

The Great Nerf War

by David Carner

A long time ago in a...wait...that's not this story. Oh. Chuck Bartowski has a new apartment, and is reminded of an old way of meeting people. Sarah Walker, just HAPPENS to live right across from him, and recognizes said way of meeting people. It's a CIA exercise. What happens when a nerd and an ex-CIA agent meet? I'm writing it. You should know. Fluff. ALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL the fluff. Also a small twist on cannon. Welcome to The Great Nerf War.

Rated: T · Genre: Friendship, Humor, Romance · Chapters: 2

Chapter 1: The Great Nerf War Ch 2

A/N: Was supposed to be a quick one shot or OTP. Welp...that didn't happen. I was GOING to wait until the whole thing was done, but, I also am the guy who sometimes gives a Christmas present as soon as I buy it. So here you go, more fluff. From me. Hope you enjoy it.

Disclaimer: I don't own Chuck

He looked around the new apartment and surveyed how much he had accomplished.

Living room furniture arranged the way Ellie thought it should be. Check

Bookshelf arranged the way he thought it should be. Check.

Keys by the door. Check.

Gripping anxiety of moving out of his sister's apartment, moving across town, and having his own place. Check. Check. And check.

He smiled. Since the... "incident" at Stanford it had been a long road, but Chuck had gone back to school, graduated, and now was working for a computer security startup.

He smiled. Things felt right. He glanced around the apartment and his face fell.

He saw them.

The house warming gift Awesome had brought. The one Ellie had clearly not been in favor of.

Two Nerf guns, both loaded with ammo, and an entire box of back-up ammo.

He shook his head. It was Awesome, trying to be...well...Awesome

Bro, I know the last time you used this it worked.

The words rang through Chuck's head and Awesome was right.

He had met his best friend in college using the Nerf guns at Stanford.

He had met Bryce.

The fraternity had actually encouraged The Great Nerf War and had provided the guns.

Their belief, if you have trouble making friends with your neighbors, then give a Nerf gun to your neighbor as a greeting gift.

The rules, if the neighbor fires on you, then the war is on. There was no pause unless both parties agreed on it.

His next door neighbor at the frat...Bryce.

The two became inseparable.

Until they weren't, which was when Chuck was suspended.

Chuck looked at the guns, shook his head, and left the living room.

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He came back into the living room a little while later, freshly showered. He was wearing his lounge pants and a tee shirt. He sat down on the couch and had to admit the site lines were perfect for the TV.

He went to turn on the TV when he heard the keys go into the apartment door across the hall. Chuck froze and slowly turned his head. His eyes landed on the Nerf guns. He turned back to the TV. The one that wasn't on. He kept staring at it, wanting his finger

to push the power button on the remote. It never came on.

He stood, walked over to the door and stopped. He stared at the guns. He looked at both and picked up the one he thought was better.

He opened the door, took a deep breath, and walked out of his apartment.

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Sarah was staring at her refrigerator. It was empty. It was always empty. She had lived for years out of cans or MREs. She shut the refrigerator door, opened the cupboard and looked at the cans.

It was an old habit. One she should get rid of. But it was familiar and easy.

At least she didn't dive into goodwill overnight clothing bins any more to find new clothes. That was one her father had taught her.

She was out of the CIA. She was out of conning. After the mess with Bryce....

She had a real job now...a real career. She was a translator, and a good one. No. A great one. It paid well. She had medical insurance, a 401k, and most importantly she wasn't being shot at.

She would say no one was trying to stab her but there were interoffice politics. It was nothing she couldn't handle. In fact, it amused her.

She reached for a can of pasta in sauce. She thought she should at least warm it up before she ate it, or at least put it in a bowl instead of eating it straight out of a can, when she heard it.

There was a staccato knock on the door. She literally moved her body away from the cupboard door to look at the front door, as if doing so would allow her to see who was outside.

She rolled her eyes at herself, shut the cupboard door, and walked across the living room ready to be amused at whoever was going to try and sell her whatever.

