SHIELD's Little Surprise, Part 2 - Getting to Know You

by SHIELDAgentMD

Summary

The SHIELD team gets to know little Skye better, and vice-versa. Bobbi realizes some double standards she's guilty of, and endeavors to make things right.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

For anyone who may be curious, when I picture little Skye, I often see her as a very young Camilla Belle - here are a few pictures of her around the age that she is in these stories. :) (I do not own rights to these photos, they were found at the links provided.)


Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD

SHIELD’s Little Surprise!

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

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

After lunch, when Skye was finally coerced into taking her nap, the team gathers to discuss the strange revelation that is her stuffed animal’s name.

Coulson calls for order, then looks at May. “So… you think that she had a dream?”

May nods. “She cried out, and Simmons and I went to see what was wrong. She was sitting up, alarmed, like she had been woken out of a dead sleep.”

With a nod Jemma adds, “she was crying, sir… though even she didn’t seem to know why.”

May continues. “That’s when she told us that the toy had apparently ‘said his name is Trip’.”

Everyone sits in silence for a minute, mulling this over.

“And nobody mentioned Trip’s name yesterday, in Skye’s presence?” Coulson asks, looking around.

Everyone shakes their head. Simmons looks down, trying to hide the tears in her eyes. She hasn’t often been able to speak about Trip since a few days after his death.

Fitz finally speaks up. “Well… the only explanation must be that deep, deep in her sub… her sub…”

“Subconscious?” Jemma offers, gently.

Fitz nods. “Yes, in her subconscious… Skye must still have her memories somehow.”

Hunter blinks. “But mate, don’t you think, if that were the case, that she would have some tiny shred of recollection when awake? She has not shown a single other sign of knowledge of her life over the past 20 years, otherwise.”

Fitz counters this quickly, “even in cases more m… um… ‘mundane’… than this, people carry all kinds of- of repressed memories that surface only when their subconscious is fully relaxed. During sleep.” Jemma nods in agreement with this.
“So…” Mack begins. “Is this just the beginning then? Will her whole life start flooding back to her through her dreams?”

“I certainly hope not,” Simmons interjects, looking worried. “It’s amazing that Skye was able to cope with everything that happened to her these past couple years. How could a 6 year-old possibly take that on?”

Agent May shifts slightly, deep in thought. Coulson looks at her. “May?”

May sighs and leans forward. “I spent this morning with Skye. About 2 minutes after she woke up, I tried to ask her about the dream she had had. She couldn’t remember it. She was happy and curious and ready to get into everything she’s not supposed to again,” May smirks, but fondly. “She is innocent. Frankly, I’d like to do all in my power to keep it that way.”

Coulson nods.

Hunter shrugs. “So, every child has strange, even bad dreams sometimes. We just make sure to insist that that’s all they are.”

Coulson is worrying about something potentially much more dangerous than some bad dreams. “Now,” he adds, “you said she was upset… she was crying, when she woke up. Tell me… was there any shaking? Did you feel any tremors?”

Jemma looks at May, then back at Coulson. As May replies, “no,” Simmons answers, “not at all, sir,” at the same time.

Coulson nods, and a few people sigh with relief.

“So… there’s a chance that she no longer has her powers?” Bobbi asks, extremely interested.

“Sounds like there’s a good chance,” Coulson responds. “While Skye was learning to control her powers as an adult, I highly doubt that at six she would have that kind of control. Still, let’s not assume anything just yet. At the first sign of Skye’s powers emerging, if they do, I want to know immediately.”

The team nods, and replies, “yes, sir.”

“Good. Now… Fitz and Hunter scanned the tunnels again, thoroughly, and we can safely say that the 0-8-4 was the only anomaly there. Our presence here is no longer needed, and we really need to get back to base. I want wheels up in an hour.” Coulson turns to head out.

Bobbi’s eyebrows raise. “Well… this will be a fine way to test whether she has her powers or not. Yesterday she was terrified at the mention of flying. This is one way to make her upset.”

Coulson turns back and looks at Bobbi, with a slight smile. “Indeed.”

For the next hour, Jemma is kept very busy in the lab. She was tasked with creating child-sized gloves like the ones she made for Skye, that could possibly damper any vibrations that the child may cause. It was one thing to test their theory of Skye’s powers, but quite another to risk the entire plane and everyone on it.

Both Fitz and Mack aid Jemma, as time is of the essence. The gloves are completed in just under an hour, and Simmons makes her way up to May’s room, Morse accompanying her. With a deep sigh, and a nervous look at Morse, Jemma enters the room.
Skye is still sleeping peacefully, hugging her favorite new toy, her beloved stuffed monkey. Simmons groans, hating to have to wake the child, but safety requires that she be buckled in properly for takeoff.

She tucks the gloves into the back pocket of her jeans and sits on the edge of May’s bed, rubbing the little girl’s back. When Skye begins to stir feebly, Bobbi gently picks her up and sits her in her lap. Skye whines quietly until her monkey is placed back in her arms.

Bobbi rubs Skye’s back until the youngster finally starts to open her eyes. “Hey munchkin,” Bobbi whispers. Morse gives Jemma a pointed look and nods, and the scientist quietly pulls the gloves out, holding them at the ready.

“Skye… we are going to take a little trip, so we need to go get buckled in, okay?” Bobbi tells her gently.

Skye’s eyes open now, and she looks around blearily. Agent Morse’s words don’t seem to sink in right away, but suddenly the plane’s engines come to life, and the little girl sits up, eyes wide. “No… no…” she mutters, looking around frantically.

Simmons comes closer and brushes hair back from Skye’s face. “Darling… it’s all right. We fly this plane all the time. Nothing bad is going to happen, I promise…”

“No!” Skye cries, twisting and turning until she manages to slide off of Bobbi’s lap. The little girl runs for the door, but Jemma beats her to it and scoops her up.

“Shhh, sweetheart, it’s going to be all right. But we have to get you buckled in now.”

Simmons carries the struggling child with difficulty to the nearest seats with seatbelts, those on the white couch in the lounge. Morse hurry to join them, ready to force the child into the seatbelt if need be.

