



### xiii. Saving Tony Stark

Natasha and Rhodey played the message. It was from Tony to Pepper, a goodbye message. Apparently, Tony was trapped in space. He had run out of food and water. He was about to run out of oxygen. The news shocked them out of their grief induced stupor, and for a moment, the old Avengers, the determined people who would do anything to protect the world, had returned.

"We have to save him," Auralie cried. She couldn't lose another friend, she just couldn't.

"We will," Rhodes said fiercely, never willing to give up on his best friend, "but we need a way to get to space."

Thor raised his hand, "I can summon the Bifrost with Stormbreaker. It can take me anywhere in the known universe. I'm sure I could use it to find and rescue Tony."

"Really? You think you can do that?" Rhodes asked, "but how would you know where to find him."

"Well, we could start by checking out the Milano, my team's spaceship," Rocket suggested, "the rest of the Guardians were going to look for Thanos, your Tony might have crossed paths with them."

"That's a big if," Auralie said skeptically.

"It's the best option we have," Bruce pointed out, "I'll go with Thor because I have pockets and can take him a candy bar. Rocket will come too because it's his spaceship. The three of us have one mission, to save Tony."

Rhodey nodded, "alright. And guys, when you find him..... tell him I'm alright..... tell him it'll be ok... that we're gonna fix this. Just make sure he's alright."

"Bring him home," Auralie agreed, "we'll call Pepper and make sure she's ok. I mean, she can't be dead right? It's Pepper Freaking Potts. She's fine, we'll call her." Auralie's voice trembled as she spoke, but a spark of hope was there too. Tony was alive. They weren't all gone.

"Alright," Thor promised. And with that, he, Rocket, and Bruce all went off to find snacks to bring to Tony and then go save him.

Natasha said, "I'll go call Pepper."

Steve nodded, "alright. You call Pepper. Auralie, I need your help pulling up some of the old records on the Infinity Stones. Maybe there's something there we can use."

"So we aren't giving up," Auralie said.

Steve placed a hand on her shoulder, "not a chance."

The two fell into step. They both had tear tracks down their faces, dirt, and grime on their clothes, bags under their eyes, and were both utter messes. But they weren't giving up. If Steve could stay strong after watching his two best friends die, Auralie could stay strong too. And they could get everything back.

"Do you think Tony's gonna be alright?" Steve asked.

Auralie took a deep breath, "I think he's probably been through some shit. But I also know that Tony's a survivor. But let's agree that after this, Tony and the rest of the team get a real vacation because damn they've earned it."

"I think we can work that out. But you know, we're gonna have to deal with the government yelling at us for breaking the law," Steve reminded her.

Auralie rolled her eyes, "if they have a problem with us after we stop Thanos, then there's something wrong. Especially since we've been saving the world since Shield fell without a paycheck."

Steve sighed, "yeah, that's kind of annoying."

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Two hours later, Thor, Bruce, and Rocket had succeeded. Tony was shoveling food in his face, looking confused and sad, but alive.

Auralie ran into the kitchen as he ate pizza, and burst into tears of joy when she saw him. He put the pizza down, cleaned off his fingers and gave her a hug. Auralie hugged him back, and soon they were both trying really hard to keep it together.

"You look like you've been through hell," Tony said.

"You don't look any better," Auralie replied, "oh Tony, what happened."

Tony opened his mouth, but then paused, "I..... things ended. Badly. Really badly. I had to watch some good people..... I'm not really ready to talk about it, alright."

"Ok," Auralie said. He seemed on the verge of tears. He didn't ask what happened to her, he seemed to respect that she was barely holding it together.

"I've missed you Beacon," he said with a half smile.

"I've missed you too Tony..... look, about what happened two years ago....."

"It's alright. I've forgiven you. You had your reasons for doing what you did and I respect that. We're still friends, no matter what."

Auralie nodded, "of course. And I respect your choices even if I don't agree with them. Besides, now we have to put that all behind us and deal with this Thanos."

"Yeah," Tony agreed, "so, who else is here?" What he meant was who's left but he didn't want to ask that.

"Bruce, Thor, and Rocket the Raccoon, obviously, you've already seen them," Auralie said, "Rhodey, me, Natasha, and Steve. We're planning to try and contact Clint soon and see if he's alright."

"Alright," Tony sighed, "any news on Pepper?"

Auralie answered, "Natasha was checking, but she hasn't told me if Pepper is ok."

"She is," Natasha said, coming into the room, "she's alright, worried, but alright. She seemed relieved when I told her we were bringing you back to Earth. You might want to go see her in person though."

"Yeah, I'll do that right after I finish eating," Tony said, "Rhodes and I can go see her. Hey Nat, how are you?"

"I've been better," Natasha admitted, "none of us are doing good. Steve's really sad. Look, Tony, about everything....."

"We all made hard choices, some that we regret," Tony placed his hands in his head, "we'll sort it out later. Now isn't the time for fighting. We just need to try our best to get along. Even me and Steve."

Natasha sighed, "Tony, whatever happened, you don't have to talk about it until you're ready. You're being very strong. But if you do need to talk, we're all here for each other. It's time we start acting like a team."

"Alright," Tony replied, "I'm not sure if I'm ready. I need to talk to Pepper before I do anything. But thanks, guys. Oh, and Ali....."

"Yeah," Auralie said, concerned. Tony was in pain, she knew it, but he was trying to stay strong.

Tony cracked the smallest of smiles, "Your cartoons are still DVR'd. I kept them for you these past two years. Your welcome."

Auralie broke into a beaming grin, tears streaming down her face at how a little thing like cartoons could make her so happy at a time like this, "Thanks Tony, you're a great friend."

He put an arm around her, "I know Beacon, I know."

**A/N: I brought Tony home! He needed to come home! So now he's home! Also, Nebula is there too, but Auralie hasn't met her yet.**

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