

Spider-Man 261

Chapter 261: Divided They Fall

"Gamora isn't responding..." Corvus Glaive frowned as he lay in bed with his wife.

"I said this would happen." His wife, Proxima Midnight comments, draped over her husband's lean naked alien body.

"She's just like her sister. Traitors, all of them." Proxima scoffs in distaste.

"It does seem that way, doesn't it?" Corvus nods.

"I never understood how Father could fawn over them so much, especially that sl*t, Gamora." Proxima hisses in jealousy.

After a while, the Mad Titan started to treat the Black Order and its members more as subordinates instead of adopted children.

This turn of events was easily noticed by their members, especially Proxima, who practically worshipped the ground her Father walked on.

Even Nebula, who was constantly verbally and physically abused by their father was the subject of Proxima's unending jealousy.

In her mind, Nebula was at least receiving the attention of their father.

Proxima would gladly undergo the same hellish 'upgrades' that were forced upon Nebula as long as her father would pay even the slightest bit of attention to her.

"It seems that we'll have to act before Father grows even more impatient than he already is..." Corvus ignores his wife's usual hate toward his other sisters as he untangles himself from her and climbs out of bed.

"Not only did that sl*t ruin fathers plans but now she's ruined our evening together as well."
Proxima spat venomously as she reluctantly got up and paces off in a fit of anger.

'I can't wait for the day Gamora and Nebula are dead...!' Corvus thought as he wouldn't have to hear his wife's complaining nearly as much.

With a long list of names and locations, thanks to the hypnosis spell he learned a few months ago, Peter turned to the orange-skinned Nova commander, who was looking at him with shock and awe written all over his face.

After all, he tried everything he could to get even a fraction of the information that Peter was able to get in less than a half an hour.

"Ready your men." Peter ordered as he left the Kree terrorist sleeping in his cell. "I want to hit every location at the same time. Once the properties are finished, we can start hunting the names on the list."

"Y-Yes, sir!" The Commander stuttered as he ran off to prepare everything.

"Dude, you'd tell me if you mind-controlled me before, right?" Quill asks nervously.

He wasn't the only nervous one in the group either, as each member of the Guardians looked at Peter with wary eyes.

"Quit looking at me like that. I would never use that spell on you guys." Peter rolls his eyes as they stare at him skeptically. "That's actually the first time I've ever done that to someone."

"Sure..." Rocket says in doubt. "Just keep your mind voodoo away from me and Groot. We don't consent to nothin'."

"I am Groot." Groot nods at his friend's words.

"I wasn't planning on it."

...

After waiting almost an hour for the Nova Corps to gather their members and prepare, Peter and the Guardians accompanied the Commander and his men, who would be assaulting the main base of the Sons of Ronan.

The Provincial Tower, floor 217.

"Talk about an easy payday." Quill says with a giddy smile on his face.

Peter and the Guardians were currently in a fairly high-end Nova ship alongside the Commander and his trusted soldiers.

Surrounding them were dozens of patrol ships, each filled with Nova Soldiers, ready to unleash hell on the people who have been terrorizing their planet.

It's safe to say that the Nova Corps took this situation very seriously.

"With all of these soldiers helping us, we'll all be 100 thousand units richer in no time." Quill smirked in greed.

Seeing the greedy look spread from Quill to Rocket, Peter couldn't help but roll his eyes. They both looked almost relaxed as if this would be a walk in the park.

"Just because we have help doesn't mean we should slack off." Peter reprimands them a bit.
"Overconfidence is a slow and insidious killer."

"Yeah, whatever..." Rocket waves his hand uncaringly.

Hearing Rocket's response, Peter opted to remain silent.

If they wanted to act foolishly, then Peter would let them and, hopefully, it will lead to a good lesson for them.

"Who owns the 217th floor?" Gamora asks as they flew to the tall shard-shaped tower in the distance.

Drax and her seemed to be the only two members who took this mission even remotely seriously.

"That would be a company named Aronn Productions." The Commander says as he looked into each location before leaving.

"Seriously?" Peter asks incredulously as he instantly understood the anagram. "They scrambled the letters in Ronan's name and used it for their company and you never found out?"

Hearing Peter's words, the Commander's eyes went wide in shock as he just realized it now.

Soon, the ship was filled with all sorts of alien curse words, as the commander started reprimanding his men for missing such an obvious clue.

...

Arriving at the tower, the dozens of Nova patrol ships surrounded the place while others landed in order to evacuate the building.

While this was happening, the commander's ship landed on the roof.

"Alright, listen up!" Peter calls out as everyone exited the ship. "You follow my commands and-"

"We don't work for you, jacka*s." Rocket comments as he and Groot stroll passed Peter and enter the building.

"You know what, okay." Peter nods to himself as he steps aside. "Does anyone else want to work on their own?"

One by one, Quill, Gamora, and Drax entered the building, unused and unwilling to work with others.

"Sir, should we stop them?" The Nova commander asks.

"No, let them deal with the repercussions of their actions."

-Inside the Building-

"I am Groot..." Groot commented as he follow after Rocket, who held a large high-tech assault rifle in his hands.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Rocket asks as they enter the elevator and head down to the 217th floor. "We never needed nobody but us, and that ain't changing just cause you made some friends."

"I am Groot." Groot disagrees.

"If you like them so much, then go!" Rocket blows up on his longtime friend. "I don't need yah..."

Ding!

Suddenly, as they were arguing, the elevator doors parted, revealing a line of blue-skinned men with weapons aimed in their direction.

"Oh, sh*t..."

Meanwhile, seeing that the elevator was already taken, Drax chose to instead take the stairs.

Driven by bloodlust, he rushed down as fast as he could, passing each floor swiftly as he grew closer and closer to 217.

Just as he passed floor 218 and turned to head down one more flight of stairs, Drax was too caught up in his own anger and drive for battle to notice the thin trip wire on the next step.

boom!

With a single step, Drax was blown across the stairwell by a hidden explosive, dropping his knives as he tumbled down the rest of the steps, where an armed group of Kree men and women stood.

Not nearly as dumb as Drax, Groot, and Rocket, Quill, on the other hand, chose to utilize the large ventilation system to make his way to floor 217.

Crawling through the metal vents, he endured many drops and slides before finally arriving at his destination.

Just one more drop and he would go from floor 218 to 217.

'Here goes nothing...' Quill thought as he maneuvered himself backward and fell feet first.

Bang!

Sadly, unlike all of the other drops he took to get here, this one led directly to a grated vent, which instantly buckled and broke under his weight.

"Ugh!" Quill grunted as he tumbled out of the vents and crashed onto the floor. "Huh?"

Looking around him, Quill found himself surrounded by a shocked group of blue men and women, who instantly pulled their weapons on him.

"F*ck..."

As for Gamora, she watched all of this take place from the safety of the building's security room, hoping to gain some useful information before facing the enemy.

She watched from the cameras in the stairwell as Drax blew himself up, and in the elevator when Rocket and Groot were forced to surrender.

As for Quill, she only saw him enter the vents but later assumed that a similar fate befell him as well.

