

## A whole load of Trust Issues

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/27011059) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/27011059>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a>
Fandoms:	<a href="#">The Avengers (Marvel) - All Media Types</a> , <a href="#">The Avengers (Marvel Movies)</a> , <a href="#">Hawkeye (Comics)</a>
Relationships:	<a href="#">Phil Coulson &amp; Avengers Team</a> , <a href="#">Thor &amp; Avengers Team</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Phil Coulson</a> , <a href="#">Thor (Marvel)</a> , <a href="#">Clint Barton</a> , <a href="#">Tony Stark</a> , <a href="#">Steve Rogers</a> , <a href="#">Natasha Romanov (Marvel)</a> , <a href="#">Bruce Banner</a> , <a href="#">Lucky (Hawkeye)</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Age Regression/De-Aging</a> , <a href="#">Kid Avengers</a> , <a href="#">Chaos</a> , <a href="#">Team as Family</a> , <a href="#">Trust Issues</a> , <a href="#">Implied/Referenced Child Abuse</a> , <a href="#">Past Child Abuse</a> , <a href="#">Hospitals</a> , <a href="#">Animals</a> , <a href="#">Dogs</a> , <a href="#">Family Bonding</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 18 of <a href="#">65 Random Prompts</a> , Part 2 of <a href="#">Of Chosen Families and Utter Chaos</a>
Stats:	Published: 2020-10-22 Words: 4,244 Chapters: 1/1

# A whole load of Trust Issues

by [Banashee](#)

## Summary

Phil's first clue that something must be incredibly wrong is the fact that Thor of all people is calling him.

"My friend, I believe we are in trouble."

"What happened, is everyone okay?" Phil already makes his way to the door, prepared for the worst. Thor doesn't sound too distressed, but that doesn't have to mean anything - he is very much capable of remaining calm when he needs to.

"No one has been harmed, but the others are, well. They are currently children."

Phil stops in his tracks, blinking. That's a new one.

"They are - what. How?"

(...)

In which Phil and Thor find themselves having to parent 5 Avengers, who have been magically turned into children and teenagers of various ages. The situation is just as chaotic as it sounds, especially since neither of the kids seems to trust any of the adults around them.

-

Part 2 of 7

## Notes

Another prompt list thingy with my dear friend @banana\_ink.

Full prompt list can be found here:

<https://banashee.tumblr.com/post/190342596571/65-random-writing-prompts>

Part 2 of 7

What even is a canon timeline? Can you eat that?

## **A whole load of Trust Issues**

Phil's first clue that something must be incredibly wrong is the fact that Thor of all people is calling him.

Not that they don't get along, on the contrary even - but it would be a lie to say that Thor of all the Avengers would be most likely to use a phone. Because he's not. As far as Phil knows, he doesn't even *own* a phone, much to Tony's dismay and despite his fruitless attempts to give him one.

Thor understands midgardian technology well enough, especially if it involves kitchen gadgets or the TV. He's just more interested in other things.

But then Phil's phone is ringing and it's one of the countless SHIELD numbers, which doesn't concern him much. However, he quickly is concerned when Thor of all people greets him and pretty much does so with,

"My friend, I believe we are in trouble."

"What happened, is everyone okay?" Phil already makes his way to the door, prepared for the worst. Thor doesn't sound too distressed, but that doesn't have to mean anything - he is very much capable of remaining calm when he needs to.

"No one has been harmed, but the others are, well. They are currently children."

Phil stops in his tracks, blinking. That's a new one.

"They are - what. How?"

Thor takes one very deep breath, then he starts to explain the situation to Phil while he makes his way into the garage and his car. His tale is long and flowery, typical for the resident god of thunder, but what it boils down to is this:

On their latest mission, the Avengers have come across a secret facility full of unknown technology. Unfortunately, said secret facility hadn't been nearly as empty as they'd thought or hoped for. Things happened, and due to a combination of strange devices and magic, 5 out of 6 Avengers have been turned into literal kids, ranging from small children to teenagers.

As far as they can tell by now, they are themselves, mentally and physically as they were at the time.

Well, shit.

Phil allows himself to curse, and Thor waits patiently for him to finish, humming as if in agreement.

“We are at SHIELD right now, and your Doctors want to take a look at them - no one is happy about it.”

He sighs before he continues, carefully conversationally,

“Did you know that Clint is very good at throwing knives even this young? The Doctors are both bothered and, dare I say scared, because even as a 14-year old, Hawkeye has most excellent aim...”

