It's always the quiet ones

by eringeosphere

Summary

For this prompt on the kinkmeme:
After the Grindelwald incident MACUSA and MoM are holding a dueling competition. Originally Newt only came to be support for his older brother and his new american auror friends. He's not comfortable at such events. Some asshole who wants to take revenge on Theseus for humiliating him the year before, thinks he can get it by challenging Newt to fight in front of everyone. Anything goes. Before Graves can intervene, Theseus smirks and accepts the challenge for Newt.

Newt proceeds to wipe the floor with him by using apparation, martial arts and an impressive list of spells, leaving everyone who was worried gaping. Theseus, proud and protective older brother that he is, admits on being responsible for the latter two.

Notes

For reference, this is some in future when Graves has been found and him and Newt are still kind of dancing around each other - I'm not all that great at writing romance, but there are hopefully hints of attraction between them. Have cleaned up some typos and migrated it over from the kinkmeme.

Hope you enjoy!
The start

Newt can think of a great many places that he’d rather currently be. In his suitcase, for one, working on expanding the temperate forest habitat in anticipation of his planned visit to the redwood forests in California later this year. Or actually in California.

Sadly, he’s neither of those places, and is instead sitting on a bench in the observation deck above one of MACUSA’s duelling arenas, watching his older brother Theseus battle against one of the MACUSA aurors.

From what he’d gathered, when Theseus had arrived a few days earlier with a contingent of his colleagues, the Ministry of Magic and MACUSA tended to convene once a year or so for a duelling tournament between the aurors of the two departments, as a sort of knowledge and technique exchange. Some of the fighting was a demonstration of techniques, but quite a lot of it was simply straight out fighting. With a competition at the end, of course.

It just happened that Newt was back in New York at the same time, visiting his friends at MACUSA (and sneaking off to visit Jacob in his new bakery) when Theseus had gotten wind of his presence, tracked him down and physically hauled him into the MACUSA building. Newt had been sorely tempted to hex his older brother there and then, but Tina, Edward and Micheal had looked so delighted that he was there to support them that he hadn’t the heart to sneak off again.

Theseus, the asshole, just looked smug.

Hence his presence on the observation deck. Newt is keeping half an eye on the duel below, and the other half on his sketchbook, where he’s been capturing some of his friends in motion. Tina, looking cheerfully vicious, his brother victorious, Percival looking calm and collected. Quite a lot of Percival, now that he has a chance to think about it. (Newt is very firmly ignoring the implications of his current… interest in the newly reinstated Director of Magical Security. He’s also never letting Theseus see this sketchbook. Ever.)

His musings are interrupted by Tina, who flops down on the bench next to him with a sigh. She’s slightly out of breath, having just won her most recent duel.

Newt smiles at her. "Congratulations," he begins.

Tina grins back, a pleased flush on her cheeks. "Ta. It was a close call, though." She peers through the transparent floor of the observation deck. "How’s your brother doing?"

Newt gestures at Theseus’ duel. "Well enough, I think. I’m not sure anyone has really pushed him yet."

Even as the two of them watch, Theseus blasts a hole in his opponent’s hastily conjured shield charm and follows it up with a disarming and binding spell combination, ending the match. Cheers erupt from the spectators, along with a few groans of disappointment from a few. Theseus glances up, waves and then cancels the spells on his opponent. The two of them disappear out of the side door, and a few minutes later he reappears on the observation deck himself. Theseus sits down on Newt’s other side and slings an arm over his shoulders.

"What do you think, oh brother mine?" Theseus says.

Newt rolls his eyes, but doesn’t even bother to try to shake Theseus’ arm off - his older brother will take it as a challenge and Newt would rather not end up in an unscheduled fight today. (In
hindsight, it wouldn’t have made much difference.)

"You’re still too static. I don’t think I’ve seen you move more than a few steps from your starting point."

Theseus pouts. "How mean. No congratulations for not getting disarmed yet? I thought brothers were supposed to encourage each other."

Newt huffs. "Your head is big enough as it is. You don’t need me to encourage it."

Theseus wails in disbelief, turning to Graves, who’s just approaching them. "Percy - can you believe it - Newt is picking on me!"

Newt is quite certain that Theseus calls Graves ‘Percy’ just for the aborted double take reactions of the MACUSA aurors.

Graves raises a single eyebrow. "I’m certain you deserved it."

Theseus clutches a hand to his chest. "Betrayed. And I thought you were my friend!"

Next to Newt, Tina disguises her laughter as coughing.

Theseus turns back to Newt. "Besides, your criticism was entirely unfounded. I haven’t moved yet because no one has made me move."