She looked out the peephole in the door and pulled her head back, amused. She didn't know door to door salesmen could be so tall.

She also had never seen one with a plastic gun before. She reached over to the drawer of the table by the door and pulled her own gun.

She didn't think he'd have one of those 3D printed ones she'd heard about, but if he did and was stupid enough to let her see it was going to be the last stupid thing he did.

She gripped the gun when she saw him look down, back up, and then almost cartoon like, he glanced down again, horror on his face.

"Oh God!" He exclaimed, looking up at the key hole and thrusting the gun out in front of him in both of his hands. "It's a Nerf gun! I come in peace!"

Sarah Walker had seen a LOT of things in her life. She wasn't sure when something had amused her more.

She opened the door, with one hand, and slid the gun she had back into the drawer, and slid it shut, deftly, with the other.

"Hi!" The tall man who was obviously freaking out said. "I'm Chuck Bartowski, your next door neighbor."

"Hi," Sarah replied.

He thrust the gun at her. "It's loaded. It's something I did in college."

She glanced down at the gun and then back at him.

"Please, take it," he said. She reached out and took the Nerf gun in her hand, never taking her eyes off of his. "So, it's your call. When we moved in, to get to know our neighbors better, or just break the ice, we had 'The Great Nerf War.'"

She didn't say anything, and she never let it show, but inside, she tensed.

"If you decide to participate, you take a shot at me whenever you see me," Chuck explained. "Once it begins, though, the war cannot end until both sides agree to a truce."

"I see," she answered, her eyes still locked with his. She was studying him. She was somewhat confused and surprised. This...this didn't make sense.

"Like I said, your call," Chuck told her. He stood there a second, and then nodded. "Okay, good to meet you neighbor."

She nodded, and closed the door. She watched through the keyhole, as he stood there a second. He then turned and went back into his apartment. After he shut the door, she tossed the Nerf gun onto the table, and stared at it in disgust.

She walked back to the refrigerator, and opened the door. She grabbed the bottle of wine, pulled it out, took off the cap, and drank straight from the bottle.

Who the hell was this guy, and why was he running a CIA exercise?

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It had been two days since he had knocked on her door. The Nerf gun still laid on the table by the front door.

She was pissed.

There was no other way to describe it. Since she had left the agency, she still tracked people's movements. She still knew where every exit was located. She still did the unconscious things her father and the CIA had taught her.

But now, she was doing conscious work. Work she had never wanted to do again.

She had out her small notebook at all times, making notes on the tall man with curly hair across the hall from her. Any time she heard his door open, she would move quickly and silently to her peephole to see what was going on, and make notes.

She still wasn't sure what to do with everything she had gathered. He was either the greatest spy she had ever encountered in her life...or he wasn't a spy.

He didn't keep a low profile. He talked to everyone.

She had watched him in the lobby of the apartment building. If he knew she was watching him he didn't show it. She scoffed. Of course he didn't know she was watching

him.

She never saw him offer anyone else a Nerf gun.

She was currently leaning against her counter in the kitchen, staring daggers into the Nerf gun, sipping a glass of wine.

She reached over, and grabbed the note book. Chuck Bartowski. Probably Charles. Six foot three or four. Approximately one hundred ninety pounds. Little to no apparent physical training.

She had watched him get mail out of his mailbox, lose his grip on it, and nearly crash into a wall trying to secure the envelope.

Again, either he was the greatest spy there ever was, or he was a civilian.

But if he was a civilian, why did he know about The Great Nerf War?

It wasn't that he just knew about it, he called it the proper name.

Bryce used to brag about how he used it in the past to meet his mark.

She shook her head, put down the notebook, and picked up her glass of wine. She stopped mid-way through bringing the glass to her mouth, hearing a knock on the door across the hall.

She moved quickly and silently over to the peephole, and saw a short man with an impressive beard be welcomed by Chuck. The short man went inside and Chuck shut the door.

She moved over to the couch, and picked up the headset to listen in on the bug she had planted in his apartment.