Skye squirms and thrashes around in Jemma’s arms, like an angry, trapped animal fighting for its life. As Jemma sets the girl down next to the couch, one of Skye’s hands flails upward and strikes Simmons right in the face.

Jemma gasps and recoils, and Bobbi makes a fast, executive decision. She grabs the little girl’s flailing arm and turns her around. Morse lands a firm swat on the seat of Skye’s pajama pants, designed more to get her attention than to cause her any pain. “Skye, no. You stop this right now, young lady,” she scolds, giving her another light swat.

Skye bursts into tears and puts her other hand back to protect her bottom. Bobbi scoops her up once again and sits her on the couch, then proceeds to quickly buckle her in before the child can struggle too much. Skye cries pitifully and tries to push Bobbi’s hands away, but Morse gives the back of her hands a light tap in warning, and says, “no,” in a stern voice.

Jemma quickly sits on the other side of Skye and tries to comfort her. “Honey… please behave. It’s all right, I promise, it’s all right.”

Morse adjusts the straps of the child’s harness tighter. Once this is done, Skye struggles but finds that she is well-restrained in. At this, she pulls her legs up to her chest and hides her face in her hands, sobbing uncontrollably.

Mack appears in the doorway and looks at the two agents questioningly. Bobbi spots him and gives him a thumbs-up, though her expression remains solemn. He frowns at the sight of the miserable little girl and heads back out, heading back to the cockpit to give the all clear for take-
Bobbi tries to stroke Skye’s hair, but Skye gently pushes her hand away, still crying hard. Morse grimaces, knowing that Skye is both hurt and scared... of her now too, most likely. Morse leans in close to Skye and whispers, “baby, I’m sorry that I had to swat you. I don’t ever, ever want to hurt you. When you are being very naughty though, that is what will happen,” she explains gently.

Skye doesn’t respond but leans further over toward Jemma, who wraps an arm around her. The biochemist can feel Skye trembling.

Morse knows that she shouldn’t feel guilty, but the little waif is certainly evoking it in her. She hops up and hurries out of the room, then returns a moment later with Skye’s precious stuffed monkey. Skye accepts him and hugs him close, crying into his soft brown fur.

“Once we are up in the sky, we’ll be able to get up again and walk around, just like normal,” Jemma tells the little girl cheerfully as the plane begins to rise.

But Skye keeps her face hidden and cries until that moment comes. When a pleasant ding sounds through the plane, Jemma says happily, “okay, we did it! See darling, that wasn’t so bad, right?”

Bobbi looks at Jemma and nods toward the door. She knows that in order to reestablish her positive relationship with Skye, Jemma must be completely out of sight, or the girl will cling to her instead.

Simmons takes the hint and nods. “All right... I’m going to see about fixing us a snack,” she says, a bit too brightly, before ducking out of the room.

Morse unbuckles her seatbelt, then starts to undo Skye’s as well. Skye seems to want to push her hands away again, but thinks better of it, now rubbing her eyes with her fists. Before Skye can run away, Bobbi kneels down in front of her, and takes her little hands in hers.

“Skye?” she says quietly, lifting the little girl’s chin with her finger. When Skye finally looks up over her monkey Bobbi is heart-broken to see not anger, but fear in the child’s features. “Oh, honey... munchkin, I’m not mad at you. I didn’t like how you were behaving, so I swatted you.” She explains, matter-of-factly. “You hit Jemma in the face. You hurt her. Did you know that?”

Skye looks down and sniffs, and Bobbi believes her when she shakes her head.

“I know it was an accident. But you hurt her because you were fighting us. That was not okay. But it doesn’t change how I feel about you, at all. I cherish you, munchkin.” Morse wipes a few of the girl’s tears away, and is relieved to see that the youngster will let her touch her now.

Skye still looks tense and forlorn though. Just when Bobbi thinks that the little girl is making an awfully big deal about two light swats, Skye speaks tremulously and makes clear the real reason she’s so upset. “Please... please don’t send me away...” she squeaks, then begins sobbing anew.

Bobbi’s heart plummets. Of course... she knew Skye’s early history. The girl had lived in several foster homes, and had always been sent back to the orphanage before long. And Coulson had shared with her that Skye believed it was always her fault... that she was sent back because she had done something wrong. Morse swallows hard and gathers the little girl in her arms. Wishing desperately that she had a rocking chair, she instead sits back down on the couch and holds Skye close to her. “Never, munchkin. Not. Ever,” she promises, then plants kisses all over the small, wet face.

Skye wraps her arms around Morse’s neck and buries her face in the agent’s shoulder. She wants
to believe her, she really does. But even though Bobbi had swatted her, she feels that all of this is too good to be true, and that she’ll be sent away again soon for something.

Bobbi holds the youngster close, rubbing her back. "Skye... do you think that we will send you away if you get in trouble?" she asks softly. She feels a nod against her shoulder and hears a quiet sob.

"Oh... no, little one. Look at me."

Skye's watery gaze slowly rises to meet Bobbi's.

"Honey... you are just a little girl. You're going to make mistakes and wrong choices and you're going to get in trouble sometimes... and that's okay. It's a part of growing up... of life, really. You may be punished... but we're not going to send you away, honey."

Simmons pokes her head back into the room, holding a plate of celery with peanut butter and some small cookies. She catches Bobbi’s eye and her S.O. waves her in. Jemma bites her lip to see the little girl still crying, and walks silently over to the couch, setting the plate on the table without a sound.

Bobbi smiles softly at Jemma and hugs Skye tight. “You’re not going anywhere, munchkin. Not without one of us, anyway. You’re stuck with us now.”

Simmons smiles, but finds her own eyes welling up with tears again.

When Skye calms down considerably and is once again rubbing her eyes with her fists, Morse says softly, “look what Jemma brought for you.”

Skye looks up, but instead of looking at the food, she immediately crawls over to her favorite agent. “Jemma,” she says softly, climbing into the young woman’s lap.

