughing.

“She’s your problem now.” Natasha rolled her eyes at him, smiling as she took Steve’s hand.

They walked up the few steps and when they stopped in front of Father-wait Phil? Why was Phil standing where Father Michael should be.

“Oh…Steve, where’s Father Michael?” Steve chuckled nervously.

“He went home this morning.” Natasha’s eyes widened and she turned her head to fully look at him.

“Home as in home, home?” Steve gave her a sheepish smile.

“But it’s fine. We have Coulson.” Steve said smiling and Natasha looked back to Coulson.

“Hi Phil.” He smiled warmly at her.

“Hi Natasha. Not gonna lie, not how I thought I’d be saying congratulations.” Coulson said making Natasha smile shaking her head.

“I forgot you were ordained.” Coulson shrugged.

“So did I until Clint hunted me down asking for my help. Nice change in scenery I must say. So are we ready?” They both nodded and Coulson smiled.

On behalf of the bride and groom I’d like to thank everyone for joining here today. It’s honor to be able to marry these two. Marriage is something that brings two people together in an everlasting bond, a bond you both have created over the years. The love you two share is one that might not be spoken, but is ever present in your lives. It has grown with the bond you two share, from the moment I introduced you two, though granted then those were not my first thoughts.” they all chuckled.

“But you’ve both grown more as individuals because of the other and I’ve had the pleasure of watching that, seeing you two become the best yous there are. You challenge each other, teach each other and are simply there for each other. I remember sitting with Fury asking him how Barton was and he goes “he’s still Barton. But on leave.” And I go “so…you put Natasha on solo missions? She must be happy” and he looks at me and goes, “I’m not that easy I assigned her to Captain Rogers.” I looked at him like he was crazy and he just shrugs and goes “What’s the worst that could happen? Not like I expect them to marry each other.” I kid you not those were his exact words and if he were here today I’m sure he’d be handing you ten bucks right now.” Steve smiled shaking his head at the old joke.

“So, to be here now, to see you two here, it’s an honor and about time.” Everyone nodded in agreement. “So I believe you two wrote your own vows, at least I hope you did because that page didn’t print…”

Coulson said flipping through the book he had shaking his head. To be honest she hadn’t even thought about that and judging by Steve’s face neither did he, but they both just nodded and she handed Maria her lantern as she faced Steve.
“Nat…When I started working at SHIELD you were an enigma. I heard these stories I’d read your file, but none of them told me who you were. Learned a lot about the Black Widow and who she used to be, but nothing about the woman behind the persona. I quickly learned that you kept to yourself, everything that people said, was just their own fears. You just let them think what they wanted, and I didn’t understand why. So I made it my mission to figure you out. I thought you didn’t care for a while, but I learned again that was wrong. You just weren’t used to people trying to get to know the woman instead of the Widow. After SHIELD fell I got a glimpse of the woman beneath the masks and what I saw was a girl who just wanted to get back on the right track.

You see the thing is Nat, you kept asking how I could love a woman like you, but you could only see the woman you used to be, not the woman you’ve become. No I don’t like what you did, but that was the past. You were asked if you wanted to change and you said yes and you did. I didn’t fall in love with the Widow I fell in love with you. Natasha.

The woman who tells the worst dad jokes, steals my sweatshirts only to return them after they’ve lost their scent—yeah I caught onto that one—the woman who I watched risk her life on several occasions to save millions. The woman who I’d wake up to find sitting on my couch at two-thirty in the morning knowing I’d be awake and not wanting to go to sleep either. You were also the same person who’d stay with me while I slept because I couldn’t close my eyes without going back. You helped me through one of hardest times in my life and I don’t think I could have gotten through that without you. You saw the broken man behind the hero when no one else did and it was only when you let me see a side of you no one else ever had, that I realized why. You let me see you and I couldn’t imagine loving anyone more than I love you.

