



## xvii. The Machine (The "Reversinator" according to Scott and Ali)

When they returned, Auralie had dried her tears and was shoving her grief down as best as she could. Unlike Scott, she couldn't optimize the situation and tell herself they could fix it. Thousands of fears and ways this could go wrong swirled around in her head. They walked into the compound, four rather sad individuals who discovered the rest of their team working hard.

"Hi," Auralie smiled as she came in, "we found Clint."

After a round of welcomes, Auralie saw what progress they were making. Everything was a mess of battle prep and technology. There were parts strewn around everywhere, tools out of place, nothing was where it should have been. And it felt like home. The Avengers were not neat people. So seeing the compound a mess gave Auralie a sense of nostalgia that surprised her. It seemed odd, how she had been away for so long, how terrible things were, but it still made her feel better. It felt like home or the closest place to it she had ever known.

"We almost finished the machine," Tony said, and though the circles under his eyes were deeper, he was holding it together. Auralie admired his strength. Tony sighed, "we just have to connect it to Scott's van. Scott, you ready?"

"Yeah sure thing Iron Man," Scott said with excitement. Nothing was able to keep Ant-Man down. He continued, "but I think we should give it a name. Instead of just calling it the machine. We're the Avengers, that seems a little lame for us, don't you think?"

"You, Bruce and Tony built it," Rhodes replied, "you three can name it."

"Are you all ok with that?" Scott asked, "because Ali's the one who's gonna use it, so if she wants to name it....."

"You all can name it, it's fine by me," Auralie said, a little distracted. Scott nodded, "OK! Bruce, Tony, any ideas?"

Bruce shrugged, "I was never really good at the naming stuff. Tony's probably got a clever one."

"I'm drawing a blank. Any suggestions? Pep? Rocket?" Tony called out.

Pepper sighed, "I don't know Tony. I've been a little busy helping. Rhodes needed more people to move inventory, I was happy to help."

"I'm a little busy," Rocket called.

"Doing what?" Tony asked, a little wary of having a talking raccoon near his technology.

"Making explosives! After we save our friends, I'm gonna blow Thanos's wrinkly chin off. For Groot!" Rocket yelled. They all just decided to leave him alone after that.

"Ok, Scott, you get to name the Machine," Bruce said.

Scott grinned, "ok, ok, I was thinking..... the reverse machine. Because it's reversing the snap. Ok, it's not that good, but I was thinking fast."

"It's not the best," Clint agreed, "but hey, it could be worse."

"Maybe if we changed it to Reversinator," Auralie mused.

Scott cocked his head, "ooh, I kind of like that!"

"Reversinator," Natasha snorted, "Ali, you're amazing, but that sounds like it came from a kid's cartoon."

"I mean, sort of," Auralie said with a little smile. Natasha decided not to argue. If it made Auralie and Scott happy after all they had lost, she wouldn't judge.

Scott picked up the small box that would serve as a power fuser and said he was going to get it hooked up to the van. Rhodey went with him to be of any assistance necessary. Rocket was continuing building his bombs, and Pepper had left the room. It was just the original seven. The ones who had started it all. Well, not entirely. Maria and Nick had started the Avengers Initiative as well. And Phil Coulson.

"Listen, guys," Tony said suddenly serious, "and girls. I..... well..... I have some new tech, for all of us. I was doing some work on War Machine's armor, and Rocket was working on his blasters, and Scott his helmet, before we got started on the machine....."

"Reversinator," Steve commented, shooting the tiniest smile at Auralie.

"Yes, that," Tony corrected himself, "and I made us some new gear too. I figured..... this is the fight of our lives. We would need every advantage we could get. I know some of us have had our differences in the past....."

"I'm sorry Tony. I really am," Steve said, looking down at his shoes. Though he didn't like to talk about it, he had felt very guilty about what happened between him and Tony. Tony had felt the same way. Neither was perfect, they were only human.

"Yeah," Tony agreed, "well, anyways, Bruce, I fixed up the hulkbuster armor for you. If the green giant doesn't want to come out, he doesn't have to. But you said you wanted to fight, so I figured I'd make sure you could."

Bruce smiled, "Thanks Tony, and you can count on me. I'm in this with you all till the end. You're the best friends I could have ever had, and we've had some good adventures."