"..." Thinking to herself for a moment, Gamora left the security room and made her way back to the rooftop, where she found Peter and the Nova Corps standing around leisurely.

"Gamora, your back." Peter smirked under his mask as he leaned back onto the nearby wall. "Did one of you finish the job already?"

"No, they're all captured." Gamora admits, taking a bit of pride in the fact that she wasn't among them.

"I see." Peter says uncaringly. "It's your turn now, I guess. Don't worry. I know you don't want my help so I won't interfere."

"..." Gamora instantly went quiet as a frown formed on her face.

"What? You forget something?" Peter asks.

"I was wrong." She admits and receives a knowing nod from Peter.

"And what were you wrong about?" Peter asks, enjoying the moment.

Rolling her eyes at him, Gamora plays along.

"We should have worked together as you said instead of rushing in separately." Just as she said this, a nearby Nova Soldier ran over with a tablet in hand.

"Sir, the terrorists want to trade hostages for free passage out of the building." He says as he hands over the tablet, which showed a live image of the captured Guardians with over a dozen rifles pointed in their direction.

All of them looked unhurt, except Drax, who seemed to be unconscious and slightly burned, though he was breathing steadily, which is good.

"Hello, who am I speaking to?" Peter says as the image changes to an elderly Kree man in a nice suit.

"My name doesn't matter." He says in a tired yet confident tone. "I have your men and if you want them back alive, then you'll let us go."

"Let me talk to the hostages one by one and you have a deal." Peter offers.

Of course, they wouldn't be leaving here, unless it's in cuffs, but Peter wouldn't say that.

"Why must you-"

"This isn't negotiable." Peter cuts him off. "You can listen in on our conversation, but this needs to happen before anything else."

"..." The elderly man seemed to think for a moment before nodding his head. "Alright, one moment."

Muting the tablet while waiting, Peter turns to the Nova Commander beside him.

"Are all of the civilians evacuated?"

"Yes, it's only floor 217 that's currently occupied." He nods.

"Good." Peter says as he unmutes the tablet and sees a Rocket on the other end. "Hey, Rocket. How's it hanging?"

"Fine, I got these punks right where I want 'em." He replies in fake confidence.

"Sure you do..." Peter says sarcastically, eliciting a glare from his furry acquaintance. "If you admit that you were wrong, I'll help you out."

"Not gonna happen, you witchy freak!" Rocket exclaims in anger.

"Are you sure?" Peter asks as he saw five different rifles pressed up against Rocket's head. "Because this looks serious."

"Yeah, I got this covered." He continues to lie.

"I am Groot!" Groot disagreed from off camera.

"Alright, if you say so then the deal is off." Peter shrugs as the tablet is instantly turned back toward the aged Kree man.

"You would leave them to their deaths?" He asks in confusion.

"If my men can't be team players, then what use do they really have?" Peter shook his head as Quill started yelling in the background.

"I was wrong! I'll be a team player! Just get me the hell out of here!" He called out.

"It's a package deal, I'm afraid." Peter says uncaringly. "Rocket would have to admit that he's wrong as well."

"That ain't happening!" Rocket yelled sharply.

"You know what?" Peter says as he looks the old man in the eyes. "I'll give you 10 minutes. If Rocket changes his mind by our next call, then our deal will be back on. Though please do remember that any physical actions taken against my men will result in the deaths of every Kree in the building, including yourself."

"Wait, this is not-"

"Bye." Peter ends the call with a wave.

"You're evil" Gamora comments with a smirk.

"Is it okay to do this?" The Nova commander asks worriedly. "You're companions may not make it out of this alive."

"They'll be fine." Peter taps his ear. "I'm listening in. If things get rough, I'll go down and end this, but until then, Rocket needs to learn how to play with others."

Chapter 262: Harsh Lesson

-Floor 217-

Just as Peter abruptly ended the call, Quill could be heard berating Rocket.

"What's wrong with you?!" Quill shouted angrily. "Just tell him that you were wrong! You don't even have to mean it..."

"..." Rocket simply remained silent and looked forward, ignoring Quill's words completely.

"What should we do?" An armed Kree man asks the elderly leader.

"I can get him to say whatever you want." A very muscular man with a bald head eyes Rocket with a bloodthirsty grin. "Just give me a knife and some cleaning supplies. He'll follow any script we give him after that."

"No, the hostages are our way out of this." The elderly man shakes his head. "We can't afford to anger the Nova Corps."

"..." The room goes silent as everyone looked between one another.

Sighing to himself, the Kree leader turns to Rocket and looks him in the eyes.

"Will you do as he wants?" He asks.

"No." Rocket answers defiantly.

"Alright..." The man nods his head as he turns to his subordinates. "Set the charges as we initially planned."

In the corner of the room sat a long table full of high-tech bombs, which were originally planned to be used for future targets.

"Are you sure?" Someone asks as this plan didn't guarantee their escape.

In all likelihood, the majority of them would die, allowing for only a select few to escape among the wreckage.

"Yeah, just get it done." The nameless leader orders solemnly.

Instantly, half of the men and women in the room grab a few explosives each and rush off.

Though one of them didn't leave the room and stayed behind to set multiple charges on the support beams.

"I am Groot..." Groot says in dread.

"Seriously?" Quill hisses at Rocket, who continued to remain silent, watching the bombs get placed and armed to blow at any moment.

...

Time ticked by slowly as those who went to place the bombs filled the room once again, finished with their job.

Sat at his desk, the elderly leader stared down at a small device with a single black button, which would be used to detonate the many explosives.

"I think it's been 10 minutes, sir." One of the Kree men says.

"Should we call-" Someone spoke as the tablet on the desk started beeping, indicating an incoming transmission.

"Hello." The elderly man answers as the room goes deathly quiet.

"Hello again." Peter says as he stares down at the tablet. "Did Rocket change his mind?"

Of course, Peter already knew the answer, as he was listening in on them the entire time.

"No, he refuses to do as you say." The man states as he sends an annoyed glare to the stubborn raccoon. "So we've decided to change the deal. Allows us free passage out of this situation, and we won't demolish this building into the ground."

"And how are you planning on accomplishing that?" Peter asks.

"This-" The man says as he reaches to grab the detonator but finds nothing there.

"You mean this?" Peter asks as he held the detonator up to the tablet. "Or maybe this?"

He then turns the tablet around to show a pile of disarmed explosive charges, which he portal'd over shortly after they were placed.

Of course, the Nova Corps brought their own version of a bomb squad, as they were dealing with terrorists who've been using explosives left and right.

So Peter let them do all of the work when it came to disarming.

"Oh, I forgot these as well." Peter says as he opens a few small portals and reaches his hand through.

The first to notice what was happening was Quill, who saw the portals open next to the few remaining bombs in the room.

Though just as everyone else began to catch on, Peter had already reached his hand through each portal and snatched the last of the bombs.

"Hey, disarm these too." Peter orders as he hands off the remaining explosives to a couple of very nervous-looking Nova Soldiers.

Soon enough, realization dawned on the old Kree leaders face.