So, that’s why I promise to love you for now and always. I have never, nor will I ever see you with a broken set of eyes. I promise to be your confidant, the person you go to when you just need to vent. When you feel like it’s too much, like your standing on a thin sheet of ice. When you just want to be near someone, but don’t want to talk. I will be here to catch you when you fall and feel like you can’t get back up. To be your safe place, your home, you’re light. Because that is what you do for the people you love. Because I love you.”

He cupped her cheek wiping away the tears she’d let fall. She swiped at her eyes, taking a deep breath.

“When we first met, I didn’t know what to expect. You called me Ma’am. Ma’am out of everything you could have said. You think I was an enigma? Ask Clint, I couldn’t figure you out to save my life. I had never met someone so honest and it threw me through a loop. I thought you were so naïve for just taking my word on something. But as I got to know you I realized that you weren’t naïve, you just preferred to figure me out on your own. I can count on my hand the number of people who did that. It freaked me out that you were just so…you! There are no words to describe the person you are. I was so relieved when you told me that you trusted me. You have this effect on me that makes me feel like a better person. Like I’m worth it.

You push me when I need it, and you always know what to say when I wake up screaming because I can’t handle what I’ve done. You somehow have managed to see past my walls. Before you…I was so lost, even though I had great people in my life I still felt empty. I felt alone and I would tell myself that it was better that way, but once I got a taste of what it was like to have someone who cared enough about me, who barely even knew me, to actually take the time to know me…I never wanted to go back. You brought a balance to my life, a stability I never imagined having. So much so that I couldn’t see it, but now I can and I’m so sorry it took me so long to see it. Because I love you, and you know I don’t do feelings. You have turned me into a sap, and brought light to my life. I’ve tried pretending that I could go back to the life I used to live no problem. Be alone and fine…but I couldn’t. Because going back to that would mean never seeing you again and that’s just something
I can’t do. That’s something I don’t want to ever have to do. You make me feel safe, I can be vulnerable around you knowing you would never do anything to hurt me and that’s what I love most about you.

I never saw you as Captain America, because I know what it’s like to only be seen for what you made yourself to be, not who you are. And I promise to always see you, for the man not the hero. To help you carry the weight of the world you seem to think you need to carry it alone. To be the sensible one when you feel like everything that goes wrong is your fault when in reality it had nothing to do with you. To be your home, the place you go to when you just want to escape from the world. Because I can’t help what I feel for you, the love I feel for you.”

She could see the tears in his eyes and knew then she was making the right decision. They both smiled laughing lightly, looking to Coulson.

“Do we have the rings?” Coulson asked looking to Sam, who looked back at Tony who just stared wide eyed, then looked to Cooper who shrugged.

“Dude these are fake.” He said holding up Nate’s pillow.

“And that’s why I gave none of you the rings.” Maria said handing them to Coulson and they all laughed.

“These rings signify the bond you two have, the promises you two have made to each other and the promises you will continue to make throughout your marriage. Steve, please repeat after me.”

Steve took Natasha’s left hand in his,

“Natasha, take this ring as a symbol of my love for you. May it always remind you that you are loved, protected, and cherished by me, now and forever more.”

He slid the ring on and she took his hand in hers.

“Steve, take this ring as a symbol of my love for you. May it always remind you that you are loved, protected and cherished by me, now and forever more.”

She slid the ring on with a shaky hand and he tightened his grip smiling at her.

“Well, we’ve now reached my personal favorite part of the wedding.” Coulson said smiling. “Steve, do you-”

“Stop!”

Natasha froze and everyone looked out to the aisle where Hannagan was walking furiously up to the altar. Steve instinctively put an arm in front of her as Clint and Bruce stood up.

“You’ve got to be kidding me. He’s still around?” Coulson asked looking to Natasha and then it seemed to click as he sighed. “Oh boy.”

“You know for someone who’s supposed to be the greatest spy, you aren’t very smart.” Hannagan said.

“Yeah and neither are you.” Darcy said coming to stand. Hannagan raised an eyebrow.

“And who might you be?” Darcy smiled.

“The girl whose been watching you.” He frowned.
"I told you at the beginning of this that we don’t take to kindly to people threatening our family."