Now its Newt’s turn to raise an eyebrow at his brother. "You move more when you fight against me."

Theseus waves his free hand in the air. "That’s because you’re a sneaky bugger who’d probably kick me in the head otherwise."

"Now who’s picking on who? I wouldn’t kick you in the head." Newt pauses, then amends that to, "In the ribs, maybe."

Graves and Tina both look surprised, as do some of the surrounding witches and wizards who are doing a very poor job of pretending not to listen in. Theseus, of course, notices.

"Newt’s very good in a fight," he says, his voice just a tad louder than previously, blithely ignoring Newt’s elbow in his side.

"Oh?" a voice comes from behind them. "Perhaps you’d care to back that claim up?"
Newt, Tina and Theseus all twist around to observe the newcomer behind them. Short, well dressed, with a glint in his eyes that doesn’t bode well.

"Lovis," Graves greets him.

"Lovis," Theseus repeats, thoughtful. "Ah - didn’t I beat you in this competition last year?"

Newt winces as Lovis’ face goes red. He himself may accidentally offend people on a regular basis - but his older brother has always been very good at doing it on purpose.

"That was an exception," Lovis bites out.

"But since you’re always saying how good you are at judging your opponent’s strength, I’ll duel your brother."

Tina and Graves make identical noises of protest, much to Newt’s appreciation, but Theseus doesn’t even blink.

"Sure," His git of an older brother replies, "Start in 15 minutes? I’m fairly sure there’s a free slot then."

Lovis focuses on Newt, who fixes his gaze somewhere near the man’s chin. "Shall we say that anything goes? Excluding Unforgivables, of course. We’ll see just how the younger Scamander matches up to the older."

Newt really doesn’t like tone that the other man used with his brother, and it’s that, more than anything, that gets him to agree.

"Fine," he says.

Lovis looks pleased, turns on his heel and makes his way over to the stairs which descend from the observation platform. Newt suddenly realises that there are a number of people staring at him and he attempts to shrink back into his coat a little bit. He forgets, sometimes, just how easily his brother can attract the attention of a crowd.

A gentle touch on his shoulder makes him look up and - oh - Graves looks rather worried, doesn’t he?
"You don’t have to fight him," Graves says, shooting a glare at Theseus. "No matter what your sibling may tell you. If it’s something you’re not comfortable with-"

Newt shakes his head and stands. "If not Lovis, then I’ve no doubt that Theseus would collar me into duelling him at some point. This is probably the better end of the deal."

Theseus makes an offended noise that is muffled when Newt drops his coat on his brother’s head.

"Hold on to that, if you please. I’m rather fond of it, and I’d rather it didn’t get damaged."

Newt extracts Pickett from his waistcoat pocket, not without a little difficulty, and places him on Tina’s shoulder. He hesitates, then turns to Graves.

"Would you hold out your hand a moment?" he asks. Graves looks surprised, but complies and Newt deposits the Swooping Evil Cocoon on his palm.

"I don’t trust my brother not to throw this at someone -"

"Hey-"

"-so if you could keep him safe, I’d appreciate it."

Newt suddenly realises that his hand is still hovering just above Graves’ and he snatches it back, chancing a glance upwards to the man’s face. Newt catches a glimpse of a fond amusement before Graves’ face smooths out again.

"Not going to keep this one for the duel?" Graves asks. "Lovis did say that anything goes."

Newt lifts a shoulder in a half shrug. "There’s only one of him. I might if I was against multiple people." He glances over his shoulder at his brother. "That is not an invitation."

Theseus tries to look innocent. It doesn’t really work. "Never crossed my mind. Still, you’d best be off." His older brother’s smile turns sharp for a moment. "The anti-apparition wards are down in the arenas, so you’ll be fine. Break a leg!" He pauses, "Or a few ribs, I’m not particularly fussy…"

Newt’s answering smile mirrors his siblings when he hears the old joke - the punchline being that its usually Newt doing the breaking, rather than ending up injured himself. He waves in acknowledgement and turns for the stairs, leaving his friends behind him.
The first round

Chapter Notes

And part number three. A few people have asked in various places if there are plans to continue this story past the end of the completed version over on the kinkmeme and I am certainly planning to post a few snippets of 'deleted scenes' and backstory which didn't make it into the final story. Anything beyond that is somewhat time and work dependent!

Hope you enjoy!

Graves is not worried. Definitely not. Newt has clearly managed to survive his ridiculous life thus far, and storming down to the arena and hauling the younger wizard out of the firing line of a fully trained auror with a grudge is not an appropriate course of action for the situation. (If he keeps telling himself that, he might actually start believing it.) He settles instead for turning a blistering glare on Theseus.

