

ii. Excelsior

A/N: I hate Brutasha, so I'm just going to make it not happen in this. Just like Staron will not happen in the Civil War part of the fanfic. Just to make that clear.

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Auralie looked around the room. Tony had gone all out for their celebration of Hydra's setback. She looked around. Maria and Natasha were in dresses, Steve and the other boys were in nice clothes, no one was dressed for work, although they all had weapons on hand.

Auralie had gotten dressed up too, or as dressed up as she ever got. She wore a pair of black leggings and a white tank top, and a long, goldish brown cardigan. She played with her hair as she made her way through the crowd of people, most of whom she didn't know. She spotted a few she recognized, like Rhodey, but no one she really felt comfortable initiating a conversation with.

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She found Thor and a bottle of Asgardian liquor surrounded by a group of partygoers and she just knew this could not end well.

Nothing involving Thor and alcohol ever did. Auralie sighed, knowing it was up to her to stop the chaos.

Thor seemed to be protesting against giving the people the alcohol, which was good, but they didn't seem to be taking it well. Auralie rolled her eyes. She wasn't legally allowed to drink, but even when she was, she wouldn't. She had seen the Avengers drunk several times, and it seemed to be so stupid. She never wanted to end up like Tony and Clint, standing on a table and singing Part of Your World from the little mermaid. Yes, they did do that.

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"Neither was Omaha Beach blonde," one old man said, "stop trying to scare us."

"Alright," Thor said, pouring the old dude a glass. Auralie ran over and protested, trying to convince her teammate the horribleness of this idea. Both the god and the old man did not listen.

Five minutes later, two other men were carrying the old man out as he muttered, "Excelsior."

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Auralie decided to get away from the mess surrounding Thor and made her way into the crowd. Then she spotted someone and her face lit up. She pushed through the people and made her way over to Steve and Sam Wilson who were playing pool.

In the year since the Washington DC incident, Auralie and Sam had become fantastic friends. Sam had an outlook on life that appealed to her. He savored the good things and worked with her to get through the bad. Plus he was sarcastic and willing to make fun of Steve and his drama with her. Together they had taken on the tasks of finding Bucky and introducing Steve to important things like Star Wars.

"No, no," Sam was saying, "I'm perfectly happy chasing cold leads on our missing person case."

Auralie came up and interjected, "sorry Sam, I really would have helped you, but poor Natasha can't be expected to manage Tony, Clint, and Thor on her own. I mean, Steve has to make the plans and Bruce has to do science stu , so Nat needs me as her back up."

"Hey, no hard feelings," Sam laughed, "I know these people are trouble." He turned back to Steve, "avenging is your world and your world is crazy."

"Truer words have never been spoken," Auralie sighed.

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"But it's a trick," a semi-drunk Clint cried, twirling a drumstick (no explanation there) talking about the hammer.

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"Oh no, it's more than that," Thor assured the archer.

Clint snorted, "yeah, "who shall ever be worthy shall haveth the power," and all. I'm telling you, it's a trick."

Thor gestured to the hammer, a silent challenge, and said, "well please, be my guest."

"Really?" his eyes lit up.

Thor nodded, "yes."

Tony laughed, "Clint, you've had a hard week, we won't hold it against you if you can't get it up."

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"You know I've seen this before right?" Clint said as he reached for the hammer. He pulled on it, but it didn't even budge. Auralie sighed. They had already been over this, the fact that the hammer couldn't be lifted, when Thor le it on top of the Nutella and no one could get to it. Clint groaned, "I still don't know how you do it."

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Tony grinned drunkenly, "smell the silent judgment."

Auralie rolled her eyes. Her teammates were actual five-year-olds. Clint pointed to the hammer, "please, Stark, by all means."

Tony got up and stretched, walking over to the hammer. Natasha sighed, "here we go."

"Never one to shrink from an honest challenge. It's physics," Tony declared, "so if I lift it, I rule Asgard?"

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Thor shrugged, "yes of course."

He grinned, "I will be reinstating Prima Nocta."

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Auralie smirked, "not if Pepper has anything to say about it." She had given up on her dumbass friends ever being responsible and had decided to join in teasing them. Tony ignored her comment (because it was true) and pulled on the hammer. It did not move.

"I'll be right back," Tony said. Being Tony, he could not let this go. He came back a moment later, the Iron Man glove on, and it still didn't work. Once again unable to give it up, he recruited Rhodey to the cause, both wearing their suit gloves of course.

"Are you even pulling?" Rhodey asked.

Tony replied, "are you on my team?"

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"Just represent, pull!"

"All right, let's go!"

It still didn't budge. Auralie rolled her eyes at them and said, "Alright you two, time to give it up. Let Bruce have his turn."

They finally released the hammer and Bruce took their spot. He tugged with all his might, but the hammer did not move, so he released the handle and "hulked out." Everyone laughed at the scientist's roar.

"Let's go, Steve," Tony called, "no pressure."

Steve smiled and walked up to the chopping block. He reached down and tried to lift the hammer. Auralie saw it shift to one side slightly, and she saw Thor look worried, but the hammer did not come up. Steve pulled back and Thor laughed nervously. The supersoldier shrugged, "nothing."

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Tony laughed, reclining back in his chair, and Bruce called, "Widow."

Natasha held up her hand, denying the offer, "oh, no no no, that's not a question I need answered."

"Ali," Tony called grinning at her. Auralie sighed and stood up, making her way over to the hammer. Her fellow Avengers cheered, and she saw her sister leaning forward in anticipation. She reached down and pulled on the hammer. It did not move.

She pulled away and smiled, "I guess I'm not that type of worthy."

"What do you mean?" Maria asked.

Auralie sighed, "a warrior, a king, a god, that's not me. That's not the kind of magic that I'm compatible with."

"You actually believe in it," Bruce said, surprised, "I thought you were an atheist?"

Auralie replied, "I don't believe in a higher power, but I believe in different types of magic. They aren't above us and don't need to be worshiped, but they do exist."

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Tony interjected in the philosophical conversation by saying, "all deference to the man who wouldn't be king, but it's rigged."

"You bet your ass," Clint cried happily.

Maria pointed at Clint accusingly, "Steve, he said a bad language word."

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Steve sighed, looking pointedly at Tony, "did you tell everyone about that?"

"With a little help from me," Auralie singsonged. Steve turned his glare on her and she giggled. Sometimes Steve was just too easy to mess with.

"The handle's imprinted right?" Tony asked, "like a security code. Whosoever is carrying Thor's fingerprints is the exact translation."

"Interesting theory," Thor mused, as he stood up and retrieved his hammer, showing off by flipping it, "I have a simpler one. You're all not worthy."

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Suddenly a metallic screech pierced the friendly atmosphere. Auralie let out a gasp at the surprising sound, exchanging frantic glances with the others, Maria in particular. Maria seemed confused, and Maria was almost never unprepared. That in itself was worrying.

"Worthy," a gravelly voice like gears turning said from beside the elevator, "no, how could you be worthy? You're all killers."