“Oh, hello darling,” Simmons murmurs, cuddling her close. She then grabs a tissue and proceeds to mop up the little girl’s face. “There, there, everything’s all right. No more tears,” she adds. “I brought you a snack.”

Now Skye looks to the table and notices the food. She reaches out for a cookie, but Jemma, ever the health-conscious doctor, stops her and says, “just a moment... the cookies are a reward, darling. For every stick of celery you eat, you get a cookie!”

Skye considers this, sniffling, and takes a piece of celery. Even though it’s green, she finds that she quite enjoys it with the peanut butter, and has no problem with this compromise...

Having set the plane to auto-pilot, May decides to check on the girls. She peers into the lounge and sees Skye snacking, somewhat subdued but otherwise okay. She steps inside and says, “hey,” giving Skye a small smile and a nod. Then she looks at Bobbi. “May I have a word?”

Bobbi nods and stands up, stroking Skye’s dark hair as she passes. She meets May in the hallway.

“So... I didn’t feel anything out of the ordinary. Was she upset?” May asks, getting right to the point.

“Oh... she was upset, all right,” Morse states, then sighs. “I really think that if her powers were going to manifest, they would have. Not only was she terrified, but I ended up having to swat her before we essentially restrained her with her seatbelt.”
May blinks, feeling upset at this announcement. She quickly pushes that aside however, knowing that Bobbi wouldn’t swat anyone, even Jemma, without very good reason. “I see. How did that go?”

Morse chuckles warily. “Um… about as well as can be expected.” Bobbi explained everything that had happened, including Skye’s plea not to send her away. Bobbi’s eyes swim with moisture as she remembers the child’s fear. She swallows and looks at May. “You know… we really need a rocking chair.”

May smirks, but then nods and says, to Bobbi’s great surprise, “I was actually thinking the exact same thing.”

The two women exchange a grin and re-enter the room. They find Jemma testing out some simple arithmetic on Skye.

“So darling, if there are 4 cookies, and I eat one,” she begins, taking one cookie off the plate. “How many do you get?”

Skye looks at the plate, then happily announces, “three!” She then reaches for the three cookies.

Simmons stops her just in time. “Hey… you still need to eat your celery first,” she reminds her gently.

Skye blinks. “But you said I get those,” she points out with a pout.

Jemma bites her lip, realizing this was a bit her fault. “If I let you eat the cookies, will you still eat the celery, too?” she asks quietly.

Skye smiles and nods.

Simmons looks at the adorable child for a moment, then caves completely. “All right, go on then,” she mutters, knowing that she’s a total pushover.

May shakes her head and walks over. Morse follows behind, muttering, “gee, some master negotiator you are.”

Simmons blushes slightly and shrugs, admitting defeat.

Coulson walks in at that moment and looks around. He spots the little girl happily eating cookies and smiles down at her, then spots the plate. “Hey… where’s my celery and peanut butter?” he says, with a hint of a whine.

Bobbi laughs and Jemma smiles. “Would you like me to fix you a plate, sir?” the biochemist asks, kindly.

But she was too late. Skye had already grabbed a piece of celery, walked over and was now holding it up to Coulson. Everyone chuckles and Coulson accepts it. “Thank you for sharing, little one.”

Simmons shakes her head and mutters something about, ‘eats the cookies’, and ‘gives up her veggies’.

“So, what’s new?” Coulson asks, before a big bite of celery.

Morse and May exchange a look, then exclaim at the exact same time, “we want a rocking chair.”
Coulson chokes, both amused and exasperated. Jemma can be heard saying, “oh, yes! That would be lovely…”

Once the Director clears his airway and swallows his bite, he says, “I see. And where exactly on this *aircraft* would you like to put a rocking chair?”

May answers quickly. “Easy. Get that ridiculous cot out of my room”. With a smirk she turns and leaves the lounge.

Morse raises her eyebrows and grins at Coulson. He shakes his head. “Gee, I’ll look right into it.” He casually swipes another piece of celery off of the plate before hurriedly leaving the room.

“Sir!” Jemma scolds, half-amused, while Skye giggles.

That giggle is music to both Jemma and Bobbi’s ears, and Morse scoops up the little girl again. “Okay, munchkin. We are safe and sound in the air. Are you ready to see something really beautiful?”

Skye looks nervous at the idea, but finally nods, her curiosity getting the better of her.

Bobbi smiles at Jemma. They slowly walk over to the nearest window, Bobbi feeling Skye’s grip getting tighter. Morse kisses the child’s cheek, then leans down slightly to give Skye the best view.

Skye maintains her strong grip on Bobbi, but finally peeks out of the window. Her mouth opens in awe as she stares down at the clouds. Finally, she lets go of Morse and wriggles to get down. As soon as she’s let down, she scoots closer to the window and looks around from every angle.

Jemma and Bobbi exchange a smile, knowing that they have now conquered a huge hurdle in Skye’s fear of flying. Simmons leans down and whispers, “look, darling… just last night you saw the whole galaxy from below. Now you get to see our world from above.”

Skye smiles softly and runs her little finger along the window, outlining clouds.

Bobbi leans in too and says, “look… that cloud looks like a turtle!”

The three take a seat under the window and spend the next several minutes happily identifying the shapes of various clouds…

Just before 4:00 Bobbi sighs and stands up. “Well, I’m due to go train. Mack challenged me to a rematch. He’s clearly upset at having lost to me last night,” she adds proudly, with a smirk.

Simmons bites her lip and frowns slightly. She certainly doesn’t mind having the youngster to herself for a while, but...

“I’ll see you soon, munchkin,” Bobbi assures Skye with a wink, then turns to head out.

Simmons jumps up suddenly and hurries to Bobbi’s side. “Wait, Agent Morse, please… you’re… you’re going to fight with Mack?”

Bobbi smiles knowingly and places a hand on Jemma’s shoulder. “Honey, I’m fine, really. You don’t need to worry about me. I’ll take it easy, okay?”