Theseus looks unconcerned at the ill will directed in his direction. ‘Don’t worry about Newt, Percy. He’ll be fine.’

Given that empirical evidence indicates that neither of the Scamander brothers have the correct definition of the word ‘fine’ when it applies to themselves, Graves thinks he can be forgiven for doubting Theseus’ words.

He opens his mouth to say as much, but at that point, a handful of the British aurors wander over to where the three of them are peering down at the arena where Lovis is already waiting.

Summers, an fairly young wizard, greets them with an overenthusiastic wave and a smile, whilst the dark haired witch - Miller? was it? - next to him offers a more reserved nod. Graves had seen her duel earlier, and had been impressed by the efficiency of her wandwork.

Following the direction of their gazes, the newcomers watch as Newt emerges into the ring below. Summers whistles. ‘You got Scamander to duel? Er. The other one, I mean? How on earth did you manage that?’

Theseus shrugs. ‘Accepted for him.’

Miller sighs. ‘Poor sod. Remember that time with the prat from Belgium?’

Summers snickers. ‘Hardly likely to forget.’

Their remarks are not helping Graves feel any less concerned about the situation. The sentiment seems to shared by the spectators, who don’t seem to rate Newt’s chances of making it out unscathed particularly high. Most of the comments do seem to be out of concern, although Graves makes a note of a few faces which seems pleased that Newt might be about to take a few hits.

… For entirely non personal reasons. Obviously. Tina is doing the same thing, judging by her expression, so clearly this is simply a matter of keeping an eye out for a friend.
Any further thoughts are put on hold as the master of proceedings announces the match line up:

‘Newt Scamander, British, MACUSA consultant, against David Lovis, MASUCA Auror’, and all eyes focus downwards on the ring. Newt has his wand clasped between his teeth and is rolling up his shirt sleeves, fixing them just above his elbows.

Even as Graves watches, Newt takes a deep breath and settles, feet a shoulder width’s apart, head up and back straight. Graves notes, with some surprise, that Newt looks almost … relaxed. Certainly he doesn’t appear to be letting any tension stiffen his muscles.

‘Start!’

Lovis immediately fires three fast travelling spells towards his opponent - but Newt disapparates with a faint pop, reappears 5 feet behind Lovis and hits him with a disarming spell before the man has a chance to react. An almost lazy ‘Petrificus Totalus’ immobilises Lovis and Newt catches the wand that arcs towards him with an enviable ease.

There is a moment of stunned silence.

‘Told you he was a sneaky bugger.’ Theseus says smugly, as mutterings break out amongst the spectators. He leans forwards and calls, ‘Go best out of three, Newt!’

Graves can almost feel the exasperation rolling off of the younger Scamander as he cancels the spells on Lovis. Lovis sits up and snatches his wand back off Newt, agreeing to a second match with a short, jerky nod of his head. Theseus’ expression as his brother and Lovis return to their starting positions can only be described as gleeful.

‘I doubt Newt will try the same trick twice.’ Theseus says to Graves. ‘And if your auror doesn’t underestimate him quite as much, this next match should be fun.’

… Maybe Graves should get the Scamander brothers a pair of dictionaries for their next birthdays. Clearly they seem to have misremembered the meaning of several commonly used words in the English language. He files the thought away for later and returns his attention to the arena below.

Newt and Lovis are ready, and with a sharp command from the master of proceedings, the second duel begins.
The second round

Chapter Notes

Cleaned up this bit somewhat and improved the flow a little. Thanks to everyone who's commented on the few chapters!

Newt fires off a spell and promptly disparates from his starting position. Lovis calls up a shield spell and the stunning curse rebounds off of it, but the conjured brick Newt sends flying Lovis’ way from his new position sails right through, forcing Lovis to duck. Newt blocks a returning curse, dematerialises out of the way of a second and sends a trip jinx towards the auror from behind him. Lovis barely avoids it, and Newt has already gone by the time the next spell is thrown in his direction.

And so the duel goes - Newt dodges the spells sent his way with alarming ease and responds with charms and jinxes aimed to distract and annoy - one to coat the floor beneath Lovis’ feet in ice, another to try to knock his legs out from under him. There's a close call when Newt conjures a bedsheets to block the auror's view of the arena, and Lovis only just succeeds in raising a shield charm to block the bludgeoning hex aimed at his knees.

As the duel wears on, Newt can see the irritation building on Lovis’ face as the jinxes and curses aimed at him are either blocked or fail to find their target in the first place and he keeps watching for an opening to end the match.