“Thor, how bad is this situation?” Phil asks, because yeah. He very much knows his friend's history. There is no way in hell that this is going to end well - even as an adult, the archer can't stand the medical personnel. Him dealing with them as a teenager only asks for trouble.

“Very bad.” Thor answers honestly.

“I'm trying to keep the damage to a minimum here, but I fear that I'm going to need help.”

“I'm on my way. Please tell the medics to wait for me to arrive, or this isn't going to end well. You know their files. They won't trust anyone.”

“Aye.” Something crashes in the background, and Thor sighs heavily, collecting himself.

“See you, Phil.” And with that, he hangs up the phone, leaving Phil to ponder over this situation on his own.

Fucking hell. Phil curses again and drives faster.

The first thing he sees when walking into the medical area of the SHIELD base, is a scalpel stuck in a wall. It's embedded quite a bit, almost on eye level for most people. Phil has a pretty good guess who is responsible for this.

Only seconds later, his hunch proves to be right because a scrawny boy with a blond mop of hair and clothes that are way too big is sprinting right past him, headed towards the door.

“Suck it, asshole!” the boy yells as he flips off the panting doctor who is running after him with a few feet of distance that he can't seem to cross, no matter how hard he tries. Another scalpel flies through the air.

Phil casually side steps the knife. Clearly, his request to wait got ignored.

At least the door doesn't open from the inside unless a key card or registered fingerprint is used. Teenage-Clint finds this out very soon, snarling in frustration when it traps him in the hallway with at least two other people.

His sharp blue eyes flicker through the hallway, clearly looking for a way out, or at least an opportunity to hide. It comes to no surprise at all that his gaze stops at the ventilation system.

At least, he seems to have ran out of knives, but that doesn't mean much. Give him a little time and he'll find new projectiles - he's skilled and creative, both traits that SHIELD normally likes in their agents.

Before Clint can make a decision, Phil steps closer. He keeps his distance and his hands clearly visible and casually hanging by his side in an attempt not to spook the boy even more. As much as Clint is posturing and spewing insults, Phil knows he must be terrified. He doesn't want to make this situation any worse than it is.

"Can I help you?" He asks, voice calm and holding every bit of authority and *Agent Coulson On Duty* in it.

"Yes, you can! Sir, this boy-" the doctor starts, clearly outraged, but Phil interrupts him, holding up a hand to stop him from talking.

"Actually, I was talking to Clint." he replies, and it sends the man spluttering. Phil doesn't care - he'll live. His main priority is the wellbeing of the children, and since Clint is already here, he'll start with trying to get his attention and maybe, possibly a fraction of... Maybe trust would be a little much. But something like it - anything to make a good start.

The sound of his name makes the boy's head snap around.

"Who are you?" he asks, looking directly at Phil with narrowed eyes, clearly suspicious. Entirely unsurprising, he doesn't trust a soul around here.

Despite not knowing what exactly went down here, from the looks of the situation Phil just walked into, it can't have gone too well.

Careful to keep his face and posture open and non-threatening, he turns towards the teenager who is still glaring daggers through him.

"My name is Phil." he says, and then adds, "I know this is a strange situation. But we know each other - or at least, the adult-you, so to say, knows me. We've been friends for many years."

"Uh-huh. Sure."

Clint glares daggers into Phil, but at least it doesn't look like he wants to attack him. For now. This entire conversation is like walking on eggshells next to a sleeping tiger. But Phil has one advantage: years of knowing Clint and his file.

He doesn't fool himself into thinking that every single shitty situation and turn of events he's lived through made it into those files, especially since Clint is pretty tight lipped about some things, even with close friends.

But still: it's a lot more than nothing.

Phil decides to go the safe way. He is immensely grateful that the doctor remains quiet and motionless in the background for now. One issue at a time.

"What do you remember before getting here, Clint?"

"I... I think I was old. Not sure what I was doing, but it must have gone to shit real fast." He shakes his head a little bit, disbelieving.

"At the same time, I remember having training with Tricksh- oh fuck." He pales visibly. "Trickshot. He'll be pissed as hell. I need to go back like, right now."

His eyes are wide when talking about his mentor, and Phil knows why.

If that man wasn't already dead by the time Clint joined SHIELD, Phil would have been tempted to make him disappear.

"I'm afraid that won't be possible. Physically, I mean." Phil explains carefully, because really - where do you even begin to explain a situation like this?

"What the fuck does that mean?" Clint demands to know. The question shoots out of his mouth faster than a bullet. Phil is going to have to be very careful with this conversation - he does his best.