His hostages were worthless and his backup plan was thwarted before it could even be revealed, leaving him nothing...

"Bring the hostages forward." He orders, breaking his subordinates from their state of panic.

Doing as they're told, the hostages are prodded forward by the barrels of multiple high-tech rifles.

"Hey! Quit pushing!" Quill yells irritably.

"..." Rocket remained silent as he was kicked forward.

"I am Groot..." Groot looks at Rocket one last time.

"Zzz..." Drax remained asleep as he was dragged forward by his arms.

"Let's start with the tree." The leader says as he pulls a pistol from his desk and aims it at Groot.

"!" Rocket's heartbeat quickened as he stared worriedly at his only friend.

"Allow us free passage or I'll start killing hostages one by one." The leader threatens as he shows Peter the lineup of Guardians.

"Okay, go ahead." Rocket watched in shock as Peter shrugged uncaringly.

The old man seemed to hesitate for a moment, as they would be killing their only leverage, but his gaze soon hardened as he turned the tablet to look Peter in the eyes.

"Remember, you brought this on yourself." He said as he turned the tablet back to Groot. "Alright, execute-"

"Stop!" Rocket yells as he thrashes in the hold of multiple Kree men. "I admit it! I was wrong! Are you happy now?"

"What were you wrong about?" Peter asks through the tablet.

"..." Rocket remained quiet for a moment, though the guns trained on Groot got him talking again. "I was wrong to go off on my own. You were right about working as a team. Now get us out of here!"

Although Rocket was frantic at first, now he just seemed very angry with Peter.

"Was that so hard?" Peter asks as the tablet is turned back to the old leader.

"Do we have a deal?" He asks, looking much more relieved.

"Sure..." Peter says as he waves his hand and opens four portals in the air.

Instantly, the floor below the captured Guardians opened up, dropping them onto the roof in front of Peter.

Quickly, Peter snapped the portals shut and looked toward the shocked Kree leader, who just lost his last hope of escape.

"Here's the deal." Peter says as the Guardians pick themselves up off the ground, realizing that they're safe. "We won't kill any of you as long as you surrender peacefully."

"I-I..." The elderly man was lost for words by this point.

"I'll give you another 10 minutes to make your decision." Peter says as he could see the p*ssed-off looks of the people that he just rescued. "Choose your next actions wisely."

With those final words, Peter ended the call for a second time.

"You motherf*cker!" Quill exclaimed as he charged over to Peter with everyone following closely behind him.

Though Drax, who was still knocked out, was currently being treated by some Nova medics.

"What? Come to thank me for saving you?" Peter asks as Rocket grabs the gun of a Nova soldier and starts firing in his direction.

"That's not very nice..." Peter comments as he sidesteps each laser bolt with ease.

"Not very nice?!" Rocket repeats in anger. "Groot almost died because of you!"

"Me? Do you actually believe that?" Peter asks incredulously. "First of all, you were the one who didn't want to take any orders and ran off alone, though I think we can all see where that got you. Secondly, I offered you an easy way out and you refused to take it until the very end like the stubborn moron you are."

pew pew pew...

Upon hearing Peter's response, Rocket didn't verbally reply and simply started shooting once again.

Of course, Peter continued to dodge each shot with ease.

"Stand still and take it like a man!" Rocket shouted as he kept firing.

"Okay, I think that's enough." Peter says as he shoots a web and used it to yank the gun from Rocket's hands.

"Give me that!" Rocket jumps toward Peter, but receives a boot to the face, sending him tumbling back to Groot.

"I don't know why you're all so angry." Peter says as he aims the gun forward and fires at the newly rescued Guardians.

pew pew pew...

"?!" Everyone watched in shock as he shot at his own comrades, though that shock soon grew as the red laser bolts seemed to bounce off of them, leaving Rocket, Groot, and Quill completely unharmed.

"You weren't in any danger, to begin with." Peter says as the spell he placed on them for protection fades away.

"I'm alive..." Quill muttered as he thought for sure that he was dead.

"Y-You..." Rocket stutters in frustration, as he didn't know whether to feel p*ssed or thankful anymore.

"I am Groot..." Groot says in confusion.

"While they were arming the bombs, I was able to open a small portal and place a spell for protection on all of you, though it's all used up now so don't go getting yourselves killed." Peter explains as the tension on the rooftop started to simmer down.

"What was the point of all this?" Quill asks in confusion.

"To teach you a bit of a lesson. None of you are strong enough to be running into dangerous and unknown situations alone." Peter explains his mindset. "That Orb that you're all dying to get your grubby little hands on is going to bring you far worse opponents than this. You'll need to learn how to work together to overcome them because I won't always be around to save you."

"..." They all turn silent, as if their parents just lectured them into the ground.

"He's right." Gamora nods in agreement. "The dangers ahead of us are much deadlier than a group of weak Kree terrorists."

...

"Fine, so what's the plan?" Rocket sounded a bit hesitant, though he seemed ready to work as a team now.

"I'm willing to work together." Quill sighs and agrees as well.

"I am Groot!" Groot seemed happy with the outcome of this situation.

"I'm with you as well!" Drax, who managed to wake up in time to hear Peter's little speech, shouted as he shoved the medics away and joined the group.

"The plan is simple." Peter smirks as the Guardians started to finally come together as a team. "If they don't surrender peacefully, we go in and raise some hell."

Chapter 263: Wrapping Up

Sadly for the Guardians, who wanted a bit of good old fashion revenge against the terrorists that bested them, the Sons of Ronan gave themselves up as soon as Peter called them again.

Their elderly leader seemed to have a good head on his shoulders.

He realized that Peter wasn't even taking him seriously, to begin with. In fact, they were used as a sort of training tool for the former hostages, as if this was a harmless exercise for new recruits.

Though what really helped him make his decision was the portals.

If the Nova Corps could open those portals anywhere, then they could be flanked and killed at any moment, making any sort of resistance literally impossible.

With nothing else to do, the man chose to surrender in hopes that the Kree Empire would trade for their release.

After all, they had to be funded by somebody, and everyone knew that the Kree empire was forced into the treaty that sparked all of this.

Of course, the Kree Empire would never admit to funding a terrorist cell, which would be more than enough to skate away from any responsibility, as the Nova Empire wants to maintain the peace more than anything.

"This was a good mission." Peter says happily as he watches the Nova Corps drag the sullen Sons of Ronan away.

"For you, maybe." Quill says with a scoff. "The rest of us had the pleasure of learning your 'lesson'."

"Well, it was an important lesson to learn, don't you think?." Peter asks as he turns to Gamora.

As Gamora nods her head, Rocket speaks up.

"Yeah, we learned that we're useless and weak." He sounded both annoyed and sullen about the whole situation. "Just a bunch of powerless losers."

"True..." Peter agreed with a nod.

"Hey! You ain't supposed to agree with him." Quill shouts in protest.

"...but you could be great if you work together." Peter clarifies as he continues to watch the terrorists being arrested. "I was hoping they would put up a bit more resistance so that you guys could have your first fight together, but I guess I scared them a little too much."

There's always next time though.

