



# LETHAL WEAPON

## BLACK WIDOW



### ON THE RECORD

#### REAL NAME

**Natasha Alianovna Romanova**

#### ALLEGIANCES

**Russian Intelligence, Avengers, Champions, S.H.I.E.L.D., Thunderbolts**

#### POWERS

**Peak human augmented by life-extending physical and chemical enhancements**

#### MISSION

**After years of indefensible actions, Black Widow seeks to atone by saving lives and punishing evildoers**

#### STATUS REPORT

**Reported dead but unverified sightings persist**

Russia in the 1920s, as the Soviets consolidated their hold on the country and began to export their revolution to other nations.

One of 28 orphan girls selected for certain aptitudes, Romanova becomes part of the Red Room project: physically altered and augmented while being intensively schooled in every aspect of espionage and assassination. Specialist guest tutors include Canadian agent Logan (James Howlett) and master-assassin Winter Soldier (James “Bucky” Barnes), with whom she pursues

**Agent provocateur** Despite acquitting herself as a formidable Super Hero, Black Widow was born to be a super-spy.

“

You have no idea what I’m capable of.  
**Black Widow**

”

As befits a master spy, the true origins of the Black Widow are shrouded in mystery and disinformation. The truth has been obscured for decades in a web of meticulously layered back-up and cover stories. The most consistent reports state that Natasha Romanova was born in

an unsanctioned affair. After numerous missions for the KGB, Romanova is ordered to marry Alexi Shostakov—trained as the Red Guardian to be Russia’s answer to Captain America. When he is reported killed, she assumes the code name Black Widow for her future missions

With the US experiencing a wave of superhuman incidents and the birth of a new generation of Marvels, Romanova is dispatched to steal secrets from munitions inventor Tony Stark, but suffers humiliating defeats at the hands of Iron Man. Calling herself Natasha Romanoff, she seduces emergent hero Hawkeye into being her weapon against Stark. Failing repeatedly, she is recalled to the Kremlin, brainwashed, “re-educated,” and armed with mechanical devices that enable her to compete with Super Heroes on their own terms.

After developing real feelings for Hawkeye, Black Widow defects to the West, beginning a long association with the Avengers and S.H.I.E.L.D. Her relationship with the idealistic archer—and later Daredevil—seemingly counteract much of her early Red Room programming and,

as both an intelligence operative and Super Hero, the Widow seeks to make a new life for herself.

### Asset management

Conflict and isolation remain major parts of her life, especially as suppressed memories and evidence of her old life continually resurface. Weighing her past deeds against her current morality, Black Widow decides she has too much blood on her hands and resolves to balance the scales by helping the innocent and punishing the guilty.

Black Widow’s gifts and training make her one of the most capable fighters and strategists on Earth, and after leading the short-lived super-team Champions of Los Angeles, she renews ties with the Avengers. Her ability to make hard decisions also makes her indispensable to S.H.I.E.L.D., where Nick Fury gives her freedom to handle the dirty, difficult problems Super Heroes are ill-suited to.

Although a loyal and dedicated member of many teams, the Widow’s training and temperament prevent her from ever truly trusting anybody or accepting any final judgment but her own. This includes her readiness



**Love hurts** Former lovers Black Widow and Hawkeye maintain a complicated relationship for years.

to keep killing as a necessary option for neutralizing her opponents. During the climactic battle against Hydra’s Secret Empire, when Black Widow and a group of teenage heroes strive to liberate Washington, D.C., she prevents young Spider-Man (Miles Morales) from murdering Supreme Hydra Steve Rogers, determined that no innocents should carry the burden of being a killer. ■

### Widow makers

After Natasha Romanoff defects to the West, survivors of the Red Room program activate a replacement Black Widow: Yelena Belova. Although a worthy substitute, this new agent also proves noncompliant and eventually goes rogue, battling both beside and against her predecessor. Belova briefly retires, but is lured back to espionage work by S.H.I.E.L.D. and is transformed by Hydra into a power-duplicating Super-Adaptoid, before becoming

Minister of State in Super Villain-controlled Bagalia.

She is reported killed by Romanoff, but a Red Room protocol to store fully trained and suitably indoctrinated clones of their most effective agents suggests that an unspecified number of counterfeit Black Widows are still at large in the world. It might also provide the answer to the question: who is carrying on in Natasha Romanoff’s name, following her reputed death fighting Hydra in Washington, D.C.?