Tony said coming to stand next to Darcy. "You see Darcy here, happened to find some pretty interesting information, tell him what you found Darce."

Darcy smiled.

"You see I knew there was something off about you at the party and once I got a hold of your information I decided to do some digging. Obviously we found out that you were the one to tell Jan about Natasha’s visa, but it became clear then that there was something more."

"You see, Darcy told me this and I had to agree. We couldn’t figure out why you seemed to have such a vendetta against Natasha. You were going through some pretty big hoops to make sure this didn’t happen. That she would get deported. So we got to thinking…what could you possibly have against her. Then Darcy remembered seeing a picture in your wallet that FRIDAY just so happened to make a copy of. Then we realized the little boy in the picture was you."

"You and your mother." Darcy supplied. "I dug more into your background and found that up until two years prior to taking on Natasha’s case you never even existed. Did some more digging to find out that you are originally from Russia."

Natasha looked from Hannagan to Steve who just shook his head.

"The trail seemed to go cold after that, but we dug deeper into SHIELDs files. There wasn’t much, only one mention. Her name was Olga Belsky, but Natasha you might know her as Madame B."

Tony said looking back at her.

Natasha’s face fell and she looked dead at Hannagan. Now seeing the similarities, the eyes, nose, and the hardened gaze.

"Somehow, you got in, you took over, and have been spending the last fifteen years planning and plotting, maybe even longer. And you almost got away with it too." Darcy said.

Everyone looked between Hannagan and Natasha.

"Who’s Madame B?" Sam asked and Natasha took a deep breath her eyes never leaving Hannagan.

"She was the headmistress of the Red Room Academe where I was trained. That is until I killed her." Sam made an ‘oh’ nodding. “This is all because I took back my life…”

"Because you took hers!" Hannagan shouted, making Darcy and Tony take a step back. “I came home to find my mother with a bullet in her head and imagine my surprise when I find out it came from her prized pupil. I was fifteen and I swore I would make your life a living hell. It took me years, but I had it worked out. I had to do nothing but sit back and watch you go back to certain death and my revenge would be complete. But no, because nothing is ever that simple. But now I guess if you want something done right-"

He pulled a gun out and Wanda threw up a shield as Steve tucked Natasha into him. But instead of a bang they heard what sounded like bolts of electricity and Natasha looked out to see Hannagan twitching on the floor while Darcy smiled happily.

"You have no idea how much I’ve wanted to do that since meeting him." Darcy said, holstering her Taser. Tony looked down from Hannagan to Darcy slightly terrified.

"Remind me never to piss you off." Happy came in along with secret service, CIA and whoever else just so happened to be on security taking the crazy man away.
“I should have known…” Natasha said shaking her head.

“Yes, because who would suspect that a sociopath who enjoys training little girls to become killers would have a child of her own.” Tony stated plainly.

“When did you guys…” Darcy shrugged.

“I picked up on the scent after the accident. I hadn’t even thought to look more into the picture until I told Tony. We didn’t want to say anything yet because it we knew if Hannagan was after you for something then bringing this to light might cause a backlash none of us would enjoy. He needed to think he was still winning.” Natasha looked around at her friends, her family.

“You all knew?” they all nodded.

“But not till last night, when they got full confirmation. Clint was the only one with contacts who could get us Madame B’s picture to compare it too and when it came in then we knew.” Steve explained, taking her chin between his thumb and pointer finger tilting her face to look at him.

“I told you, you were never alone.” Natasha let out a breathy laugh.

“Wait so hold up…Madame B, was your trainer and you took her out trying to escape?” Sam asked looking for clarification.

“When Clint gave me the choice I knew I couldn’t just up and leave. So we devised a plan. I would go back, tell them the job was done, get some information on them to use as leverage to keep them gone. I had to go to her house on the property to get the evidence, I got caught and I took her out.”

“Uh…” Clint said rocking back on his heels. “Actually I did.”

They all looked at him.

“What?”

