

conversation by other means

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by [shellybelle](#)

Summary

Clint and Natasha's first fight will go down in SHIELD legend.

Notes

Written for ashen_key, who gave this prompt over at the Good Ship C/N Promptathon of Magic and Joy: *"Easy sex, where a woman lies on a bed and you get on top of her, isn't very interesting. I'm a man, I like a struggle, a conquest. I just happen to like being the loser, and then made to satisfy the female winner."* - Eric Stanton

Natasha sleeps with six SHIELD agents before she sleeps with Clint.

The problem, she thinks, is that they *know*.

Most of her file is confidential, but some of it, she knows, is common knowledge. She knows the whispers that follow her—*taken as a child, family murdered, trained to seduce, child whore*—and the men she sleeps with know them too, and they try to be *nice*. It's not that they're bad in bed—well, one of them is, but she's not so cruel that she'll tell the world—but they treat her like she's something fragile. They say, “is this okay?” and “am I hurting you?” and when she says, “just *fuck me*” they flinch like she's burned them.

So she goes to find Clint.

She hasn't seen much of him since he brought her in. He checks in on her periodically, asks after her missions, her training, her eval status, but mostly he keeps his distance. She finds him intriguing, the first man she's ever met to truly pique her interest. She wants to take him apart, find out how he works, and put him back together piece by piece.

She finds him in the upper gym, sparring with a junior agent. He's in sweatpants and a US Army t-shirt, stained at the neck and underarms. Sweat shines at his brow and his lips are moving as they fight, and Natasha realizes he's instructing, or critiquing, or something, moving mostly on the defensive. She watches him, appreciating his form, the way he moves, the ripple of hard muscle under his clothing.

He catches her eye and she tilts her head to the side, an unspoken offer. Clint gives her the barest of nods and ends the fight with the junior agent, catching the young man's ankle with his own and taking him down easily. The kid goes down with a grunt and Clint pins him with a knee. “Not bad, Davies,” he says. “What'd you do wrong?”

“I got distracted,” the kid says, with a guilty look at Natasha, and Clint chuckles, the sound low and deep in his throat.

“I was going to say your form was off, but you’re not wrong.” He moves back and gives the kid a hand up. “Off you go, kid. Dismissed.”

The kid gives an aborted salute—former military, then, Natasha thinks; SHIELD agents don’t salute superiors—and leaves, inclining his head at Natasha as he goes. Clint crosses to the side of the ring and picks up a towel and a bottle of water, taking a swig and wiping down his neck before leaning against the ropes, looking down at her. “Agent Romanova,” he greets her.

“It’s Romanoff, now,” she says.

“Is it?” he says, with a tone that says he already knew. “Good to know. What can I do for you?”

Natasha nods at the ring. “Came to spar. No one else puts up a challenge.”

Clint laughs. “Can you blame them? You scare the shit out of people, Nat.”

And yes, that’s what she was missing—his easy laugh, his stupid nicknames, his informality, his utter lack of fear. “If only,” she says, and takes off her shoes, climbing into the ring. “First to pin?”

“Pin and hold,” he says. “And if I look like I can’t breathe, it’d be great if you could ease up. As much as death-by-thigh is a great way to go, I’ve got a car halfway restored and it’d be a shame to not finish.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

The fight will become SHIELD legend.

It starts out slow, like first fights often do. They gauge each other’s strengths and speeds, sizing each other up with careful movements. Natasha catches the way he favors his left leg

ever so slightly, the way he always turns his eyes before his head—an ear injury, she thinks, old enough that he’s learned to compensate. She can see the calculations in his eyes and knows he’s seen that she’s guarding the ribs on her right side, still sore from her last mission, that her balance is just slightly off thanks to the pulled muscle in her big toe. Clint’s eyes are as sharp as hers and she feels a tingle in her fingertips, the thrill of a challenge, knows this isn’t a fight she’ll definitely win.

It’s an intoxicating thought.

By the time they begin to fight properly a small crowd of agents has gathered around the wind. She can hear them exchanging bets, sees the cut of Phil Coulson’s suit stand out against the sea of casual gym clothes, catches the reflection of the gym lights on Nick Fury’s bald head, but it’s all in the background. Clint fights differently here than he did in Russia; there’s less desperation to his movements, less awkwardness—but he was bleeding, then, the room around them filling up with smoke, and he’d been trying to take her down and take her alive. It had baffled her then and it baffled her now but she knows enough to be grateful, and if it’s a red mark in her ledger, at least he’s proved to be the kind of man who doesn’t take advantage of a debt.

Here in the SHIELD gym, though, Clint Barton fights like the man he is: former military, former circus, former car thief, former dancer. He manages to be both fluid and calculating at once, improvising, moving through five or six styles of fighting in the space of a minute—tae kwon do, judo, boxing, krav maga, smooth as honey. He’s grinning, too, close enough that she can see the sweat glistening on his eyelashes, his teeth flashing white. He smells hot and heavy and *good*; she wants to bury her face in his neck and breathe him in and run her tongue over his collarbone until he’s as breathless as she feels.

He’s not a handsome man, but as he drops to the ground and almost manages to take her knees out from under her, Natasha thinks he’s beautiful.

And she fights back: she lands more punches than he deflects, not by much, but enough; she catches his hips between her thighs and knocks him to the ground. She doesn’t bite or scratch or grab his hair—it’s not a dirty fight and she won’t sink to that level unless she has to. He’s got height and mass over her but she has speed and agility, and it’s the most even match she’s had since the Red Room.

In the end, she wins, but barely.

