



## viii. Fury and the Hawk

Auralie had just turned 15, when her two good friends, Clint and Natasha, were competing to see who had the weirdest story to tell. Auralie and Maria were listening with amusement.

"I went undercover in Stark tower and survived his tremendous ego, all to figure out that he really isn't someone we want to work with," Natasha bragged, "plus, he was playing ACDC nonstop, and I still haven't gotten it out of my head."

Maria sighed, "yeah, and you singing it non-stop is getting old. Not that you aren't a great singer or anything, but really, you need to stop."

The redhead sighed and lounged back on the couch, propping her feet up on the table. Clint put down his coffee and adjusted the pillows of his armchair. He had a light grin on his face.

"Well," Clint said, "I was part of Coulson's team that went down to New Mexico to investigate this hammer that fell from the sky. No one could lift it. Then, this one night, it was raining super hard, but there was a break in, and this dude with blonde hair tried to take the hammer. I almost shot him, but Coulson wanted to see if he could get the hammer. He couldn't, but later this alien thing almost destroyed the local town, and the dude, who calls himself Thor, got the hammer back and saved the day. It was pretty cool. Coulson got to meet him, but I was petting someone's dog so I didn't get to. Oh, and Coulson got really mad, because his coffee spilled in the attack and you know how Phil is without his coffee."

"So what I'm hearing is, you spent an alien attack, not defending civilians, but petting a local dog," Natasha smirked.

Clint shifted awkwardly, "it was a really fluffy and cute dog."

Maria laughed, "wow Clint, always so professional."

Clint scowled, "you know what, I don't have to put up with this shit." He took out his hearing aids and stuck out his tongue, thinking he had won.

Maria looked at Auralie and mouthed, "he is very mature for a 3 year old." Auralie giggled, looking at Clint's smug expression.

Natasha promptly destroyed that expression by quickly signing, "Wow Clint, if you want to act like a Kindergartner, I can get you a juice box before you go to the time out chair."

"Don't forget his blankie," Auralie added. She couldn't sign as quickly as Natasha, but she was getting good. Clint was teaching her ASL and Natasha was teaching her how to speak Russian, thanks to Auralie's request to be able to swear in another language.

Clint glared at them and put his hearing aids back in, knowing he couldn't escape the sass no matter how hard he tried. Maria, Nat, and Auralie exchanged triumphant smirks. Clint rolled his eyes at the Russian who had become a sister to him, and the two Shield agents that he had befriended, and was now regretting ever talking to.

Auralie snickered at his face, enjoying being around her friends. Clint sighed deeply, "I need a vacation."

"Can I come too," Natasha begged. Auralie laughed. Natasha was always asking to go and see her newborn godson and honorary nephew. She also loved seeing Clint's wife Laura. Auralie and Maria had only met the Barton family recently, when a mission went awry and they needed a place to hide, but they understood why Nat liked them so much. The Bartons had accepted her as one of their own, and family was something Nat hadn't had for a long time, so it was precious to her. As for Maria and Auralie, their family consisted of the two of them, but that was perfectly fine.

Phil Coulson came into the lounge and automatically went for the coffee maker. That man drank more coffee than anyone Auralie knew, except for Clint Barton.

"Shadow, Hill," Coulson said, "Director Fury wants to see you. He says he has a mission to debrief you on."

Maria and Auralie automatically got up. One didn't keep Director Fury waiting. Auralie and Maria exchanged looks, wondering what the mission would be this time. Auralie had been going on missions for 4 months now, never solo missions, because she couldn't drive or anything, but she had done good on missions with Natasha and Maria, and even Clint. The Clint mission had almost gone awry when Barton had nearly crashed the jet, but that wasn't Auralie's fault. Her success, skill, and the fact that she was good at knowing everything that happened around Shield had earned her a place there, and people respected her, even if she was young.

The sisters entered Fury's office, where the one-eyed spy was waiting for them. Auralie had great respect for Fury, who had fought his way to the top and was dedicated to fighting those hell-bent on destroying the world, like terrorist organizations and enemy spies. Fury was terrifyingly efficient, competent, and prepared. Plus he had taken a chance on a 13-year-old with superpowers, and Auralie would always be grateful to him for that.

"Agent Hill, Agent Shadow," He nodded his head towards the seats in front of his desk. Maria and Auralie sat down, waiting for his instructions.

Fury addressed Maria first, "Agent Hill, you have served Shield with dedication and efficiency for many years now. You have rose through the rankings to be one of the finest agents we have ever seen. Now, I want to offer you a promotion. You have the skills to be a fantastic leader, and I could use your assistance running this organization."

He slid an information packet across the table, "here is a file on the position of Deputy Director of Shield. If you accept, you will be my second in command, in charge of helping keep Shield running in an orderly fashion."

Maria's face lit up. She had always wanted to be a leader and rise to the top. She looked at her teenage sister, who grinned back and nodded, encouraging Maria to accept.

Maria turned back to Fury, "thank you for this honor sir. I accept."

"Very good," Fury nodded, his gaze shifting to Auralie, "now, Agent Shadow, I have a mission for you."

Auralie replied, "yes sir, who will I be working with, Clint or Natasha?"

Fury said, "actually, I have decided it's about time we test your skills on a solo mission. It's local, but very important. Someone has been hacking into government files and could release nuclear codes to the web. We've been having trouble finding them, so we need you to track them down and bring them in for interrogation and arrest."

"Yes sir," Auralie responded, "is the suspect known to be armed?"

Fury answered, "we don't know much about them, but we suspect that they carry several firearms."

"Understood," the agent said.

Fury gave her a file and a flash drive, "all other information on the case is stored on here. I trust you can pull this off quickly."

"Of course sir," Auralie nodded, "I won't let you down."

**A/N: I know it might seem like it's taking a long time to get to the actual movie, but I think it's important that I establish Auralie's backstory, life at Shield, and friendships before delving into the movies, so bear with me. Also, I just want to say, Nick Fury is terrifyingly competent and prepared, and I fear for anyone who disrespects him.**

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