Simmons feels deeply torn. On the one hand, she is a doctor, and knows that given what Bobbi has been through at the hands of Ward, the agent is not ready for such physical exertion. On the other hand, Bobbi is her S.O., and Jemma has learned the hard way, several times, not to question
or argue with a superior officer. On top of all this, she knows that Bobbi is a skilled, experienced agent of high rank, who may, possibly, know what she’s capable of after all. With all of this whirling through her mind, she just continues to gaze pleadingly up at Bobbi.

Morse just smiles and strokes Jemma’s cheek gently. “Don’t worry,” she repeats, and heads out.

Skye watches her go sadly, then walks over to Simmons. She looks at the concerned expression on Jemma’s face. “Can we go watch?” she asks, having no idea what Morse is about to do, thus feeling infinitely curious about it.

Simmons bites her lip again and considers it. She and Fitz both know better than to show up in the training room while the operatives are practicing, lest they want to be punished… or worse, challenged to a fight. But she also wants to keep an eye on her S.O., in case of injury. Finally, she says slowly… “well… I suppose, for a few minutes. But we must stay outside and only watch through the glass, all right?”

Skye nods happily and runs out of the room to try to follow Agent Morse.

“Are you a little sore there? Was last night too much for you?” Bobbi taunts, watching Mack stretch out his back.

Mack scoffs. “Last night? Please woman… that was just a warm-up. Prepare to go down,” he teases, entering the ring.

Bobbi just grins and fist-bumps him before immediately sinking into a defensive stance.

Skye runs up to the glass doors and attempts to push one open. Jemma catches up right in time and pulls her back. “Skye, what did I say? When people are fighting in there, we are not allowed in,” she says again, a bit more sternly.

Skye frowns and whines, but then is quickly caught up in the ‘dance’ that Mack and Bobbi seem to be doing. She starts mimicking everything she sees, giving a little kick and throwing her tiny fists out to strike the air.

Simmons covers her mouth with her hands and chuckles to herself. Watching the little girl emulate the warriors, pretending to be fierce… this is literally the cutest thing she’s ever seen.

Morse’s focus is pulled away as she catches movement in the corner of her eye. That split-second distraction is enough for Mack to suddenly grab her and throw her to the ground.

Bobbi groans, and sighs. “We have company,” she says breathlessly, nodding toward the door.

Mack glances over just in time to see Skye miming throwing someone to the ground. He laughs. “Looks like I could teach her some moves. Had enough?” he adds, giving Bobbi a hand up.

“Oh, you wish. You got lucky; I was distracted by ‘Crouching Kitten, Tiny Dragon’ over there.”

Mack scoffs. “Using the kid as your excuse… nice,” he teases. “Maybe we should let her in here to kick your butt.”

Morse rolls her eyes, but then watches the little girl attempt a twirling kick and fall to the
She chuckles, watching Jemma help the child up and considers it for a moment. “I’ve always wanted a little sidekick.”

Mack grins and waves to the little girl.

Simmons’ jaw drops… May would have skinned her alive if she ever interrupted a training session, but Skye was going to be invited in? The injustice of it all! She shakes her head and pushes open the door to let Skye in, then, after a moment’s hesitancy, follows the youngster inside and ducks behind a rack of weights to watch inconspicuously.

“Come up here, little princess,” Mack says jovially, taking a knee. “So… you want to be a fighter?”

But Skye gives him a ‘stern’ look with her arms crossed over her chest. “You hurt Bobbi,” she says accusingly, in a low voice. Then, quite seriously, she puts up her little fists, as if to challenge him.

Morse bursts out laughing. “She’s going to come in here and kick my butt, huh?” she mutters to Mack, walking over. She smiles gratefully down at Skye. “He didn’t hurt me, munchkin… but thank you for being protective. We’re just practicing. Trust me. He couldn’t hurt me if he tried,” she adds, keeping Mack in sight out of the corner of her eye.

Mack shakes his head, and gets back to his feet. “Let’s test that theory, shall we?”

Bobbi grins, more than ready. She leads Skye over to the very edge of the ring and lowers her down to the ground right outside of it. “Ok, munchkin, listen. If you’re going to be in here, you need to stay *right there*. Do you understand? You cannot move from this spot.”

Skye nods her understanding, eagerly standing up on tip-toe to watch.

Just to be sure, Morse gives the little girl a serious look. “Do. Not. Move.”

Skye nods again impatiently, dutifully clasping her hands together to show she’s on her best behavior.

Bobbi gives her a wink and moves into the center of the ring, facing off with Mack again. “All right. No holds barred. Except over there,” Morse amends, nodding to Skye’s direction.

Mack nods his agreement, grinning. “Bring it,” he taunts.

With that, the two extremely skilled agents fly at each other. Simmons watches closely, frowning in concern. Skye’s mouth drops slowly open as she too watches closely, and soon her little fists are flying again in imitation of the duelers.

Jemma chuckles softly at the child’s movements, but finds herself also intrigued by the fight. As she is not an operative and is most often left outside of any ‘battle ground’, it isn’t often that she gets to see their skills firsthand.

Simmons becomes so engrossed in the bout that she doesn’t even notice when another agent enters the room and approaches from behind her.

“Simmons!”

Jemma jumps and gasps, bumping into the weight rack. A few 3 lb. weights fall off the rack with a thud, catching the attention of Mack, Bobbi and Skye. Simmons stammers quietly and
starts backing away, toward the ring, as May looks at her with narrowed eyes.

“What do you think you’re doing in here?” May asks sternly.

“Oh! Oh, I just… I was keeping an eye on…”

“And more to the point, what on Earth is *Skye* doing in here?!” May asks crossly, looking around at all of the adults in the room.

When no one answers, seemingly too nervous to do so, May shakes her head crossly. With the air of quite the disappointed ‘mom’, she walks right up to Jemma and takes her by the arm. May leads her the few final steps to the edge of the ring, places her foot on the second step up, and pulls Jemma over her knee.

Simmons gasps, then moans in pain as May lands 10 hard swats on her rear end, incredibly embarrassed to be disciplined in front of all these people, including the child.

“What is the rule regarding the training room?” May asks, with another hard smack on the seat of Jemma’s pants.