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It had been about thirty minutes of the two of them gaming, when Morgan paused the game.

"Something wrong, Buddy?" Chuck asked.

"I should be asking you," Morgan pointed out. "Twice you've had me dead to rights, and twice you were slow to react on the shot. What's eating you, Chuck?"

"Nothing," Chuck replied, shaking his head. He got up, and took his glass into the kitchen to refill it. Morgan followed. "Really, nothing."

"Uh-huh," Morgan agreed. "Chuck, buddy. You've been my bestest bud my whole life, and I know when your nothings are nothings and when they're something. That nothing was a serious something." Chuck stood at the counter, and looked at his friend. "I think...I think I made someone not like me."

"Oh," Morgan said, nodding. "As bad as in ninth grade when you were looking at Becky, walked into the trash can, flipped into it, your tray flew out of your hand, and your uneaten Jell-o hit Mr. Saterly in the face?"

Chuck was silent a moment. "I...I don't know," Chuck admitted.

"Okay, tell Uncle Morgs what's wrong," Morgan said. Chuck started to protest and Morgan held up his hand. "Chuck."

"Fine," Chuck muttered. "I...Awesome brought over some Nerf guns, thinking I'd have trouble meeting people, and building a relationship with them." "When do you have building a relationship with people?" Morgan asked.

"Normal people," Chuck replied as gently as possible. "Fair," Morgan said.

"So, I knocked on my next door neighbor's door and realized I was holding a gun, and kinda freaked out and made her take it and told her everything, and she shut the door in my face," Chuck confessed.

Morgan stood there, attempting to hold a straight face. "So, you didn't get her name or nothing?" Morgan asked.

"No," Chuck said. "I knew it was a stupid idea to try it. But Awesome kept saying it helped me meet people."

"Didn't Bryce give the gun to you in college?" Morgan asked. Across the hall, Sarah nearly dropped the headphone she was holding against her ear.

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It was eleven o'clock, and she still couldn't sleep. His friend had said Bryce.

Chuck Bartowski had met Bryce when Bryce had given Chuck a Nerf gun.

Bryce. It wasn't possible was it?

She huffed, and threw her covers off of her. She padded over to the closet, and began to dig. She found what she was looking for a few minutes later. She pulled out the phone, and hesitated.

She didn't want to do this, but she needed some help. She didn't have access any more like she used to.

She could make the call, or go back to bed and toss and turn for the rest of the night. She gritted her teeth and typed.

You up?

She stared at it, and knew what the answer would be if she sent the message. She hit send.

She laid the phone down and a second later phone dinged.

For you, always. Followed by a winky face emoji and a smiley face emoji.

Sarah couldn't help but roll her eyes, amused. She hit the call button.

"Late night booty call?" the teasing voice asked on the other end.

"No, I need help," Sarah said.

"Always straight to business," the voice on the other end answered. "Never any foreplay with you." "Carina," came Sarah's tired voice.

"Finnneeee," Carina replied. "What's the problem?"

Sarah explained it to her in detail.

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"So, want me to come over and interrogate him?" Carina asked. "It sounds like I might break him, and you know I'm not into buying anything."

"I just need you to run a check on him," Sarah said. "I don't need you to sexually harass him."

"Sexually harass?" Carina asked, hurt in her voice. "Blondie, it wouldn't be any harassment."

"That is for the person you are harassing to decide," Sarah gently reminded her.

"Hmmp," Carina grunted. "Fine, I'll do the boring job. What are you going to do?"

"If it's a trap, I need to spring it," Sarah said. She had been thinking about this for two days now. She knew what she needed to do.

"Time for The Great Nerf War?"

"Yeah," Sarah answered. "I need to know the answer."

"Be careful, Blondie," Carina told her. "The odds of this being a civilian aren't high."

"Do I detect worry in your voice?"

"No," Carina said. "But if something happened to you, as your emergency contact-"

"You're not my emergency contact," Sarah said, cutting her off.

"Rude," Carina said. "Gotta bounce." With that she hung up.