"Clint." he says quietly. "Do you know what year it is?"

"Do I - listen I know I'm not the brightest candle in the box, but seriously? It's 1996, what the hell kinda question is that?"

Slowly, Phil shakes his head no.

"This is not an insult, I promise. It's currently 2015. October 14th, to be precise." On a short notice, and because he doesn't have any further proof for now, he pulls out his smartphone, showing the time and date.

Clint still looks at him in disbelief, trying to figure out if this is all some kind of big joke. But the strange, modern phone and the date - it takes his air away for a moment.

“Right.” Clint says, “That doesn’t explain why this asshole here” he jerks his head in the direction of the irritated doctor, “keeps wanting to get his hands on me.”

Shit. Phil cringes inwardly - this, exactly this was the reason he’d asked them to wait. Damn SHIELD and their tight time frames.

“They want to make sure you guys are okay.” Phil explains carefully, unsurprised when that gets him a scoff.

“Sure.”

No trust - he kinda expected that, too. He’ll have to go about this differently, or they’ll never get anywhere.

“Are you okay with a deal, Clint?”

“What kind of deal?” His blue eyes glare daggers and he still looks wary - scared, and unwilling to show it.

“How about this: You can help me to find the other kids. No one is going to touch any of you.” he pauses for a second. “No stabbing or throwing knives please.” Phil adds, hoping it’ll ease the situation for Clint. Instead of calming down though, he all but explodes.

“I *said* , don’t touch me. He still did and I didn’t *do* anything before that!” Clint snarls angrily.

The doctor looks more sorry than annoyed now - he seems to come to the conclusion that his approach to this situation really wasn’t the best. If he could, he’d probably disappear into thin air at the spot. No such luck - maybe, just maybe Coulson can manage to prevent a disaster, he hopes faintly.

Phil holds the boy’s gaze, calm and collected. His answer now is probably going to determine if he even has a chance to earn this kid’s trust.

“Fair enough. Warn first, stab later?” is what he proposes, and Clint seems to seriously consider the whole offer. In the background, the doctor pales visibly.

“Alright.” he says, shrugs in an attempt to look more relaxed than he is. The look in his eyes is still wary, but he doesn’t seem to distrust Phil as much. Right now, he really can’t hope for more. Earning this kid’s trust will be hard work, and he really can’t imagine this will be much easier with the other kids.

“Thank you.” Phil shoots him a small smile. “And for whatever it is worth to you, but I won’t let anyone harm you. That’s a promise.”

Clint doesn't say anything, looking down to his feet. He isn't used to hearing reassurances and doesn't know how to react to them. How to believe in them. It's easier to just ignore.

Despite all that, he walks beside Phil with a few feet of distance. All things considered, it's a win.

It doesn't take long to find the others - truth be told, all they have to do is follow the chaos. When they round the corner, they are greeted by the sight of a very frazzled looking Thor with a dark haired boy of maybe 12 years or so clinging to his back. The boy seems to be able to talk a mile a minute without breathing and it looks like he's been at it for quite some time - Tony, then. No doubt. He's always had a habit to ramble on and on when he is anxious, it seems.

Scattered around them are three other kids, who must be Natasha, Steve and Bruce.

Steve looks even younger than he probably is, due to his bony frame and the fact that he looks terrified. At the same time, he's making an effort to look taller than he is. He's all but drowning in his clothes, which look like they might be an agent's gym clothes - maybe Natasha? Even as an adult she is pretty short, although no less deadly. All of the kids seem to wear borrowed clothes, since their uniforms would not fit at all.

Right now though, Natasha is young and tiny, maybe 6 years old at most, and she's glaring daggers into the room while simultaneously clutching Steve's hand. Her gaze shifts immediately when she notices steps coming closer.

Bruce looks just a little bit older than her, and he's trying to make himself as small and invisible as possible. He is quiet and doesn't look anyone in the eye - in fact, all that's visible of him is a tuft of wild brown curls visible behind a book from under a chair in the waiting area.

"Phil! Thank the allfather, you're here." Thor smiles at him, widely and keeping his tone light, but Phil can tell that he's out of his depth and probably walking on eggshells around the traumatized kids who used to be his very much grown teammates just this morning.

He smiles back, taking in the room while he does so.

"Hey, Thor. Sorry it took so long."

Seeing 5 of his favourite people so small, distrusting and vulnerable just about breaks Phil's heart. However this is going to go, he'll make damn sure these kids are safe, well-fed and happy.