Simmons squirms slightly and recites the rule she knows only too well. “One is not to enter at any time that training is going on, if one is not an operative or a specialist!” she cries softly.

“That’s right,” May confirms, with another three fierce swats that cause Jemma to cry out and squirm. “And whatever *possessed* you to bring a small, defenseless child in here?” she asks in disbelief.

Mack had turned away, uncomfortable with witnessing the young scientist’s punishment. Bobbi, however, is rather familiar with disciplining Jemma, and tries to come to her aid.

“May, please… Jemma didn’t bring Skye in. We… we sort of invited her to come watch.” Morse admits, realizing now that that probably wasn’t the best idea.

May pauses, still holding Simmons firmly over her knee. “You *invited* her?” she asks, in a dangerous voice.

Upon Bobbi’s sheepish nod, May sighs in disbelief and lets Simmons up. Jemma stands quickly, rubbing her bottom only briefly before clasping her hands in front of her. “You still know better,” Melinda scolds, though more gently now. “I’m sorry, ma’am,” Simmons murmurs, her blazing red face lowered.

Skye had been watching this entire scene play out with wide eyes. It was a revelation to her that she apparently wasn’t the only one who could be swatted for misbehavior. Afraid that she might be in trouble too, she tries to hide behind Morse when the tall agent approaches her protectively.

Bobbi speaks up again. “Agent May… I’m sorry, too. I clearly wasn’t thinking. Skye was watching through the door and was just so interested and…”

“I want a word with you both,” May interrupts irritably, looking at Morse and Mack and striding purposefully to the opposite corner of the room.

Bobbi ushers Skye over toward Jemma, whispering a sincere, “I’m sorry, honey,” to her older ward, before quickly heading off to what she was sure would be a lengthy scolding from
Simmons nods in response with a weak smile.

Skye, ever the pint-sized empath, gives Jemma a big hug around the waist and looks up at her. “Are you okay?” she asks, in a carrying whisper.

Simmons, eager to remove the youngster from the forbidden place, picks Skye up and hugs her close. “Yes, darling. I’m all right,” she assures her, walking her back out through the glass doors. Figuring that she should use what happened as a teaching tool, despite her embarrassment, she adds, “I broke a rule. And I was punished. I really did know better.” Simmons smiles at the little girl again, wanting her to know that this was the way of things, and that she held no resentment against May for punishing her.

Skye stares at Simmons, somewhat in awe. She plays absent-mindedly with a lock of Jemma’s hair, then asks sadly, “did it hurt?”

Jemma flushes slightly again and decides to be honest. “Well darling… yes, it did.” She admits. It hadn’t hurt a lot, especially as it was quick and over her clothing, but there was still warmth and a bit of sting from May’s hand. “But… I suppose I would rather learn a lesson from a spanking than from getting hurt by fighters practicing in the ring. Do you understand?”

Skye, who is quite honest at this age at least, shakes her head, puzzled.

Simmons grins at her and thinks hard how to explain, setting the child down and taking her hand as they climbed the spiral staircase. Simmons heads for another window seat in the lounge, and sits down (wincing only slightly). Skye soon climbs into her lap, and Simmons elaborates…

“Well… Director Coulson and Agent May set a rule that only agents trained, or training in fighting may be in the training room while people are practicing. They made that rule to protect those of us who don’t know how to fight. They don’t want us to get hurt,” she explains, stroking Skye’s cheek.

“So, when I let you go inside, and I went in too, I broke that rule. I allowed both you and I to be in danger, which I never should have done.” Jemma shifts uncomfortably at the truth of those words. “And… well… when Agent May punished me for doing something dangerous, that was her showing me that she cares… that she doesn’t want me to get hurt.”

Skye sits quietly and mulls this over for a while. Finally she quietly asks, “she was mad, huh?”

Jemma thinks about this. “I think… I think that she was disappointed that I disobeyed her. But I don’t think she was very mad… more worried. Worried that something might happen to me, or to you. Because she cares,” she repeats with a smile, really wanting Skye to understand that part, as she did.

Skye looks up into Jemma’s eyes. “So… you’re not mad at her?”

Simmons shakes her head right away. “No darling. Not at all. I am very grateful to Agent May, for teaching me, for protecting me, and for caring for me so much…”

Skye spends the next 10 minutes quietly cuddling with Jemma, trying to understand…

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Meanwhile…

Mack and Morse were receiving quite the scolding in the corner of the training room. Although both agents stand almost a foot taller than May, they clearly defer to the legendary ‘Cavalry’. Still, while Bobbi has the decency to hang her head, Mack’s eyebrows are furrowed and he frowns heavily.

“We would never hurt Skye,” he insists. “Or let anything happen to her.”

Morse secretly agrees with this, and glances up to look from him to May.

Melinda takes a step closer to Mack. “I know that you would never intentionally hurt her. But children are unpredictable, and look at you, Mack! She is just a baby. If she ran into the ring suddenly while you two were going at it, she could be *killed* by one blow from you.”

Mack shakes his head stubbornly, positive that he could never make such a mistake.

“You are a big brother, Mack. Tell me… when you would wrestle or even play-fight with your brother as a kid, how often did someone end up hurt?”

May can see the flicker of realization behind Mack’s eyes. His frown leaves his face as he reminisces, and he sighs heavily. “Okay. You have a point,” he admits.

“These rules are set for a reason,” May continues, more quietly now. “I do plan to start working with Skye in here, on some very basic self-defense. But when I do, I will be alone in here with her, there will be absolutely no fighting going on, I will be on my knees holding up gloves for her to hit. I will *not* be going full-force with another trained, skilled agent feet away from her.”

Mack finally hangs his head as well and nods. May knows that she has gotten through to him.

“All right, that’s all. Get out.” May nods toward the door and watches as Mack heads out, then turns her sharp eyes onto Bobbi.

“You, however…” she says, in a dangerous purr. “You are going to be here for a while. Maybe you should take a seat.”

“May, I…”

“Sit!” May repeats firmly.

Bobbi sighs and closes her mouth. She glances around and goes to fetch the closest item she can sit on, a blue exercise ball.