"That actually went better than I expected," Sarah said to herself.

A/N: Next time: "Hey," she heard a voice call from far away. His hands were up in the air as she turned and saw him. She had drawn her Nerf gun, ready to go into the apartment and get in a few shots. "You cannot shoot outside of the building. I know I never said so earlier, but that's a rule." She had known it was a rule. And so had he. How?

She aimed the gun at him. "How do you know I'm a rule follower?"

He squinted his eyes at her, and then lowered his hands. "I just do."

"I really should shoot you," she told him.

“You should,” he agreed. “What if I buy you ice cream instead?”

Gosh...is that....banter?

Chapter 2: The Great Nerf War Ch 2

A/N: The war...it begins.Disclaimer: I don't own Chuck

She was ready. She had timed what time he left his apartment and was prepared. Her door was unlocked, her hand on her doorknob, and she was holding the gun in her other hand.

She had never seen him carry his own Nerf gun, but she was ready, just in case. She looked out the peep hole, knowing he should be coming out any second.

She saw him exit, his headphones in, him moving his head to the music. Again, either the greatest spy ever, or a civilian.

He walked away from his apartment and she slowly opened her door. He never made any move like he heard her as he continued to walk away. She stood in the middle of the hallway.

She had thought about this all night, and she knew what she had to do to truly spring this trap...if it was a trap.

"Chuck!" she said loudly.

She saw him stop, and turn. She pulled the trigger.

He never had time to move. The Nerf bullet hit him directly between the eyes on his forehead.

She had prepared for a hundred reactions. But this one....it disarmed her.

First, came recognition. That she had expected.

Second....came joy. Pure joy spread across his face. He smiled. And not a fake smile. No, this was from his heart. At this moment, she knew he had truly been worried she didn't like him. Who cared if someone across the hall from you liked you or not?

Apparently Chuck Bartowski.

"Y-you...you know what this means, right?" he finally asked.

The smile was so infectious, the joy was so radiating, that she couldn't stop herself.

"Do you?" she replied, and pulled the trigger again, and hit him in the exact same place.

"Okay," he said, throwing his hands up. "You wouldn't hit a defenseless," she shot him again. "Nerd...I guess you would."

She couldn't help but laugh. She studied him a second. "Sarah."

"What?" he asked, confused. "Sarah Walker," she told him. "That's my name. Since I'm going to be shooting you constantly with Nerf bullets, you should know it."

"You don't know that you-" She shot him again. He finally dove behind the corner of the wall. "Can we talk a second?" "Sure," Sarah said. He stuck his head out and she shot him again.

And then, she was truly disarmed. He laughed. "Okay, I asked for this. Apparently I have challenged a word famous marksman..I mean markswoman." He was silent a second. "Sorry about that, just used to saying...you know what I'm just gonna shut up." He had moved a bit away from the wall. He hadn't even noticed he had done so. She hit him in the back of the leg. "Wow! Okay. So, you weren't mad at me, you just didn't want to shoot me three hundred times to zero, is that what I'm learning?"

"You have to admit it was weird," Sarah said, waiting for him to stick his head around the corner, knowing he would do so, after what he just said. He did, and she put this one into his hair.

"That's impressive," he said, diving back around the corner. "As fun as this is, I have to go to work." He paused. "Oh crap, I should have kept my mouth shut and just gone."

She began to walk forward as he scurried to the elevator. He ran past it and into the stairwell. She couldn't help but roll her eyes, as she entered the stair well, and got off numerous shots, hitting him every time, all while he laughed. "I will get you!" he promised.

"No you won't," she said.

He stepped into the open and looked up at her. "I will, Sarah Walker." The way he said her name did something to her insides. She pulled the trigger, but he had already begun to move and she missed. "Missed me!" he yelled gleefully as he ran out the door.

She stood there a moment, and found herself wondering when she had more fun.

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It was the next afternoon, and she stopped at the park before she got to her apartment building. The first afternoon, when he came home, he sounded like a pack of wildebeests trying to sneak up on her. She hit him five times to his one shot he got off. He missed wildly.