She pins him down to the floor of the ring, straddles him and locks her elbows to fix his wrists to the floor. His eyes meet hers and his pupils are blown dark, his breath ragged and rough. A few strands of Natasha's hair have fallen from her ponytail, sticking to her face. She feels sweaty and worn-out and amazing, her pulse pounding in her ears. "Finished?" she asks him.

Clint gives a hoarse laugh. Under her hands, he closes one hand into a fist and raps his knuckles against the floor three times. Surrender, she thinks, has never looked so good.

In the surrounded crowd, someone cheers out her victory. Natasha looks up at the assembled agents, and she has never felt so included before.

She climbs off Clint and offers her his hand like he'd done for the junior agent. He grins and takes it, lets her pull him to his feet. "Good fight," he says.

Natasha looks at him. He's not so much taller than her, but he's tall enough. She looks him in the eye. "Yes," she says. "Yes, it was."

Clint gazes at her, and he looks at the agents. "Kids," he says. "Shoo."

She has never realized, before, just how easily he commands. The gym is empty in seconds. Coulson is the last to leave, and the door clicks shut behind him, leaving them alone. "Thought they'd never leave," Clint mutters. He steps toward her, into her personal space, she can feel the heat of his body. He puts his hands on her hips, but goes no further. He says, "Natasha."

Natasha curls her fingers into the collar of his t-shirt. Clint is not a nice man, and she doesn't want a nice man, but she likes that he's enough of a gentleman to make the effort. "Yes," she says. "Clint. Yes."

It's not gentle. Clint pushes his fingers into her hair and kisses her, hot and deep like he's plundering her mouth. Natasha kisses back just as fiercely, bites his lip and rakes her nails

down his neck, pushing him down and climbing on top of him. His hands push under her shirt and he finds her nipples with sure fingers, pinching them rough and hard, and Natasha groans into his mouth, grinding her hips against him. She can feel him through the slim fabric of his sweatpants, hard and heavy, she wants to slam herself onto him and ride him until he screams. She breaks the kiss and worms her way down his body, palms his cock through his pants, mouths it until the outline is wet with spit and pre-come. "Fuck," Clint growls, and he rolls them over, pulling his shirt and pants off and stripping her just as efficiently. He pushes her legs apart and buries his face between them, licks a thick line down her slit and plunging his mouth into her, lapping at her clit, and Natasha *moans*.

Clint eats pussy like he fights, rough and harsh and beautiful. Natasha swears at him in Russian and he spreads her with his fingers and fucks her with his tongue, spreads her own moisture over her clit and rubs hard with the pad of his thumb. He scrapes his teeth over her labia and slides two fingers into her to crook against her G-spot and when she comes she clenches her fingernails into his shoulders, hard enough to draw blood. "Come here," she gasps, and when he doesn't she slams him back into the floor, straddles him with shaking thighs. She grasps his cock in one hand and rubs the head over her clit, thrusting her hips against him, and she comes again, hissing through her teeth, and he watches her with half-lidded eyes, his dick wet and gleaming at the head.

"Fuck, Natasha," he says. She moves to slide down onto him and he catches her hips. "Condom."

She pauses. "Are you clean?" SHIELD has mandatory STD screening every month, and she knows every female field agent is required to take some kind of birth control, insurance against assault in the field.

Clint's fingers clench on her hips, and then relax. "Yeah," he says. "Sorry. Force of habit."

Natasha barks out a laugh at the utter ridiculousness of chivalry and slams down onto him, and Clint actually cries out as her ass meets his balls. She reaches down and back to squeeze them and he grabs her hands, pulls them away. She pins his hands in retaliation, shoving them back to the floor of the mat, and rolls her hips, rides him hard. The slap of skin on skin fills the air, punctuated with her gasps, Clint's grunts, *fuck*, she wants to ride him into the ground. He jerks one hand free from her grip and brings it between her legs, rubbing at her clit, and it's good, fuck, too good, too soon, she forces his hand away. Clint shoots her an irritated look and then rolls them over again, smooth enough that he doesn't even slip out of her, and they're close enough to the edge of the ring that she can wrap her fingers around the ropes and prop herself up. He rises up on his knees and fucks up into her, hitting her just right, and

Natasha clenches her hands around the rope, lets herself cry out when his thrusts pick up speed. “Good girl,” Clint rasps, snapping his hips forward. “Come for me.”

Natasha throws her head back and his next thrust pushes her over the edge; she clenches down around him and comes in a rush, heat and cum running between her thighs, and Clint lets out a harsh groan, thrusts in hard, once, twice, then comes inside her, his fingers clenching down on her nipple and his teeth rough at her throat.

They collapse down against the floor of the ring, breathless. Natasha can’t feel her toes and her inner thighs are burning from being spread too wide; her shoulders are wrenched from her awkward grip on the ring, and she can feel bruises blossoming on her neck and breasts. Clint looks just as wrecked, a bruise darkening on his jaw and his eyes closed as he gasps for breath.

He rolls his head to look at her. “So,” he says, like they’re drinking coffee in the mess and she’s just handed him a sugar packet. “SHIELD boys too nice in bed for you?”

“You’re a SHIELD boy,” she reminds him.

Clint grins, slow and lazy. He rolls over and slides his hand into her hair. “I know,” he says. “But not a nice one. You don’t like nice boys, do you, Agent Romanova?”

“Agent Romanoff,” she says.

“Is it?” He slips his tongue into her mouth, runs it over her upper lip, she curls her fingers around his bicep. “Correct me, then,” he says.

She does.

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