May does well at stifling her amusement at this. Now standing just slightly taller than Agent Morse, May begins speaking in a low voice. “You already know what you did wrong, in terms of Skye…” she begins.

Bobbi quickly speaks up, “yes May, I do. It was dumb and I’m really sor…”

“Now,” May booms to cut her off, “now, we’re going to discuss what you are doing wrong in terms of Jemma.”

This shuts Morse up. Her look of surprise turns to one of confusion as she tries to figure out what on Earth May is referring to.
May crosses her arms over her chest and approaches closer, until she is barely a foot away from Bobbi. “Do you know what Jemma did, after you were shot?”

Taken aback by this question, Bobbi just shakes her head.

“She cried. She cried at least a dozen times, and she barely left your side for well over a week. She held your hand and she spoke to you. She read to you from your favorite magazines while you slept.”

Morse pictures this in her mind’s eye and feels a wave of emotion wash over her. She swallows hard and looks down.

May continues. “I even happen to know that once you woke up and started to heal, she snuck in Cactus Coolers for you and had your favorite foods prepared.”

This Bobbi does remember, and she smiles softly. May knows that she’s reaching her fellow agent.

“The point is… she adores you. She was devastated that you were injured, and showed a devotion to caring for you that went way above and beyond her job description. And now, how are you repaying that care? She is your doctor, and she has *not* cleared you to fight. You haven’t even been cleared for less strenuous exercise.” May watches Bobbi swallow hard, and gently adds, “do you remember what you did to her, when she was sick and was pushing herself too hard?”

Bam. Of course Bobbi remembers. She had punished Simmons thoroughly… and that had been just for working on some research. The tall, beautiful agent feels tears well up in her eyes. “Oh my god,” she mutters. “I… I’ve really screwed up, haven’t I?” she asks, quietly, furtively wiping her eyes.

May nods, not one to sugarcoat things. “Yes, you have. You are Jemma’s Supervising Officer. You are a role model to her. Exactly what kind of example are you setting, throwing yourself into situations that can negate all of the healing she’s led you through thus far?”

Bobbi again imagines her sweet ward crying over her own bloodied body in a hospital bed. She tries to fight back more tears, but several leak out anyway.

May lays a hand on Bobbi’s shoulder. Suddenly overcome with guilt, Morse looks up at May and says, “I-I’m so sorry. You… you have to take care of this. It’s only right. Please.” She rises and looks around.

Melinda blinks. She thinks she knows what Morse is getting at, but as they are essentially of equal rank, May needs explicit consent. “Take care of this?” she prompts, playing dumb.

Morse nods, sniffing. “Yes. Where’s the paddle?” she asks tremulously.

May knows exactly where it is, but before going to fetch it, she has to make sure. She grips Bobbi’s arm to get her attention. “Morse… does this mean that you are requesting discipline from me?” she asks, very seriously.

Bobbi looks back into May’s eyes, and her features become still and determined. “Yes, Agent May. Please.”

May slowly nods, giving her arm a light squeeze. “I’ll be back.”
As May leaves the room, Bobbi exhales heavily. She feels her heart rate quicken, and swallows hard. The last time she had been subjected to any corporal discipline was over ten years ago, when she was just a rookie within SHIELD, and she knows that her S.O. had taken it rather easy on her. May would do no such thing. Suddenly wishing that she had her battle staves to twirl off her nervousness, Bobbi instead begins to pace.

May returns a moment later, paddle in hand. Morse takes one look at her, takes a deep breath, and moves over to the fighting platform once more. After only a moment’s hesitation, Bobbi slides her workout pants down, leaving only her thong in place, and bends over, placing her forearms on the mats.

Melinda walks around to get into position. She is tempted to forego a hand spanking altogether and begin right away with the paddle, but keeping Bobbi’s injuries in mind, she decides that a warm-up is best after all. Glancing at the brace on Bobbi’s knee, she says quietly, “if this is too much for your knee or your back, speak up, and you can adjust. That’s not the pain I want you focused on.”

Bobbi nods, and says, slightly ironically, “yes, ma’am”.

May stifles a smirk and rests her left hand on Bobbi’s back. Without another word, she begins striking Morse’s bare backside, the slaps ringing off the walls of the training room.

Bobbi inhales sharply at the first stinging swat, but otherwise remains quiet and still. She is a skilled specialist, and has survived torture, a bullet in the back and a shattered knee, as well as countless other injuries in the past. She will bear this well.

With this in mind, May has no goal other than to help Bobbi work through her guilt and accept this act of ‘justice’. She is also exceedingly conscious of Morse’s current injuries, and obviously doesn’t wish to cause further harm.

As Melinda continues firmly spanking Bobbi, she watches her fellow agent’s reactions closely. She recognizes techniques being employed that every trained agent uses during times of pain. Bobbi is breathing deeply in an even pace, and keeping her body relaxed. Unseen by Morse, May glances at the handprints glowing pink on Bobbi’s backside and shakes her head. She never imagined that she’d be in this situation with this particular agent before.

Despite her strong and stoic acceptance of this punishment, tears were starting to fall down Bobbi’s cheeks. Not so much from the pain… she’s endured plenty of torture in her time… but from what May had just told her about Jemma. How the sweet girl had cared for her, how she hadn’t left her side, and how much she looks up to her. Bobbi isn’t sure what she ever did to deserve such devotion, but she’s incredibly grateful for it. Her tears reflect that. She lets them fall, thinking of each one as a little gift of ‘thanks’ to the petite scientist.

After another minute, May pauses and shakes out her hand. She glances at it to find it glowing pink as well. She sighs quietly and flexes her wrist, then picks up the paddle. She puts a comforting hand on Bobbi’s back and says quietly, “Morse… I want you to know that now… right now… you are being an exemplary S.O.” She knows that she needn’t say more when she hears a quiet sigh from the contrite woman, and she brings the paddle back.

CRACK!! CRACK!! CRACK!!