“Yeah I’m starting to realize how screwy your memories are of that time, but I pulled the trigger which pissed you off because I didn’t let you because I didn’t want you taking out you letting your vengeance drive you. I honestly thought you knew that.”

Natasha stared back at her best friend trying to remember, but her early years after escaping were still fairly messed up.

“You’re not just saying that to make me feel better right?” He raised an eyebrow.

“Why would I?” she opened and closed her mouth knowing he was about taking responsibility and just smiled.

“Thank you. Thank all of you.” they all smiled and then Darcy remembered something.

“I should also probably bring up the fact that through this I learned that you actually have citizenship.” Natasha’s eyes went wide.

“What are you talking about?” Darcy smiled.

“Well when I went to make your records public I had to use your birth certificate, which states your name as Natalia Romanova which you changed, but I didn’t take that into account. So when I went to Immigration I asked for Natalia Romanova’s files and when I got a box covered in twenty years’ worth of dust I found that someone went behind Hannagan to get you citizenship. It was just filed
under your birth name.” They all looked at Darcy with shock.

“Wait…who-”

“Director Carter.” Darcy replied. Natasha shook her head laughing.

“She couldn’t have mentioned that earlier? Why didn’t you?” Darcy shrugged.

“A) I didn’t want to take the chance with being wrong till I hunted down the person who filed the
documents, which wasn’t till this morning, and B) then you guys wouldn’t have learned anything.”

“So…we technically didn’t do anything illegal than right? Since technically Natasha never had an
immigrations case.” Sam asked. Attorney General Mayfair stood up from where he was seated.

“So, this was staged?”

“Eh...” Tony said wavering. “It’s a long, long complicated story. They are in love, just weren’t
technically together at the time of engagement.”

Mayfair just looked at them and then at Supreme Court Judge Daniels.

“Don’t look at me. Not my sector, its Johnsons.” The woman said pointing to Johnson, Director of
the FBI.

“How come it suddenly becomes my sector when something goes wrong? Talk to ICE.”

“Ike!” Ike stood up.

“I take no responsibility. Not my sector when this all started.” They all groaned.

“This is why you American’s never get anything done!”

“Shut up Wu! We could say the exact same thing about your country!” Ike shouted back at the
Chinese Ambassador.

“No, we have law!”

“Wait a second, wouldn’t this technically be Russia’s problem?” Director Simmons (CIA) added in.

“Really? You wanna make that phone call?” Daniels asked. “They’ll just put us on hold for three
hours. I’d rather call North Korea, they at least pick up right away, shout no and hang up.”

“No, but if we can pass the blame than none of us have to do paperwork.” They all paused thinking.

“That would be a lot of paperwork…” Mayfair said.

“And technically that would only be if we extradited Romanoff and that angry man. Let’s face it,
they won’t want her back, and they deny any and all connections to crazy man.” Simmons said.

“Not to mention Maximoff is Sokovian. Sokovia’s got one foot in the grave and no prison, meaning
she’d have to be extradited to Berlin.” They groaned.

“We’d have to involve the UN then!” Secretary Reads (Secretary of State) said standing.

“News flash they’re already involved!” Came Prime Minister Jennings voice. “The Avengers have
roles in the UN, and as is we’re still trying to deal with SHiELD and Sokovia.”
“And another thing!” Secretary Cobb (Defense) said, “If we put Star and Ms. Potts in prison, then Stark industries would most likely go down the toilet meaning—”

“Meaning Sokovia wouldn’t be getting their money.” Reads said sighing. “Of course there the main source of relief. What would happen if we still went ahead though?”

“Uh, well then we’d be stuck with the bill.” Karis (Treasury Department) stated grimly.

“I take it we don’t have room in the budget?” Reads asked and Karis frowned.

“We wouldn’t even have room in the budget to cover the cost of putting this to trial.” They all cringed.

“Anyone wanna also point out that one of them is the crowned Prince of Asgard.” Jennings said.

“Nobody asked you!” Mayfair said. “Alright let’s take a vote. All in favor of pretending this wasn’t a scam, say I.”

“I!” He looked around.