Before the opportunity arises, Lovis temper snaps.

‘Will you STAND STILL so I can hit you!’ he roars.

Newt blinks, before hastily apparating out of the way of a stunning curse. Why on earth would he do such an idiotic thing?

Above them, Newt can hear Theseus lose his composure entirely and start laughing. Lovis can clearly hear it too, because his face turns even redder than previously, which Newt honestly hadn’t thought was possible. Newt wonders if he ought to suggest that the man get his heart checked by a mediwizard- he looks awfully stressed.

‘Fine. You enjoy dodging so much - I’ll make sure you’ve got nowhere to dodge to!’

Lovis drops his shield charm and sends a jet of white hot flame spurting out of the end of his wand towards Newt. Newt hastily relocates himself to the other side of the ring, but Lovis simply turns and the flames turn with him, setting three quarters of the arena on fire in one sweeping motion. Newt can’t see Lovis to try to hit him with a spell - the flames are cutting off any direct line of sight. Lovis shouts something that Newt doesn’t quite catch over the crackle of the fire and the flames surge towards Newt, rapidly consuming the safe ground.

‘Bugger.’ Newt mutters.

He’d somewhat hoped he wasn’t going to have to resort to this. He’s not entirely sure where in the arena Lovis was last standing, but Newt is fairly confident that the man isn’t daft enough to set the
ground immediately around him alight. Luckily for him, Newt is very good at apparating blind.

Newt tucks his wand back into its holster and takes half a step forwards, pushing off his right leg. He disapparates mid step and reappears just to the side of Lovis, driving a roundhouse kick directly into the man’s chest. Lovis bends forwards, wheezing, but before he can bring his wand up, Newt apparates again, rematerialising in the air above his opponent. Newt slams both of the heels of his boots into the auror’s back, who pitches face first into the wooden floor. Newt turns his downwards momentum into forwards roll and comes to his feet in a smooth motion, then wandlessly summons Lovis’ wand to his hand for the second time that day. Around them, the magical fire sputters out.

He waits to see if Lovis attempts to get up, but the man appears content to lie face down on the floor of the arena, groaning slightly.

‘Yield?’ Newt asks, his voice echoing slightly due to the amplifying charms spelled into the ring.

It takes Lovis a few attempts to form the words, but eventually he manages to croak out ‘Yield.’
The aftermath

Chapter Notes

... and that's a wrap folks! Thank you to everyone who's left me lovely messages so far. I do have plans to write some deleted scenes and snippets, time allowing, but if there are any bits anyone is particularly curious about, leave a comment and I'll see if I come up with anything.

For now, enjoy the aftermath :)

Newt sighs in relief, then startles as cheering erupts from above him. He’d somewhat forgotten that they’d had an audience. He glances up briefly, and gives a small smile to his brother, who’s waving enthusiastically. Then he turns back to Lovis, who is in the process of gingerly attempting to sit up.

There’s quite a lot of blood on the man’s face, where his nose had smashed into the ground. Probably a broken nose. Newt hesitates, then offers him a hand. Lovis ignores him, struggles to his feet on his own and strides towards the exit. Newt stares after him for a moment, unsurprised by the reaction, before he realises that he’s still got Lovis’ wand and gives chase.

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Up on the observation deck, Theseus watches his brother depart the ring then turns back to his fellow spectators. The memory of their expressions during the duel are going to remain one of the highlights of this entire trip.

Summers and Miller are the only ones who are missing a flabbergasted expression, but then they have seen Newt duel before.

‘Nice to know your brother is as terrifying as ever.’ Summers remarks.

Theseus beams. ‘You should have seen him when we sparred last Christmas. He’d just gotten back from a trip in Asia and I’m pretty sure he spent most of it rescuing several creatures from a group attempting to illegally harvest their organs. To hear him tell it a few members of the local authorities insisted on teaching him some of their hand to hand combat style after they crossed paths trying to track the group down.’

Out of the corner of his eye, Theseus sees Graves mouth the words ‘hand to hand combat’, seemingly unaware that he’s doing it, and Theseus has to fight down a grin. Graves is not as subtle about his attraction to Newt as he’s like to think, but Theseus is fairly certain his brother has yet to cotton on. Maybe this incident will give Graves the impetus to finally ask his younger brother directly - anything more subtle will fly straight over his sibling’s head. If not, Theseus might have to take action directly, because as hilarious as it is to watch his best friend pine, at this point it’s just getting ridiculous.

Any nebulous plans regarding that scenario are put on hold as Newt finally reappears on the observation deck. Immediately a loud chorus of applause, along with a few whistles, breaks out. Newt flushes red and moves through the crowd of well wishers, returning to his friends. Pickett
promptly jumps from Tina back onto Newt and clings to his shirt collar.