"Who are you?" The captured terrorist leader asks as he passes Peter on his way to the patrol ships.

"Just your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man!" Peter responds cheerfully with a wave.

"?" The confused man felt that he was being played with as a Nova soldier prodded him forward.

...

"So, how did the other locations go?" Peter asked as they returned to the Nova Corps headquarters.

The rest of the Guardians ran off to get some food, leaving him to finish up the work.

Although they asked for him to join them, Peter has always been the type of person to finish his work before anything else.

"Just as planned." The Commander replies readily. "I sent more than enough soldiers to deal with them. Sadly, a few of my men didn't make it back, but that's always expected in an operation like this."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Peter says respectfully as he eyes a short list of names. "Are these the highest-ranking members that were captured today?"

"Yes, sir." The commander nodded.

"Alright, I'll extract information from them one last time and then leave you to finish the cleanup." Peter says after a moment of thought.

"That would help us immensely." The commander was very eager for the treasure trove of information that Peter would give him, especially from that elderly Kree, who seemed to be the head man in charge of the Sons of Ronan.

"Good, let's get it done then."

-Hours later-

After a few hours, Peter finished hypnotizing each high-level terrorist, providing the Nova Corps with far more information than they thought was possible.

First, they found all of the remaining bases and individuals related to the Sons of Ronan.

Acting quickly, the Commander started the hunt as soon as the information was brought to him.

Secondly, the Sons of Ronan seemed to be sponsored by quite a few people, including the Kree Empire, though the Commander didn't seem all that surprised by that information.

As for the other sponsors, there seemed to be a handful of wealthy radical Kree sympathizers on Xanov, sending money whenever they could.

One of which was also the connect who supplied the Sons with explosives.

Of course, these people would be quite surprised when the Nova Corps came knocking at their doors.

"I believe that wraps up everything." Peter says as he stood before the Nova Commander.

"Yes, we can handle the rest from here." He says with a tired yet accomplished look on his face. "I want to thank you on behalf of Xanov for all that you've done. Without you, we would still be chasing shadows while more of our civilians died in droves."

"I'm happy to help." Peter says as he shook the man's hand one last time and went on his way.

...

After leaving the Nova Corps headquarters, Peter found the Guardians in what looked like an alien noodle shop, eating and drinking together.

Unlike before, they seemed to be a bit more friendly with one another.

Rocket was actually talking to everyone without his usual gruffness.

Drax looked to be drunk off of some blue alien wine.

Quill was still fawning over Gamora, who didn't seem so distant anymore.

And lastly, Groot was drinking from a pitcher of amber liquid with a happy look on his face.

'Either today's lesson was a good one, or they feel more united in their annoyance with me...' Peter thought with a shrug.

Either way, the outcome was worth it.

...

After watching them for a moment, Peter strolled over and joined them at their table.

"Spider!" Drax shouted drunkenly as he held up his cup of wine. "You must try this Xandarian Juice! It is splendid..."

Looking at Quill and Rocket, Peter could instantly tell that they were behind Drax's misconception.

"You know what? Sure, why not." He shrugged uncaringly and took the cup, downing the entire thing through his mask. 'It's too tiring to be the responsible one all the time...'

...

After a long night out that some among the crew wouldn't remember, everyone awoke on Quill's ship, groggy and extremely hungover.

"My head..." Quill muttered in pain as he regained consciousness on the floor of the ship's bathroom.

Pulling himself off of the floor, Quill left the bathroom and found his new friends in a similar state to his own.

Drax was puking into a bucket with a dead look in his eyes.

Groot seemed to be in a similar state, though instead of throwing up, he was losing a few leaves on his branches as if Fall had come early.

Rocket was still passed out on the floor in front of Groot, hugging a bottle of booze like a teddy bear.

Gamora... She looked completely fine.

"How come you're not hungover?" Quill asks, feeling the dryness in his mouth with every word.

"I didn't drink last night." Gamora admitted.

"You're no fun..." Quill rolled his eyes as he found a bottle of water and downed it in a matter of seconds.

"Good morning!" Peter shouted as he walked in from the cockpit.

Instantly, Quill twitched and covered his ears as Rocket woke with a start, holding his liquor bottle like a weapon.

"Fascist Scum!" He screamed as he threw the bottle, which shattered against one of Quill's naughty posters of a naked alien woman.

"I hope you enjoyed your sleep because we just arrived on Xandar!" Peter continued to speak loudly, knowing exactly what he was doing.

"Can you keep it down..." Drax asked as he emptied his stomach into the bucket once again.

"Wait a minute..." Quill muttered as he looked at Peter in confusion. "You definitely drank last night. I remember you downing a bottle of what looked like battery acid. How are you not like us?"

"Perks of having superpowers." Peter shrugs as everyone glares at him in jealousy. "What? Don't look so negative. You should be happy. We're all about to be 100 thousand Units richer."

As Peter says this, both Rocket and Quill seemed to turn a complete 180. The Hangover symptoms quickly vanished as they rushed into the cockpit, where they saw Planet Xandar in the distance.

"Haha! We're gonna be rich!"

Hours after the Guardians left the peaceful planet of Xanov behind, a large Chitauri fleet appeared on the horizon.

"Are you sure they were spotted here?" Corvus asks his wife, as they both stare at the peaceful planet below.

"Yes, my information broker is hardly ever wrong." Proxima sounded very sure of herself.

Suddenly, before they could say another word, an image of an orange man in high-level Nova Corps garb was projected before them.

"Unknown invasion force, you are ordered to turn your army around this instant. Any attacks on this peaceful planet will not be taken lightly. The Nova Empire will not stand idly by..."

"My love, look at him." Proxima smirks at the Nova Commander. "Barking orders like a scared little animal..."

"It's always the weakest that make the most noise..." Corvus agreed in distaste.

"..." Seeing the lack of fear in the people he was talking to, the commander changed his tactics in hopes of settling this without bloodshed. "Why are you here?"

"Now we're talking." Corvus says with a smirk. "Your puny planet may make it out of this alive, after all."

"Get to the point." The commander says impatiently.

"Maybe not..." Corvus muttered as he sent some information over. "We have information that these life forms have visited your planet. Give them to us and we will not invade."

"..." As the images of Xanovs saviors appeared before him, the commanded eyes widened in shock.

"You've seen them?" Corvus read him like a book.

"No, they aren't here." The commander shakes his head, only partially lying.

Of course, he met them but they left about 10 hours before this invasion fleet arrived.

"Turn your ships around and leave." His eyes harden as he glares at the children of Thanos.

He had a debt to Spider-Man and refused to give him or his friends up so easily.

"That was the wrong answer, I'm afraid." Corvus shook his head.

After he spoke, the Chitauri fleet came to life once again and rushed to the planet below.

"This is an act of-" The commander screams, but the call was swiftly cut off.

"I'll kill that one myself..." Proxima commented as she grabbed her spear and walked off.

"Whatever you want, Dear."

Chapter 264: 6 Way Split

"Hurry up and land already!" Quill complained as Rocket took the controls and sped into Xandar's atmosphere.