"Thor, I know you have the ax, but I made you some armor to go along with it. Nothing much, just a helmet in an Asgardian style and some lightweight and basic pieces of armor. Not enough to hinder you, just to protect you," Tony continued.

Thor bowed his head from where he was sitting, "thank you, Tony. It has been an honor fighting beside all of you. You have been fantastic comrades in arms. If it were up to me, you would all be worthy."

Auralie felt tears brewing in her eyes. This was the end of an era. Even if they all survived, things would never be the same again. She didn't know what changes would occur, but she knew they were coming. They had been for a while now.

"Clint, I get it if you wanna stick with the sword, but I have a bow and a new set of arrows," Tony called.

Clint looked down at his sword, then at his team, "I think..... I think I was ready to be Ronin forever. But I would be glad to be Hawkeye again if it was for my family, and my crazy work family."

Tony turned to Nat, "I have new wrist stunners for you. I upped the power and made them more versatile. Can't have you assassinating people without the proper gear."

"Thanks, Tony," Natasha whispered, "you didn't have to do this."

"I know, but it felt right," Tony replied, "Steve..... I told you that you didn't deserve the shield. We still have our issues, but you are our Captain, and you should have your shield with you when you fight. I'll just have to trust you with it."

"I may be the Captain on paper, but we all have our moments leading this team. None of us are perfect, and we don't always get along. I made mistakes Tony. I lied. I wasn't being the man I try to be. But if you think I deserve the shield, I believe you. You have a good heart Tony," Steve said, meeting Tony's eyes. They were still on thin ice with each other. But at the end of the day, they would have to learn to trust each other and be a team.

"Did you upgrade your armor, Tony? I know you want to protect us, but you should take care of yourself first," Auralie cried with worry.

Tony smiled, "don't worry Beacon, I did that first thing. Iron Man is all ready to go, and in the best suit yet."

"Good," Auralie said fiercely. She was very protective of this team, her friends, the ones who always had her back.

"I have something for you too. I know you don't like weapons, and I didn't want to force one on you. If I could, I'd wrap you in armor to protect you, because you're my friend and you're taking on such a big risk," Tony said, "but, this felt more appropriate."

He handed the girl a plain grocery bag. Instead of a big weapon like everyone else was now strapping on. They were already in gear. They knew it would soon be crunch time. Auralie reached in the bag and pulled out a red leather jacket. It had belonged to Natasha once, but during the battle of Sokovia, Auralie and Pietro had given it to Wanda.

Auralie shrugged it on. She could almost imagine Wanda was with her. She didn't say anything, but threw herself into Tony's arms and hugged him tightly. At the end of the day, despite their differences, they would always be friends.

Soon the original seven stood facing each other. Tony said, "alright. This is it. The battle this has all been leading up to. Soon we'll be fighting. We lost the first round. We can no longer protect the Earth. We just have to try to fix it. Ali, I'm sure you'll remember me saying that if we couldn't protect the Earth, we would avenge it. It's time to avenge it and we're the Avengers."

No one backed down. They were all ready to face this fight. Steve added, "this is the endgame. But I believe in us. We've done the impossible before. Let's do it again. We said we would face it together, so now that's what we're going to do. And if we lose, we do that together too."

It was an intense moment, but it felt so good to be a team again. It felt right.

"Mr. Stark," Friday's voice came over the speakers, "there is a spaceship approaching New York. I believe Thanos has figured out what you attempt to do."

"Alright," Tony cried, "grab your gear, let's go grab the rest of the team. Ali, get down to the reversinator, Scott will tell you what to do. Anyone got anything else to say?"

"Yeah," Auralie said, "I just want you all to know, you're my friends and my team, and I adore you all."

"Thanks, kid," Steve replied, "alright team, you know the drill by now. If you get hurt, hurt 'em back. If you get killed....."

Auralie whispered, but her voice carried, finishing the iconic phrase, "walk it out."

**A/N: The OG Avengers are not going to die, but this is the end of an era in this story. These events will have an effect on our characters, so I tried to make this chapter nostalgic, with just a bit of fun mixed in.**

**Next chapter is the big battle scene. Be prepared.**

**And yes, I do get my naming skills from watching cartoons. Cartoons are the best.**

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