‘Sorry for the delay.’ Newt says. ‘I, um, spent a little while trying to convince Lovis to go to the medic’s wing.’

Theseus watches in amusement as Graves struggles for a moment and then seems to find his voice. ‘For his broken nose? Surely he could have fixed that himself?’

Newt shakes his head. ‘I was more concerned about his ribs, to be honest. The last time I pulled that last move on Theseus, I fractured three of them.’

All heads snap around to Theseus, who shrugs. It’s the truth, after all.

Tina and Graves look fairly stunned. Miller and Summers don’t, but then again, they were some of the witnesses to the fight him and Newt had two years ago, if Thesues remembers correctly.

‘You broke three of your brother’s ribs?’

Newt doesn’t seem to quite comprehend the reason for everyone’s disbelief and replies, ‘He’d already dislocated my shoulder at that point - I couldn’t quite use my wand properly and that was the first thing I thought of.’

Ah, classic Newt. Attempting to explain only to make matters worse.

‘You had a dislocated shoulder and kept sparring?’ Tina squawks.

Newt shrugs. ‘Criminals don’t tend to hold back when someone gets injured. Theseus and I don’t when we fight either.’

‘And that,’ Miller injects, ‘is why the entirety of the British auror department check the availability of the escape routes when the two of you are in the same building.’

Theseus pouts. ‘Unfair. We’ve only ever caused small scale destruction in the Ministry of Magic building.’

Graves suddenly looks deeply alarmed.

Newt seems to find his reaction as amusing as Theseus, judging by the smile he doesn’t quite manage to hide. ‘And we always fixed it afterwards.’

‘But - why? And how?’ Tina asks, and further questions seem to beyond her.

Theseus sighs. ‘The how is easy enough - I taught Newt a lot of the spells and we both started learning hand to hand from one of our parent’s gardeners. I got more training when I entered the auror academy and passed it onto Newt during the summer holidays. The apparition is all him though - Newt’s got a knack for it.’

Newt blushes again. ‘It’s not particularly impressive really - I mostly just practice a lot.’

‘Please. I saw you that one time in Belgium with the dragons -‘

‘Theseus that’s classified-‘

‘and apparating mid-air from one dragon to another most definitely counts as impressive. As well as completely insane but -‘
'Oh like you’re one to talk, what was it ‘I’m sure that the wards won’t do anything, they’re far too old -’

‘That was once!’

‘Twice! And both times the building came down around us!’

Theseus opens his mouth to rebut that statement, before he realises that Newt is, unfortunately, completely correct.

‘Oh stuff it.’ he says, throwing Newt’s coat back to him.

He turns back to Tina. ‘In answer to the other half of your question - Newt has always had an alarming ability to find trouble, so like hell was I going to let him go travelling alone without him knowing how to defend himself.’

Newt catches his coat but doesn’t move to put it on just yet. ’And I suppose you got no personal satisfaction out of it either.’

Theseus can’t deny that statement either, as he derives a great deal of personal satisfaction from the chaos Newt tends to leave in his wake.

Tina looks thoughtful. ‘Perhaps I ought to ask you about some techniques then.’

Newt looks surprised, but his smile of agreement is so brightly happy that Theseus is suddenly, overwhelmingly grateful for the series of events which crossed his brother’s path with the friends he’s made here in America. Well. No. He could have done without the whole Grindelwald subplot, but by all accounts Newt held his own well enough.

It’s then that Theseus has an idea. He debates the merit of the idea for a good thirty seconds, long enough for Newt to notice his silence. Newt’s eyes go wide with alarm at whatever expression he sees on his brother’s face and he takes half a step backwards.

‘Theseus,’ he begins, ‘no-

Theseus doesn’t let him finish. He lunges forwards and grabs his brother by the shirt collar, snatches Newt's coat back off him and flings it in Graves’ direction, then apparates them both directly downwards into one of the arenas.

‘Theseus!’ his brother yells.

Theseus temporarily ignores him and addresses the observation deck, knowing that his words will be carried upwards by the amplifying charms.

‘Miller, Summers, would you care to commentate? My brother and I are going to demonstrate a range of different techniques designed to incapacitate your opponent and you’ll have probably seen most of them before.’

His turns back to Newt. ‘Ready on three?’ he asks.

Newt closes his eyes and takes a deep, calming breath.

‘Merlin save me from idiotic older brothers.’ he mutters, opens his eyes and draws his wand.

Theseus grins in anticipation. This is going to be fun.
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