Morse lets out a gasp as the unyielding wooden paddle connected with her already throbbing, stinging rear end. She struggles to stay still and accepting, even though each loud crack reminds her horribly of a gun going off behind her. She had counted on this being painful… but she hadn’t counted on that sound. Her heart begins to race again, until she finds it
hard to breathe, suffering even more from PTSD than the pain of this discipline.

CRACKK!!

One more fierce blow with the paddle and the sound is more than Morse can bear. “Stop!” she shouts breathlessly. Her knees go weak and she collapses to the uninjured one. “Stop… stop,” she repeats quietly. Her hands move, not back to tend to her abused skin, but to her head, pressing firmly over her ears.

May does stop immediately, knowing that something isn’t right. She drops the paddle and kneels down next to Morse. “All right,” she says quietly, rubbing Bobbi’s lower back. “All right… you’re safe,” she adds in a whisper, guessing at what is going on.

Melinda waits until Bobbi finally moves her hands from her ears, then repeats her words. “You’re safe, Bobbi. You’re safe. It’s just you and me.”

Morse nods, the sound still ringing in her ears, though more faintly now. “I… yes. Yes. Thank you,” she mutters, swallowing hard. She brushes the tears from her cheeks with some annoyance.

May watches her carefully, and helps her to stand again when she’s ready. She keeps her hands on Morse’s arms to steady her, and asks softly, “you have an appointment with Andrew tomorrow, don’t you?”

Bobbi nods, letting out a humorless chuckle as she fixes her pants. “Yeah. I know… I’m a head case.”

Melinda shakes her head. “No more than any of us, who have suffered such traumas.”

At these words, Morse’s face screws up involuntarily and she lets out a sob. May immediately wraps her arms around her, knowing too well what she’s going through.

Bobbi’s breakdown is short-lived; she pulls herself together quickly, as only a skilled agent can do. She swipes the last tears off her face as she picks up the fallen paddle and clears her throat determinedly. “May, listen… thank you. I needed that.”

May nods knowingly, accepting the paddle back. “Well… I would say, ‘anytime’, but…”

Bobbi laughs. “Right.” Her expression turns more serious again. “I… I’ll also keep in mind how my actions affect Jemma. And I will respect her recommendations… as my doctor,” she promises.

This elicits another nod, and even a small smile. “Keep in mind the other curious little girl following you around. She looks up to you too, and is even more likely to follow your example.”

This thought brings about another soft smile, and Bobbi knows May is right. “Indeed. I will.”

May and Bobbi clasp each other’s forearms in some kind of warrior salute. That done, they both nod and head their separate ways.

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All goes well for the rest of the day, and even during the plane’s landing, which occurred right before Skye’s bedtime. The youngster was nervous, but she closed her eyes tight and clung to Jemma until the plane gently touched down.

May arrives to fetch the little girl, as it is well after dark and well into May’s allotted time with her. Jemma was just helping the youngster get unbuckled.

“Hey there,” May says, walking in. “It’s just about bedtime,” she adds, looking carefully at the little girl.

Skye glances up at her nervously, then looks down and fidgets. ‘Terrific,’ May thinks, dejectedly. ‘Just one day in and she’s already afraid of me’.

Jemma however smiles at her former S.O. “Yes ma’am. Would you like me to get her washed up?”

May considers declining, saying that she’ll do it. But Skye is currently holding tight to Simmons’ hand and still avoiding eye contact. Instead, Melinda nods, then turns and walks quickly out.

Knowing her former S.O. as well as she does, Jemma notices May’s troubled look and tense muscles where few others would. She sighs quietly as she leads Skye to get cleaned up for bed.

But now that they have all landed safely, Skye finds herself wide awake and as curious as ever. “Jemma? Where are we?”

Simmons smiles at the child as she hands her her toothbrush. “Well… we’re home! This plane is a home to us while we fly, and now we have arrived at our base… our home on the ground,” she explains.

Skye brushes her teeth, considering this. In a muffled voice, she asks, “can we go look around?”

Simmons strokes Skye’s hair and shakes her head with a soft smile. “Not tonight, I’m afraid, darling. It’s already past your bedtime!” Jemma smiles knowingly at the disappointed look on Skye’s face, and adds, “tomorrow morning, I will give you the grand tour. Now, we must hurry. We mustn’t keep Agent May waiting.”

After Skye has washed her face and Simmons has run a comb through her dark hair, the two head to May’s room. As they approach the door, Skye stops.

Simmons looks around when she notices she’s no longer being followed. Her face shows concern… “Skye? What’s the matter?” she asks gently.

But Skye just stares at the door and fidgets, clearly nervous.

Simmons returns to the child and kneels down. “Hey… it’s all right. I bet Agent May will read more of ‘The Velveteen Rabbit’ to you,” she offers, though she thinks she can guess at the little girl’s hesitancy.

Skye bites her lip and looks into Jemma’s eyes. “Will you come with me?” she asks, in a whisper.

Simmons thinks about this. She understands that Skye is still in a new place with new people, and even that the child has good reason to be distrustful, given past experiences. She also knows however that this is May’s limited, scheduled time with the youngster, and she doesn’t wish to interfere with that. Simmons takes Skye’s hand in hers and pats it gently, giving her a smile. “I’ll
come in with you… but then it’s Agent May’s turn to spend some time with you… and I know that she’s really looking forward to it.”

Skye looks up in surprise. “She is?” At Jemma’s nod the girl looks slightly comforted, but then she looks up again and asks quietly, “and she’s not mad at me?”

Simmons blinks. “Honey, of course not. You didn’t do anything wrong. You weren’t supposed to be in that room, but it’s Agents Mack and Bobbi’s fault, for inviting you in, and mine, for allowing it,” she admits, sheepishly. “You’re not in trouble.”

Skye nods slowly, looking quite reassured.

Jemma smiles again. “Are you ready?” At Skye’s nod, Simmons knocks, and the two enter when they hear, ‘come in’.

As soon as they enter, May comes to greet the little girl. “Well, finally,” she states. “I have waited all day for some time with you,” she admits rather honestly.

Melinda gives the girl a gentle tickle, and feels warmed by the giggle this elicits.