He's always been protective of his agents, and the Avengers are no exception. One might say that Phil is even more protective of them because they're family to him. Most of them are superhuman or at the very least, highly capable and badass, very much able to defend themselves - and yet...

In retrospect, Phil wouldn't be able to tell how exactly he and Thor manage to keep this situation under control.

They make sure that the doctors don't ever touch anyone without asking first. It doesn't stop them, especially Clint from glowering at them in the process.

As it turns out, as distrusting as he is of any adult (although Phil and Thor seem to be on neutral territory at least), he is very much protective of the other kids. All of them have turned out younger than him and Clint immediately puts himself in between the doctors and the other children. The doctor who ran after him in the hallway is nowhere to be found, though.

Things go over without any major incidents, but it is clear that none of the kids is comfortable. Everyone does their best, and by the end of it, only a few things fly through the air, courtesy of Clint and his good aim and Natasha picking up a new skill in a terrifyingly short time span.

Neither of them lets any of the adults near them, let alone touch them. The doctors start to protest, but Phil shuts them down - there are no visible signs of injury and none of the kids complain about anything when asked. He doesn't want to traumatize them any more unless absolutely necessary, which is a scenario he very much hopes to avoid.

Clint doesn't say anything after that, but he is shooting Phil a curious look, as if he couldn't believe he actually kept his promise so far.

At least this time, he doesn't throw anything heavy or sharp after the doctor.

Tony refuses to let anyone near him, not trusting them enough to do so. He swears and insults them when they try, but it is enough to stop them and he doesn't do anything to physically attack them.

However, he gets bored halfway through and starts taking apart a nearby chair. Lord knows where he managed to find a screwdriver here in SHIELD medical. Once he's done, Tony spends the next few minutes sorting it's parts on the floor in order from smallest to biggest, then reversing the whole thing. He ignores the pulsing vein in the doctor's forehead - he's well practised in that particular skill.

Bruce and Steve are the easiest two to deal with by far, and there are no incidents with either.

Unless you count being turned back into children in the first place, no one got harmed and all in all, it could be much worse.

Thor and Phil share a “What the fuck are we supposed to do?”-Look over the kids' heads as they head out, piling into a SHIELD issued van and drive off.

It is decided that they will go back to the tower - it is their home, first of all, and it's safer than most places. They'll figure out how to move on from there.

JARVIS greets them all in the private elevator, making the kids jump and collide into each other.

“Apologies, I did not mean to scare anybody.” the AI explains, and there are quiet curses and relieved giggles here and there.

“Hey, you sound just like Jarvis!” Tony blurts out, looking up at the ceiling where the speakers sit.

“Indeed, as my voice was very much designed after Edwin Jarvis. However, unlike him, I am not human.”

“That's cool. Is he here, though?” Tony asks, his dark brown eyes sparkling hopefully. He is desperate to find a familiar face here, but JARVIS has to disappoint him.

“I'm afraid not, Sir.”

“It's okay. Thanks.” He smiles up at the ceiling again, but the spark fades quickly. Nonetheless, he is happy to hear a voice he knows well. It must be comforting.

As soon as the elevator door opens to the living room, the tell-tale clicking-sounds of an excited dog travel closer and closer to the entry. Moments later, Lucky appears.

The kids perk up, and the sight of the large, fuzzy dog makes all 5 of them light up like christmas trees.

Lucky barks and jumps, tail wagging wild enough to clear a table if there was one near him.

Something is strange, because there are so many new people, but they all smell familiar. Lucky jogs closer, sniffing the familiar scents and waiting for cuddles.

Lucky doesn't know the boy who kneels down on the floor, but the hand that he offers him to sniff smells just like his human. He licks it affectionately, then leaning into it.

“Hello there, who are you?” Clint asks the dog softly, and gently scratches Lucky’s ears as soon as he allows him to. It doesn’t take long at all, and Lucky is living his best life.

“This is Lucky. He’s very friendly, as you can see.”

Surprising absolutely no one, Clint is instantly in love. And even more so, this is probably the calmest and happiest he’s ever been since the whole age regression debacle.

Clint is significantly more relaxed the longer he spends petting the dog. He even smiles a little when Lucky flops down on his lap, belly up and expectantly looks at him from upside down.

“You want some more love, huh? Alright, then.”

Lucky whines softly, and only stops when the belly scratches begin.

Lucky is an absolute hit with the kids, and with the way he lets himself be cuddled you’d think that dog had never gotten love for a day in his life. Typical Lucky, Phil thinks with a small smile. He’s sure that the dog will make things a whole lot easier - he knows that Lucky picks up on mood swings, which results in him being glued to Clint’s side sometimes, when the bad days hit. He’ll also attach himself to other residents of the tower - he might be technically Clint’s, but when it comes down to it, Lucky has turned into the Avengers Family Dog by now.