"You don't gotta tell me twice." Rocket replied, matching Quill's energy perfectly.

Both of them wore greedy looks as they stared down at the planet, ready to collect their credits.

"How shameless..." Gamora commented from the side. "They barely do anything yet they're ready to take an equal cut."

"Hey! Who's ship do you think ferried all of you to and from Xanov?" Quill argued back.

"Yeah!" Rocket agrees. "Besides, you didn't do much either."

"The woman is right." Drax marches over and takes Gamora's side.

"The woman has a name..." Gamora said in annoyance, though Drax didn't seem to notice.

"We should give our shares to Spider. He did all of the work." Drax said.

"Hell no!" Quill exclaimed as Rocket stood on the pilot's chair beside him.

"There ain't no way I'm sharing my money with nobody!" Rocket denied vehemently.

"Guys, relax." Peter inputs himself into the conversation. "My cut is more than enough. All of you can keep your credits. After all, there are a lot more credits to be made together in the future."

"..." Hearing Peter's words, everyone went quiet as they all looked around, feeling uncertain about that possibility.

They all may have started to like each other, if only a tiny bit, but that didn't mean they would definitely be sticking around...

Reading the atmosphere, Peter knew what they were thinking and could only sigh internally.

'I'll turn them into a fully-fledged crew soon enough...'

"Welcome back, Spider-Man." Irani Rael welcomed Peter and the Guardians as they landed. "You handled my terrorist problems far faster than I thought possible."

"I aim to please." Peter smiles under his mask.

"Can we get this show on the road? I got credits to spend." Rocket complains.

"Ah, yes." Irani nods as she pulls out six thick-looking alien credit cards and passes them out. "Since you finished the job far faster than expected, I threw in an extra 50 thousand credits as a bonus."

"Easiest money I've ever made." Quill laughed as Rocket snatched Groot's card and stashed it away with his own.

"I am Groot!?" Groot instantly used his roots to bind Rocket.

"Hey! Relax, big guy." Rocket shouts as he tries and fails to break free. "I'm only keeping it safe. Last time you had money, you got scammed into buying a jar of p*ss for a thousand credits."

"Ewww..." Gamora groans in disgust.

"I am Groot." Groot reluctantly conceded as he released Rocket.

"You sure picked up an odd group of characters..." Irani says to Peter as she watched the small squabble unfold.

"Yeah, but at least they're interesting."

After getting their payment, Peter and the Guardians didn't stick around much longer.

Irani Rael watched as they boarded their ship and flew off into the sky, leaving the planet at full speed.

After all, Rocket was driving.

While Irani was feeling happy with her transaction as she initially doubted the Guardian's success rate, especially since they were all criminals except Peter, a man in a Nova Corps uniform came running in her direction with a distraught look on his face.

"Ma'am!" He yelled in a panic.

"?" Turning around, Irani wonder what the hell was going on.

"Ma'am! It's Xanov! The Chitauri have invaded Xanov!" He rambled.

Instantly, Irani's good mood was turned upside down.

"I'm rich..." Rocket muttered as he stared in awe at the card in his hand. "I'm gonna buy a new multi-shot hand cannon. Maybe an energized electron blaster too..."

"I want to upgrade the ship a bit." Quill says as he held his card as well. "The brakes on this thing ain't been so good lately. After that, I'll spend the rest on whatever catches my eye."

"I'll set my funds aside for the war against Thanos and Ronan's surviving minions." Drax joins in.

"..." Gamora remained silent.

"Good, but we have to come to a decision now." Peter says as he pulled the Orb out of nowhere, catching the eye of everyone around the room. "What are we doing about the Orb?"

"It was mine, to begin with, so I don't see how everyone else should have a say in this." Quill complains.

"You took it from some ruins on Morag. The Orb never belonged to you in the first place." Gamora counters with a hostile look in her eyes.

"Yeah, the Orb belongs to me and Groot." Rocket throws himself into the argument. "We saved your life back on Xandar. Without us, you would've been offed by this witch. You owe us."

"What?! You were only trying to capture me so you can sell me off to Yondu and his Ravagers for a quick payday!" Quill was starting to get heated, as everyone seemed to have a claim to his property. "And you-"

Quill turns and locks onto Gamora next.

"I did take the Orb from a ruin. An abandoned ruin on an empty planet! It belonged to no one until I took it." Quill was fed up with everyone's greed.

"I would like to point out that possession is nine-tenths of the law." Peter says as he plays with the Orb in his hand. "also, It's ten-tenths of the law when you're strong enough to do whatever you want."

"..." Quill couldn't help but sigh in frustration, as he didn't see a possibility of getting his Orb back anymore.

He could argue with everyone else for days and even fight them for it if he had to, but Peter is a different story altogether.

"Now, since this Orb belongs to me-" Peter says as he enjoys the annoyed looks on everyone's faces. "-that means that I can do whatever I want with it. And I'd be more than happy to share it with my friends."

Instantly, everyone's mood seemed to perk up a bit.

"Just like our last job, we can split the profit six ways." Peter says, knowing that there probably won't be any profit since the Orb is completely empty. "Though maybe we can scam somebody?"

After all, it would definitely be a very Guardians thing to do.

"I'm fine with an even split." Rocket was the first to agree, as he knew that his claim was fairly weak anyway.

"I am Groot." Groot agreed as well.

"I don't care for this Orb." Drax shook his head uncaringly, detaching himself from this conversation.

The only reason he still stuck around was the fact that Gamora's family may come around.

Drax wanted nothing more than to kill everyone related to Ronan, and that included Thanos and his children.

Of course, Gamora was able to get a pass, but that was only due to her severing all ties with her father.

"Fine, I'll share 'my' Orb." Quill says, feeling like he was screwed over in this situation. "But I don't have a buyer anymore. He backed out when he heard about my run-in with the Chitauri."

Thanks to his talks with Gamora, Quill learned about the odd alien bug soldiers that attacked him on Morag.

"That only leaves you." Peter turned to Gamora, who looked extremely reluctant. "You must have been offered a sh*t ton of money to be this hesitant to share."

Hearing Peter's assumption, both Quill and Rocket looked toward Gamora with greed shimmering in their eyes.

"Now that you say it, I do remember her saying she had a buyer!" Quill says as he leans in. "How much did they offer?"

"That's none of your business." Gamora replies defiantly.

"Oh, he's right, isn't he?" Rocket joins Quill in staring fixedly at Gamora. "Just tell us how much it is. It's not like you can take the Orb now."

Silence fills the room for a moment as Gamora slowly gave in to their demands.

"Fine..." She says as she whispers the price.

Nobody else was able to hear her but Peter and although he knew the price already, he was still surprised to hear such an astronomical number.

'It is an Infinity Stone after all...' Peter thought to himself.

"Speak up, come on." Quill prodded her excitedly.

"...Four Billion Units." Gamora states, shocking everyone.

Rocket, who was probably the most money hungry of them all, dropped his 150 thousand credits onto the ground in complete shock.

Even Drax, who wasn't interested earlier, couldn't help but feel tempted by such a large amount of money.

"D-Did you say Billion with a B?" Quill asks in disbelief.