“All right, say good night to Simmons,” May prompts. When Skye goes back to Jemma May gives the biochemist a little look. Jemma understands that she is not invited to stay tonight… that May wants the child all to herself for a bit.

Simmons gives a subtle nod, and gives Skye a big hug and a kiss. “Good night, darling. I’ll see you in the morning,” she promises with a smile. At that, she promptly rises and heads out, feeling like she’s missing the little one already.

As soon as Simmons closes the door behind her, she turns to head down the corridor but bumps right into Morse instead. “Oh! Oh, I’m so sorry, I didn’t see…”

Jemma is cut off though as Bobbi wraps her arms around her tightly and kisses the top of her head. The young doctor blinks, and returns the hug, bemused. “Um… is everything all right?” she asks tentatively.

Bobbi, freshly cleaned up and feeling lighter somehow, smiles softly at her and nods. “Yes, honey. I just thought I would share with you what a joy it is, being your S.O. I am very lucky,” she admits, resting a hand gently on Simmons’ shoulder for a moment.

Jemma blinks and blushes a bit. “Oh! Well… I consider myself the lucky one, Agent Morse,” she admits quietly. “But, thank you… so much.”

Morse smiles and nods. “Anyway, if you’re not too busy, I was wondering if you could give me a check-up.”

Simmons stares, wondering if a pod person has replaced her S.O. Morse has only grudgingly submitted to her required check-ups since being allowed out of bedrest a few weeks ago. “Oh… of course!”

Bobbi smiles again and gently takes Jemma’s hand in hers. She leads the way down to the lab.
There Morse changes into a gown while Jemma gathers the usual instruments.

“Um… so, Agent Morse… are you feeling any pain anywhere in particular?” Simmons asks.

Bobbi sighs and turns around, lifting her gown up in the back. “Oh, just here,” she responds casually.

Simmons’ jaw drops as her eyes are drawn to the woman’s red backside, with a few small purple blotches. “Good lord,” she mutters. “Did you… I mean… wh-what happened??” she asks, in shock.

Bobbi, unabashed, shrugs and replies, “oh, Agent May was kind enough to point out some mistakes I’ve been making lately.”

Jemma blinks in utter surprise, then forces herself to stop staring. “Oh, well… all right, um… well, we should probably get some arnica on that. It will help with bruising, and aid in the healing process.”

Bobbi gives Jemma a sympathetic look. “You speak from experience, don’t you, sweetie?” Morse smiles knowingly as Jemma blushes and nods. “Sounds good,” Morse agrees, and turns to lean over the medical table.

Simmons blinks again. “Oh! You want… so, I should… you want me to…”

Bobbi raises her eyebrows at the young woman. “Yes, Jemma. You are my doctor.”

“Right,” Simmons mutters, blushing once again and fetching the cream. She very gently applies a layer of the soothing ointment on the warm, abused skin, very careful not to hurt her S.O.

That done, Morse straightens back up and gives the gentle doctor a smile. “Thank you, honey.”

It is obvious to Bobbi that Jemma is a bit flustered still when she attempts to nonchalantly say, “no problem.”

“Now… poke and prod away,” Bobbi adds, willingly, if not enthusiastically.

“Um… would you like to sit down here?” Simmons offers, gesturing to a cushioned chair. The young woman knows that it would be much more bearable on a sore backside than the firm medical table.

“Nope, but thank you,” Bobbi says determinedly, lowering the table for Jemma and sitting on it with barely a wince.

Jemma stifles a small smile, her admiration of her S.O. growing more and more by the minute…

May notices the sadness in Skye’s expression as the child watches her favorite playmate leave. She hurries to distract her.

“Trip has been waiting for you to come back, too,” she adds gently, bringing the youngster her beloved monkey. Skye’s expression changes once again, to one of love and adoration as she hugs
her precious monkey to her.

May wonders about this as she helps Skye change into her pajamas. Before pulling up the little girl’s pants, she gently rubs some more Arnica, which Jemma had left on the bedside table, onto the bruise on Skye’s hip. The bruise is a deep purple color now, though it somehow doesn’t seem to bother the child much. As she does this, she says carefully, “Trip is pretty special, isn’t he?”

Skye nods, gazing at her monkey almost as a mother would a child.

May now carefully pulls the girl’s pajama pants up into place, avoiding the bruise. Smiling gently at the little one, she adds casually, “how come Trip is so special to you? Do you really love monkeys?”

Skye thinks for a second, then shakes her head. “No… tigers are my favorite.”

May makes a mental note of this for the future. “I see. Then, why is Trip so special to you?”

Skye fidgets, scuffing her toes on the ground, her eyes lowered. She gives a small shrug, but it is hesitant. Agent May knows that there is more behind this, but decides not to push.

“Okay, bǎo bèi*, maybe you’ll tell me another time.”

Skye looks up, confused. “What?”

May smiles. “Bǎo bèi. It means ‘darling’… like Jemma calls you.”

Skye blinks, then smiles, deciding that she likes it.

The normally stoic agent smiles warmly and pats the little girl’s back. “Okay bǎo bèi, go get your book.”

May spends the next 10 minutes or so reading quietly to Skye (and Trip, whom Skye is cuddling tight). She tries to answer the inquisitive little girl’s questions about vocabulary and plot line, but feels a tad bit relieved when the questions die down and Skye’s eyes finally close. She reads one more page very softly to make sure, then kisses the little girl’s forehead and snuggles down with her for the night.

For the second night in a row Melinda doesn’t sleep very well. It has been about 7 years since she has slept cuddled up to anyone and the particular someone cuddled up to her now is a squirmer. She finds that she doesn’t mind it much though… the truth is, she wouldn’t trade it for the world.

To Be Continued in Chapter 3

*Update 11/29/16: Due to feedback from a very kind native Mandarin speaker, I have changed the term of endearment that May uses for Skye. 'Qianjin' has become the more appropriate ‘bǎo bèi’. Sorry for any confusion!
I appreciate all positive feedback on my works, and it encourages me to post more. Thank you for every 'Kudos' that you leave, and for telling me what you enjoy about my writing. Happy Reading!

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