The next morning she didn't hit him because she was too busy laughing. He came out of his apartment with a giant tote lid in front of him as a shield. She found herself doing something she had never done before. She laughed. And not just a one note laugh.

This laugh had built up inside of her and had apparently been in there for years. Just multiplying. Her hands were on her knees. He threw the lid back into the apartment, and scurried to the staircase. He paused at the door. "Didn't hit me, Sarah Walker."

"You didn't hit me either," she told him.

"But, you didn't hit me," he said like he had won something, and they both knew he had.

"Hey," she heard a voice call from far away. His hands were up in the air as she turned and saw him. She had drawn her Nerf gun, ready to go into the apartment and get in a few shots. "You cannot shoot outside of the building. I know I never said so earlier, but that's a rule." She had known it was a rule. And so had he. How?

She aimed the gun at him. "How do you know I'm a rule follower?"

He squinted his eyes at her, and then lowered his hands. "I just do."

"I really should shoot you," she told him.

"You should," he agreed. "What if I buy you ice cream instead?" he asked, and pointed toward the vendor.

She paused. This would be a great way to get info out of him. "Okay, but you're getting me two scoops for not properly explaining the rules."

"See, total rule follower," Chuck said with a grin. She couldn't help herself, she shot him in the backside as he turned and he yelped in surprise.

The smile on his face was so genuine that she found herself totally disarmed.

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"Rocky Road, huh," he said, as the two sat on a bench, looking out over the park.

She liked where they were. It was public. It was in the open. She had great site lines.

She also found she liked sitting next to the guy beside her.

That bothered her.

Not enough to do anything with. If he was a spy, that had to be his main weapon.

His charisma. God, he was charming, and his smile...

She needed to get a hold of herself.

"What can I say, I've burnt of a lot of calories having to be very precise with my aiming," she said with a shrug. He grinned at that.

This was what bothered her. A woman was beating this tall, lanky man constantly in a game he challenged her in. Not only was it not bothering him, he seemed to be loving every second of it.

"Maybe I should get three scoops," he began and then he paused. "I was going to say because I've been dodging your very precise aiming but I really haven't, have I?"

She snorted. Oh, God. She looked mortified. Not because she snorted in front of him, just because...she didn't even know she did that.

"I mean you didn't have to agree like that," he muttered, but the grin on his face showed it didn't upset him at all.

"So, what made you decide to give someone you don't know a Nerf gun?" Sarah asked.

"I was at Stanford," he began.

"Oooo," she said, trying to sound impressed.

He waved it off, grinning. "Anyway, when I moved into the frat-"

"No, offense, but you don't look like a frat guy," Sarah said. She hadn't mean to say that. It had just slipped out. She was glad she hadn't said what was in her head. "Not like Bryce." Thank GOD she hadn't said that.

"None taken," he replied, grinning. "Anyway, I wasn't like most of the guys in the frat. I was...I'm a nerd."

"And they weren't?" Sarah asked.

"They were, but...." He paused.

"Oh," Sarah said, nodding. "Go to college and try and be someone you're not." She tried to say it casually, but it was exactly what she had done.

She had gone. And there, she was required to build a legend of Sarah Walker. Someone she was not.

She tried, she really did, but she still found herself studying languages and becoming intrigued with how people communicated.

Her entire life...her father...the CIA...they wanted her to bottle up feelings, and actual words. Speak, but don't say anything. At Harvard, she was allowed to study different languages. She found a beauty in interpreting not just from the words that were said, but the context, the body language, and other non-verbal cues.

The non-verbal cues she had been taught her whole life. First by her father, and then by the CIA.

The non-verbal cues being given off by Chuck screamed one thing. This man. He was a civilian. He held in nothing when he talked. He gesticulated, almost wildly, and she found it so refreshing. He was so honest. So...open.

"Yeah," Chuck said nodding. "And, this may shock you, but I don't seem to have that ability."