"Yes..." Gamora uttered in frustration.

After all, she would be losing most of that money in the 6 way split.

"How the hell did you get a buyer willing to spend that much?!" Quill jumps to his feet. "My broker was only gonna give me a few million and I thought it was the payday of a lifetime!"

"Sounds like he was scamming you." Peter says as Quill's eyes widen in realization.

"That weasel Motherf*cker!" He shouts in anger.

...

Once Quill and everyone else calmed down, it was time to figure out where the hell they were going.

"So, who's the buyer and where are we headed?" Peter asks.

"He calls himself the Collector. He has the largest collection of interstellar fauna, relics, and species in the galaxy. The Orb is just another Relic for his growing collection." Gamora explains, leaving out the fact that the Orb held an Infinity Stone.

"Alright, where to?" Rocket rushed to the cockpit, ready to make his money.

"Knowhere." Gamora answers, confusing everyone.

"What? Where are we going, Woman? Don't waste my time. There's money to be made." Rocket starts complaining, like usual.

"..." Gamora couldn't help but sigh in frustration.

First, she has to share her billions and now she has to deal with this...

Chapter 265: Knowhere

With their destination known after some explaining from Gamora, Rocket ran off to set the coordinates and fly to his next big payday as quickly as possible.

"How long until we get there?" Peter asks as everyone started separating to either sleep or do what they would normally do.

"Let me see..." Rocket hummed as he took a seat in the cockpit and started hitting random buttons and switches. "...About six hours, but I can cut that down to four or five."

Anyone could see that Rocket was in a hell of a hurry.

After all, this is his biggest payout yet.

If the collector actually pays them without any sort of trickery, each member of the Guardians would make over 600 million units each.

The money-grubbing raccoon's eyes practically flashed with money signs as he pushed the ship into overdrive.

"Alright, I'm going to take a nap." Peter says as he walked off to his bedroom. "Don't get everyone killed while I'm gone!"

"Yeah, whatever..." Rocket muttered uncaringly.

Beep Beep Beep...

Suddenly, just as Peter left, an incoming transmission wrung in the cockpit.

Looking toward the monitor, rocket frowned as he saw the Nova Corps insignia on the caller ID.

"Nope." He refused flatly and swiftly declined the call.

Rocket went even further to block whoever was calling when they ended up trying a second time.

"Rocket?! Did someone call?" Quill asks as he ran over.

"Nah."

"F*ck!" Irani Rael cursed as she failed to get in contact with the Guardians.

She was sending an army to Xanov in order to combat the Chitauri, but she wanted to hire the Guardians to accompany them.

After all, Spider-Man is a one-man army, so having him involved with this would all but guarantee victory.

And he would most likely be thrilled to join, as the Avengers already have bad blood with Thanos.

But sadly, the Guardians didn't answer her call.

Of course, she did get in contact with Jarvis, but she was told that Spider-Man wasn't reachable at the moment.

'Most likely because he isn't on the planet...' she thought in frustration. 'Right when I need him, he disappears...'

"Ma'am, the ships are ready to go." A well-dressed Nova Soldier informs her.

"Send them out." Irani reluctantly orders.

Without Spider-Man, the fight would be harder, but she couldn't hold off any longer.

"Yes, Ma'am!"

...

Soon enough, Irani watched from her office balcony, as the sky over the city was filled with large Nova warships.

"..." She looked on solemnly as they all rushed off into space, headed for war.

-Xanov-

In the burnt and destroyed city of Veirus, Proxima Midnight stood over a disheveled and heavily injured orange-skinned man in a Nova Corps uniform.

The beautiful city that once matched the Capital city of Xandar was nothing but a graveyard now. If Peter and the Guardians were shown an image of the wreckage, they wouldn't recognize it whatsoever.

"Now, tell me what I want, or we'll spread from this city to the rest of your world, bringing nothing but death and destruction in our wake." Proxima glared down at the dying Commander with a predatory look in her eyes.

"..." The Nova Commander was silent for a moment as he battled within himself, though soon enough one side won. "T-They came to do a job for us, but they left about 10 hours before you arrived. That's all I know, I swear."

"What a pity..." she mutters in distaste as the spear jutted forward, piercing the commander's neck. "What a waste of time."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that..." Corvus appeared behind his wife as she flicked her spear, throwing the commander's corpse aside like trash.

"What is it?" She asks hopefully.

"Take a look at this." Corvus hold up a tablet, which showed the security footage from the Nova Corps Headquarters.

"What about it?" Proxima asks as she watched the Guardians walking through the halls together.

"That's right, you weren't there when Father learned that his newest lackey was dead." Corvus nods in understanding as he pauses the image and zooms in on Peter. "This is the man that killed Ronan the Accuser and challenged our father."

As she heard this, a big almost horrific smile bloomed on Proxima's face.

"Good, killing him would please our father very much!" Bloodlust emanated from Proxima's entire being.

"We should call father and let him know-"

"No!" Proxima hurriedly cuts him off. "Imagine the surprise on his face when we bring him his latest enemy on a silver platter."

Corvus remains silent as Proxima started daydreaming about the smile that would grace her 'loving' father's lips.

"Let's hurry, we need to find them!" Proxima rushes off toward the ship, leaving her husband behind.

"..." Corvus stood among the ruins of Veirus in uncertainty.

As much as he loves his wife, she tends to think irrationally when it came to their father.

After a moment of thought, Corvus opted to ignore his wife's words and secretly send a message to his father.

Once the brief but informative message was sent, Corvus walked back to his ship while pouring over all of the data he stole from the Nova Corps.

"There we go..." Corvus muttered as he found the make, model, and registration number of the ship that the Guardians left in.

"Hurry up, my love!" Proxima yelled impatiently from the large hangar door of their ship.

"Yes, dear."

-Earth-

In his large and messy workshop, Tony Stark could be seen wielding a blow torch with an Iron Man style welding helmet.

In front of him was a large machine of his making, which would hopefully be capable of producing nano-bots, which he would use for many things, like Biomedicine, Environmentalism, food production, etc.

Although all of that was great, Tony was far more excited about the nano-version of his Iron Man suit.

A full Iron Man suit that would cover his body at a moment's notice.

Never again would he have to carry around a suitcase or call for a delivery when a situation occurred.

Truly the pinnacle of technology.

'Once it's done, I can program the Nano bots to etch the armor pieces in those runes...' Tony thought as he peeked over at the tall stacks of books that Peter gave him.

Tony had the distinct urge to cackle like a mad scientist as he thought of the unlimited applications, but...

"Sir, there's a situation." Jarvis spoke from the speakers in the room.

"What is it?" Tony asks as he switches off his blow torch and pulls up his mask.

"The Nova Corps called..." Jarvis reveals as he explains the conversation that he just had with the Nova Prime.

"That little sh*t went off to have to play in space and left me here..." Tony complained as he tossed his torch and mask aside.

"It would seem so, sir." Jarvis didn't agree with his master's language, but he was correct.

Thinking to himself for a moment, Tony clicked his tongue as he donned his welder's helmet once again and grasped his torch.