“All apposed?” No one responded. “The I’s have it. No paperwork it is.”

“Is this really how you guys run your government?” Prime Minister Allister asked.

“No, believe it or not we have a system, but I mean really? Would you want to do all that paper work? You were here for it after all.” Allister thought for a moment.

“Excellent system.” He replied before sitting back down.

“You may continue.” Mayfair said taking his seat. The Avengers all looked around at each other as Laura and the kids came back in.

“What just happened?”

“We aren’t being arrested. They took a vote, and nobody wants to do the paperwork.” Bruce said as they sat back down.

“So, Hannagan’s no longer a problem?” Bruce nodded.

“Yeah, apparently Natasha’s been a citizen for the last twenty years and no one knew.” Laura’s eyes widened.

“You’re joking. How?” Bruce shrugged.

“Oh, it was witnessed by Director Carter.” Laura blinked.

“What I want to know is do we still have a wedding or not? Because in case you didn’t notice were all kind of invested now.” Came someone’s voice.

Natasha smiled softly looking up at Steve and he took her hand as they both looked to Phil who looked more than relieved.

“Ok, this has to be the strangest wedding in history, but then again when it comes to all of you nothing is ever simple.” They all chuckled. “Steve, Natasha, do you take each other as husband and wife.”
They both frowned and Coulson chuckled.

“Just checking. Then by the power invested in me and by the state of New York and ibidthewed.com, I know pronounce you husband and wife. Captain you may kiss your bride.” Coulson said smiling.

Steve grabbed her waist bring them together as Natasha wrapped her arms around his neck. Their guest were clapping and whistling in the background, but all she could focus on were his lips melding with hers. The kiss was full of a promise for more to come and when they parted she couldn’t help but laugh, resting her forehead against his.

“Did we really just get married?” Steve let out a breathy laugh.

“Yeah, yeah we did.” She smiled kissing him again as Tony’s voice broke through the crowd.

“Alright, alright, we still have a reception to get through you two.” She saw Steve’s face flush as he realized they were still standing in front of hundreds people.

Steve extended his hand to her.

“What do you say? Ready to figure out our future.” Our future. She liked the sound of that.

Natasha turned taking her lantern from Maria.

“As long as I’m with you, I know it’ll be good.”

Natasha slipped her hand into his as they walked out the church doors, ready to face whatever their future entailed together.

I swear that you are, you are the future

And the future looks good

Chapter End Notes

Anybody see that coming?
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Natasha walked out of the bathroom in a tiny white robe, her hair loose and face make up free. She looked absolutely gorgeous as she walked over to where Steve was standing at the window watching the waves lap at the shore. She wrapped her arms around his torso, standing on her toes to kiss him.

“You know…we never did finish what we started all those weeks ago.” She whispered into his ear, pushing him back until his legs hit the edge of the bed.

“You’re right, we didn’t. Someone had a little too much self-control that time.” She hummed, pushing him onto his back and crawling on top of him.

“What the hell do you mean that time?” She sat up on his chest folding her arms. “Steve what exactly have I done in the past when drunk?”

He seemed a little nervous as he scratched the back of his neck.

“Uh, well…a lot.” She raised an eyebrow.

“A lot?” Steve cleared his throat.

“Most of the time though it went in pretty much exactly like a few weeks ago. You’d end up on my lap, try to kiss me, I’d put you back down, you’d get upset, try again. Tried ignoring you once and that didn’t end to well. Tried making deals that was a no go to. Obviously we both know what happens when I let you and join. Tried just going home on my own like St. Patty’s which you ended up in my bed by the way. Oh! Then there was-”

Natasha put her hand over his mouth silencing him.

“Sorry I asked.” He chuckled.

“You didn’t make it easy that’s for sure.” Natasha raised an eyebrow.

“Oh? So you were tempted.” He smirked.

“I think that’s a given.” She bit her lip.

“Tell me then, what exactly were you thinking when I was trying to seduce you?” Natasha said lowly into his ear. He slid his hands up to her hips and he hummed in thought.