She heard that weird sound come out of her again. Dear, God. *Another* snort?!?

"I'm glad someone is enjoying this," he said, teasing.

"Sorry," Sarah said. Inside, she was thinking that not only did he not have the ability, that she was glad he didn't.

That bothered her. But not that much. And that bothered her even more.

"So, the president of the frat came up with The Great Nerf War," he told her. "It was a way for you to get to know your next door neighbor. To cut through a lot of the..." he paused, looking for the word.

"Awkwardness," Sarah offered. He snapped his fingers. "That's it!"

She knew that word because that was exactly how Bryce had described it to her. She looked at him. Really looked.

The openness on his face. He seemed happy, but there was something. Something deep inside.

"So, did it work?" she asked. "Yeah, I met my across the hall neighbor that way," Chuck told her. "Bryce."

"Bryce?" Sarah asked.

"Bryce Larkin, and we became..." he paused and she saw the hurt. "We became best friends."

There was a silence between them.

She did not want to ask the next question.

She knew either answer would hurt. But the thing was, one answer would hurt her, and one would hurt him.

She was stunned to find she hoped his answer hurt her.

"You two still friends?" she asked.

"No," he said, shaking his head, looking away. "You know, after college...things...."

He trailed off and refused to look in her direction. He didn't need to. She knew what was radiating off of him. "Yeah, I get it," Sarah said. "Same thing happened to me."

He turned to her, and she could see from the look on his face that while he appreciated what she thought she knew, it was obvious she didn't know.

And now, she wanted to.

No, she needed to. But, it wasn't hers.

In the past, she knew what she could do to find out, but now...now she didn't want to.

She didn't want to take that from him. It was his. It was his grief and it was his. She didn't like he was carrying it alone, but....that was his right.

For the first time since she left the CIA she felt like she had made a huge decision that a civilian would make, and not one a CIA officer would make.

"So, thanks for joining me for ice cream," he said, slapping his hands on his knees, going to stand. Part of her wanted to reach over and hold his hand and comfort him. She didn't. He didn't need her in his life like that. What she could do was be a good Nerf war partner and show him it wasn't him. It was Bryce.

"Thanks for buying and letting me have target practice," she replied.

The grin came back to his face. "Hey, for the night..." he trailed off.

"We can cool it for tonight," she replied.

"Thanks, Sarah," he said, and headed down the path to the apartment building.

She didn't know what possessed her to call out.

"Chuck." He turned. "In the morning." He grinned as she lifted her right hand, mimicking a gun and squinting.

"I'll be waiting for you Tex," he replied.

“Tex?!?” He shrugged as he began to walk backwards. He waved, turned, and headed to the building.

She pulled out her phone and decided it was time to text a number she swore she never would from her personal phone because that meant they were more than just work friends.

Cancel everything. He’s just a regular guy.

She hit send. She sat there, looking out over the park. Her phone went off. She rolled her eyes, took a deep breath and looked down.

Two eyeballs looking away were on her text messages. The phone went off again.

Guuurrrrrlllll

Sarah snorted again.

She shook her head.

Then the phone went off again, and the smile fell off her face. Carina had sent an eggplant emoji, a peach emoji, and water emoji.

Now who’s rude? Sarah texted back.

The reply made her laugh. *Never said I wasn’t.*

Sarah sat there. She wanted to know what happened to Chuck. But that was Chuck’s story. A story he should tell someone close.

So why was she wishing he would tell her?

A/N: Next time

“So, that’s tall and lanky, huh?” came the voice of her friend. “What are you doing here?” Sarah asked.

She did not need this right now. She wasn’t sure when she ever really needed it, but right now? No. Not at all.

"Rude," Carina said. "Have you thought any more about me being your emergency contact?"

"No," Sarah said.

"Have you thought about why you don't want to know anything else about tall, pale-ish, and Chuckles?" Carina continued. Sarah crossed her arms, refusing to answer.

"That move in itself is an answer," Carina told Sarah. Sarah sighed. It was going to be a loooooonggggg night.