"Prepare one of the Kree ships." He ordered as he lit his torch and got back to work. "We're heading out once my new Armor is finished."

Tony wouldn't miss out on alien wars and other adventures for much longer.

In fact, he might even make his own if he can't find Peter.

"Yes, sir." Jarvis replied readily.

'Maybe I'll invite Rhodes and Pepper...' Tony thought as he peeked over at all of the other Iron Man Models he made, which were locked up behind glass cases. 'Rhodes did seem like he wanted his own suit...'

After a nice nap, Peter woke up and used the bathroom before donning his suit and leaving his room.

As soon as the automatic door swung open, Peter was forced to step aside as Rocket, Quill, and Groot came tumbling through with surprised looks on their faces.

"What are you doing?" Peter asks as they hit the floor and looked up at him, like children who were caught red-handed with their hands in the cookie jar.

"They were trying to sneak in and peek under your mask while you slept." Gamora snitched on them from the hall.

"Hey! You wanted to see it too." Quill counters with a betrayed look on his face.

Of course, Gamora knew better than to confirm anything and simply kept quiet.

"Yeah, you lying witch!" Rocket yells as he picks himself up and looks at Peter curiously. "Just show us already. It can't be that bad. Me and Groot don't got anything against ugly. Just look at Quill."

"Hey! I'm handsome." Quill protests.

"Whatever you say..." Rocket says unbelievably.

Before a fight could break out in his room, Peter threw them all out one by one.

"Hey, watch the fur!" Rocket yelled as he flew out last and landed in Groot's waiting arms.

"Are we there yet?" Peter asks as he follows them out and walked to the cockpit.

Everyone instantly sighed in disappointment as Peter changed the subject completely, unwilling to show what's under his mask.

...

Arriving at the cockpit, Peter caught sight of a cloudy space illuminated by bright green and blue colored gases.

And in the center of it all was a giant severed head.

"Freaky, right?" Quill asks as he and everyone else joined Peter in the cockpit.

"Is that a head?" Peter pretended to be clueless. 'It's hard to believe that was a Celestial, though it's even weirder that people live inside of it...'

Oddly enough, the giant head reminded Peter of the journey he went on before meeting the Great Weaver for the first time.

At that time, Peter witnessed two colossal figures fighting on a dying world. Every blow they landed on one another shook the planet worse than the strongest earthquake possibly could.

"They say it's the skull of a fallen god." Gamora briefly explained the lore behind it. "The man we're going to meet mines the remains and sells them for a very high price."

"Eww, what kinda sick b*stards would buy that?" Rocket said in disgust.

"There's all sorts of crazies out there." Quill said in agreement.

"Whatever, let's just hurry up and land."

Chapter 266: Empty

Just as Peter and the Guardians started their journey toward Knowhere, Yondu Udonta was still on the hunt for Quill and the Orb.

Stepping into the Brokers shop on Xandar followed by a few of his more intimidating crew members, Yondu casually perused the Brokers goods.

"Do you got any other cute little buggers like this one? I like to stick 'em all in a row on my control console." Yondu asks as he eyes a tiny blue figurine.

"I can't tell if you're joking or not." The Brokers spoke nervously.

"He's being serious." A Ravager spoke up from the side.

"In that case, I can show you." The Broker nods as he walks over to the figurine, but he was stopped by Yondu, who stepped in front of him.

"But first, you're gonna tell me what this orb is, and why everybody cares so damn much about it. Then you're gonna tell me who out there might wanna buy it." Yondu says with a smile as he straightens the Brokers suit for him.

"Sir, the high-end community is a..." He says but Yondu interrupts.

"Havena kal jann shibek." Yondu started speaking absolute gibberish, which both confused and somehow intimidated the meek broker.

"T-The high-end community is a..." he tries to speak but Yondu continues to make up his own language. "It's a tight-knit... Tight-knit... The high-end community is a very tight-knit..."

Yondu kept acting like a crazy man, making All of his men laugh as they crowded around the shaking broker.

"I cannot possibly betray the confidentiality of my buyers!" The Broker had enough and shouted in order to finally get his point across.

Whistle

Yondu stops speaking gibberish and whistles, calling his trademark arrow out of its holster.

"Don't raise your voice at me." Yondu turns seriously in an instant as his arrow hovered inches away from the shivering broker's face. "That's disrespectful."

"M-My apologies..." The Broker looked like he was about to sh*t his pants.

"Now, who is this buyer of yours?"

In the center of the carved-out habitable portion of Knowhere sat parked a large ship, which belongs to the collector.

Inside the ship, the Collector himself, Taneleer Tivan walked through his museum with a scrutinizing eye.

Tivan wore expensive clothes made from the finest silks and furs. His skin was pale and his white hair stood straight up, defying gravity.

[Insert picture of the Collector here]

"Carina." Tivan calls out as he swiped his finger across a nearby table, finding a tiny speck of dust on his glove.

"Yes, Master?" A scared-looking pink Krylorians girl answered readily.

Behind her was a big glass display case, where a pale Dark Elf lay trapped.

"Your people do have elbows, do they not?" The Collector asks pointedly.

"We do, Master." Carina answers in confusion.

"Then use them. I don't have to remind you what happened to the last attendant who disappointed me. Do I?" The collector lectures her as he gestures to another display case.

Carina fearfully turned around and looked at the Collector's previous servant, who looked almost exactly like her.

The poor girl was locked up in one of the glass cases, bound and connected to some sort of torture device.

Carina shook with crippling fear as she stared at what could be herself if her master deemed it so.

"Chop chop. Our guests will be here soon." The Collector says, snapping the poor girl out of her fearful state.

Acting quickly, Carine grabs a rag and goes back to cleaning the glass cases with much more attention to detail than before.

Walking the streets of Knowhere, Peter and the Guardians admired the alien metal city before them.

Due to the fact that they were currently in a floating Celestial Skull in the middle of space, the city didn't have any dirt, grass, or stone.

It seemed to be completely crafted out of metal, from the floor underneath their feet to the shops and buildings all around them.

"Hundreds of years ago, the Tivan Group sent workers in to mine the organic matter within the skull. The bone, brain tissue, and spinal fluid. All rare resources, which are highly valued in black markets across the galaxy. It's dangerous and illegal work. Gamora explains and she turns to Quill. "Suitable only for outlaws."

"Well, Spider and I come from a planet of outlaws. Billy the Kid, Bonnie and Clyde, and John Stamos." Quill brags with a smirk.

"Robin Hood, Rambo, Captain Jack Sparrow..." Peter continued the list.

"Oh, I know Robin Hood!" Quill sounded excited that someone could finally relate to him. "Who's Rambo and Captain Jack? Is he like Captain Crunch?"

"No." Peter chuckled as he shook his head. "You know what? Once we're done with this, I'll go pick up some movies for you to watch. Rambo and Pirates of the Caribbean is probably a good start."

"Can we eat Mcdonald's again too?" Quill gave Peter his best puppy dog eyes, though it wasn't cute at all.