“Oh God, not again. Why does she keep doing this to me? Why does she have to do this only when drunk? God I wish I could get drunk. Would it really be terrible to just let her? Yes, of course it would. She’s going to make me burst. I really want to have sex with her damn it. Intoxicated, well I don’t think you need me to tell you.” she hummed,

“No I don’t think I do.” She purred kissing him hard.

Steve sat up kissing her back in equal, as he laid her down on the bed, leaving a trail of hot wet kisses from her jaw all the way down to her chest. She moaned pressing back up against him to get a better angle. She hummed in pleasure at the feel of his body pressing against her. He rolled his hips hard against hers. She felt herself growing more and more aroused by the second as he moved down
her body.

He pushed the silk of her robe off her body, dipping his head to lavish the skin inside each of her thighs as his hands slowly separated her legs. She was panting, waiting for him as he gripped her hips, thumbs pressing into her spots as his lips brushed over the lace of her panties. He lifted his head suddenly, panting slightly as he leveled her gaze.

“Really?” she smirked, trying not laugh.

“What? It was a matching set.” He shook his head laughing at her.

“I’m not sure how to feel about someone selling Captain America lingerie.” She shrugged.

“Actually they were custom made, but least they don’t have your face on it.” He raised an eyebrow.

“Was that supposed to make me feel better?” She pouted slightly.

“So you don’t like them? They don’t turn you on even a little bit” She asked nipping at his ear and scrapping her nails down his chest.

“I didn’t say that.” He answered slightly breathless. “I just think I might prefer Mrs. America a whole lot more out of them.”

She chuckled.

“I think I have to agree with you on that one.” She murmured against his lips as he resumed his earlier task…

Natasha woke up later that night to find herself alone. She heard someone move and looked over to the corner of the room to see Steve sketching. She watched him quietly for a few more minutes until he looked up, seeing that she’d woken.

“Gonna have to get you more of those. Seems you’ve reached the end.” She said noticing he looked to be using the last of the pages in his book.

Steve stood up walking back over to the bed kissing her.

“I wouldn’t say I’ve reached the end, more like just the beginning.” She raised an eyebrow as he handed her the book.

She took it then recognizing it as the book Hannagan had looked through at the facility. She opened it now understanding why Hannagan let them off hook that first time. She sat up pulling the sheet up around her as she flipped through the pages of drawings, all of her. Each getting more and more detailed as time passed, telling their story. She noticed there weren’t a lot before the fall of SHIELD, but after…

They were beautifully detailed and she knew where each one had taken place. It was like she was seeing herself through his eyes. Seeing herself as Steve saw her. She reached the last page and her breath caught at the drawing of her walking down the aisle with Clint. He’d managed to capture the warm glow of the lights behind her accenting her frame. The soft smile that reached her eyes and the light flush of her cheeks.

She took in a shuddering breath, looking up at him.

“Just the beginning indeed.” He smiled kissing her softly.
“I love you.” She smiled cupping his face.

“I love you too…”

*The future looks good*

*Oh, yeah*

*The future looks good*

*Oh, yeah*

*You, you, you*

*You, you, you*

*Woke up starin’ at this, starin’ at this empty room*

*Looked at thousand different pictures that your mother took of you…*

Chapter End Notes

Well that's all folks.

Thank you to everyone for reading and leaving kudos and comments. You guys helped me accomplish this and i am so grateful to all of you for helping me finish my first chapter fic!
I actually had this done yesterday, but editing took me till today, but I accomplished my goal of finishing as my birthday gift to myself so yay!

Almost a full six months of work has gone into this and I feel like this has helped me grow as a writer and even get to know some of you as well. I hope you all enjoyed how this story turned out and for those of you who really loved this story don't worry...

I've got something else up my sleeve, after all this was just the beginning ;)

End Notes

Update: I now have a Tumblr, long story that will make your head spin as to why i'm just getting one. I went to a cult school that had us all living like hermits is the short story. Anyways look for my handle gomustanggirl16! I will post updates on there of my current stories and sneak peaks!
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!