“Who does he belong to?” Clint asks when Phil crouches down next to Lucky, and the dog nestles into his hand, licking it as soon as Phil starts scratching the good spot behind his ear.

“He’s yours.” Phil says, smiling when Clint’s head shoots up and looks him directly into the eyes in utter disbelief.

“You’re kidding.”

“Absolutely not.” Smiling down at the dog, Phil continues, “You, well, adult-you, rescued him a few years back. He probably recognizes your scent even though you look different right now.”

Everyone Aww’s and Oooh’s at that, and Clint looks down onto the sprawling limbs of dog on the floor. Lucky is perfectly happy getting this much attention, the spoiled good boy.

“Wow.”

After a little while, he adds, “He likes you a lot, does he?”

“Yeah. I think he does.” Phil leaves it at that, so Clint can make of it whatever he wants.

“That’s good.” the words are spoken quietly enough to be ignored, but Phil takes it as another progress.

This conversation makes him think back to something that Clint had told him many years back, when they ended up stranded on a farm due to a mission.

On this particular day, Phil had found himself bulldozed by a tibetian mastiff, laying flat on his back in the mud - suit, gun, sunglasses and all, with a very happy giant dog sitting on his chest and drooling all over him.

The sight had cracked Clint up with laughter, and he simply sat down next to his handler, petting the dog’s large head with no intention of helping Phil up at that point. Even more so, Phil let it all happen without thinking it over.

“He likes you.” Clint had said back then, and Phil had forced out a pressed,

“I think my blood circulation is cut off.” but making no effort to actually dislodge the dog, running a hand through his thick fur instead, tolerating the dog drool slowly seeping into his white shirt.

“Animals know good people.” Clint had said then, much more quietly and not looking at Phil, eyes fixed on the dog.

“It sounds stupid, but I don’t trust someone when they’re mean to animals. Or when an animal doesn’t trust them - there’s always a good reason.” He shrugged, then, a little bit self conscious, but Phil had understood it as the little hint that it was.

Phil thinks of this day and this conversation now while he is surrounded by his best friends currently turned into kids, and the wonderful mutt who brightens up every dark day.

Deciding to use the time while the kids are distracted with the dog, Phil gets up to find a quiet room to call Dr. Strange.

He’s helped them occasionally, especially when a fight involved unknown magic. This time though, he only gets an automatic message.

“Hello, you called Dr. Steven Strange. I’m currently busy and can’t answer your call. Please press 1, if you...”

“Goddammit.” Phil curses, navigating his way through the ridiculous menu. Finally, there is a beep and he can leave his message.

“Steven, Hi, this is Phil. Please call back as soon as you can, we have a situation here - it looks pretty permanent for now and we would appreciate any help.”

He is not sure what to say next, so he just hangs up his phone. What else is there to say, really.

Phil is tired, and doesn't know what to do.

He takes a minute in the kitchen, preparing a pot of tea just to stay busy to collect his thoughts in the meantime.

From the living room, he can hear the kids laugh and play with Lucky and can't help but smile a bit. It's good to know they're safe and at least for now, happy. Who knows what they would do without this wonderful dog? Phil really doesn't want to think about it.

“What a day.” Thor is shaking his messy blond hair as he enters the room and leans against the kitchen counter. He looks worn out, which is impressive for him. Phil suspects that it's mostly the worry for his teammates. Both of them are gazing back through the doorway, watching for a moment.

Then, Thor turns to his friend and asks,

“Did you talk to Steven Strange yet? I don't think he likes me very much”

Phil actually chuckles at that.

“Is it *maybe* possible that this has something to do with his valuable equipment and your *slightly stormy* personality not matching up?” he asks, reaching up to elbow Thor in the ribs - not that he'll feel it through his armour, but still. A quiet rumble of laughter is the Thunder God's answer.

“Something like that.” he says, grinning slightly despite everything.

Phil smiles back, but he's shaking his head no and his smile fades again.

“I couldn't reach him, unfortunately. I left a voicemail. Let's hope he won't take too long to answer.”

“Hmm.” Thor doesn't say anything for a while.

They quietly prepare the tea instead, and when they walk out into the living room, carrying tablets with mugs, sugar and the pot, things don't look nearly as bad as they had feared just a few hours ago.

They can do this.

\*+~

Prompt No. 12 - Run away

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!