"Fine, just stop looking at me like that." Peter shrugged as his head whipped to the side and he reached out to grab the hand of a small raggedy looking homeless child. "Give it back."

Holding out his other hand expectantly, Peter waited as the kid reluctantly handed over a black wallet.

"Here." Peter says as he hands it over to Quill.

"What the..." Quill muttered as he felt his empty pockets and realized what happened.

"Keep a look out for pickpockets." Peter reminds everyone as he pulls a bag out of nowhere and hands it to the kid. "Here, enjoy."

Reluctantly taking the bag, the young thief didn't stick around for long and disappeared into one of the many maze-like alleyways.

"What did you give him?" Gamora asks curiously.

"Just some food."

As the young pickpocket found a safe place to stop after quadruple checking for anyone tailing him, he hesitantly opened the bag with a hopeful yet scared look on his face.

On one hand, the oddly dressed man could have been kind and given him something good, but on the other hand, he could have given him trash or something dangerous, like a bomb.

Peeking his little head inside, the ragged alien child was shocked to find it full of both food and credits.

Ignoring the food for now, which was hard as he hasn't eaten since yesterday, the kid did his best to count the money, but sadly there was just too much of it for him to know for sure.

It's not like he went to school or anything.

Though he did know one thing, it was a lot of money.

After walking the streets for a while, Gamora led Peter and the Guardians to a rundown bar with a lot of shady-looking aliens inside.

"We have to wait here for the Collectors representative to pick us up." She said as everyone spread out among the bar.

Although some of the shady characters tried to pick a fight here and there, the Guardians could easily handle themselves in a place like this.

Taking a seat at the bar, Peter looked over the bars menu, which was written in a language he didn't understand, and ordered himself a drink at random.

...

Sipping his bright green drink, which tasted far better than he thought it would, Peter watched through the window as Gamora and Quill talked outside the bar.

They seemed to become fairly intimate as Quill put his Walkman's headphones on Gamora, who seemed pleasantly surprised by the music that played.

Soon enough, the two were swaying back and forth in each other's arms, like real lovers.

'Quill's got some game, I'll give him that.' Peter thought as Quill leaned in for the kiss. 'Well, maybe not...'

Just as their lips were about to touch, Gamora pulled a knife from her belt and held it against Quill's throat.

'Maybe next time, bud.' Peter thought as he noticed a familiar pink woman entering the bar, taking a seat in the corner. 'Isn't that the Collectors slave girl?'

A moment later, Gamora came back inside after what appeared to be a bit of an argument.

As soon as Carina laid eyes on Gamora, she left her seat and rushed over.

"Milady Gamora, I'm here to fetch you for my master." She says with a respectful bow.

...

As Carina escorted the Guardians to the Collectors ship, Peter was wondering what he should do about this pink alien girl.

First of all, he doesn't like slavery, no one does.

Second, she kills herself with the Power Stone in the movie in order to free herself, but sadly for her, the Orb is empty this time around.

Although her death was tragic, it also freed her from a life of hellish servitude at the hands of a sadistic and cruel master.

Now she wouldn't have that opportunity anymore.

While Peter was thinking of how to save this poor slave girl, they arrived at the Collector's huge ship and were swiftly taken to his museum.

"I present to you, Taneleer Tivan, the Collector." Carina introduces the man himself as he cane strolling in.

"Oh, my dear Gamora. How wonderful to meet in the flesh." Tivan leans down to kiss Gamora's hand as his eyes wander around her body.

"!" Quill did not look happy about the way his love interest was greeted.

"Let's bypass the formalities, Tivan. We have what we discussed." Gamora felt annoyed at the way he was looking at her, though she wouldn't say anything about it.

At least, not until the money was in her hand.

Eyeing the group behind Gamora, Tivan's mood seemed to brighten as he noticed Groot.

"What is that thing there?" He asks with a look of awe and wonder in his eyes.

"I am Groot." Groot answers as the collector rushes to his side.

"I never thought I'd meet a Groot." The Collector poked Groot's body a few times. "Sir, you must allow me to pay you now so that I may own your carcass. At the moment of your death, of course."

"I am Groot." Groot looked to Rocket for advice.

"Why, so he could turn you into a frickin' chair?" Rocket didn't like the idea at all.

"Is that your pet?" Tivan asks Groot.

"His what?!" Rocket exclaims angrily as he reaches for his gun.

The Collector laughed as Gamora rushed to Rocket and stopped him from ruining the deal.

"Tivan, we have been halfway around the galaxy, retrieving this orb." Gamora says as she got Rocket under control.

"Very well, then. Let us see what you brought." The Collector acted as if his fun was taken away.

Gamora looks to Peter, who pulled the Orb out of thin air and tossed it over to the Collector, who scrambled to grab it out of the air.

"This is a priceless treasure. Do not throw it around like a child's plaything." Tivan turned serious as he held the Orb like a loving mother would hold her baby.

'It's empty anyway...' Peter thought with a shrug.

As the Collector put the Orb into a device, which started unlocking it before everyone's eyes, he goes into a very dramatic explanation.

"Oh, my new friends. Before creation itself, there were six singularities and then the universe exploded into existence..." He tells them all about the Infinity Stones and their beginning.

"Dude, every sketchy bad guy I've ever met explains stuff like this." Quill whispers to Peter.

"You're telling me..." Peter has dealt with dramatic villains like this more times than he can count.

Alongside Tivan's detailed explanation of the Infinity Stones, he also showed them a video of giant beings, who used the Infinity Stones as weapons.

"These carriers can use the stones to mow down entire civilizations like wheat in a field." The Collector explains as the video ends with a giant planet-covering explosion.

"There's a little pee coming out of me right now." Quill comments half jokingly.

Ignoring the snide comment, the Collector turned to the Orb, which was finally unlocked and slowly opened, revealing...

"?" Tivan stared in confusion as he found absolutely nothing inside the Orb.

"That was anticlimactic..." Peter mutters.

Instantly, Tivan turned to the Guardians with a suspicious glare, though they all looked just as confused as him.

After all, none of them but Gamora knew that the Stone was inside the Orb.

They didn't even know that it could open.

"What's the meaning of this!"

Chapter 267: Freedom

"What's the meaning of this?!" The collector looked p*ssed, like a spoiled child who opened his Christmas present and found nothing but an empty box.

"?" Gamora was stunned into silence.

"How the hell are we supposed to know?" Quill comes to her rescue. "You asked for this Orb and we brought it. Now, pay up."

Hearing Quill's demanding tone, Tivan looked furious as he reached into his pocket and pressed a bottom.

In an instant, the ceiling opened up and countless blaster turrets descended into the museum, each of them taking aim at the Guardians.

"I agreed to pay for the contents of the Orb, not the Orb itself." The Collector says as he glares at the group menacingly. "Now, which of you insignificant little bugs is greedy enough to think that you can trick me?!"

Watching the group suspiciously, Tivan began to wonder if it was only one of them that tried to cross him, or if all of the Guardians were involved.

Meanwhile, poor Carina was cowering in the corner, shaking like leaf.

"?!" As the Guardians stared down certain death, each of them could only think of one person.

In tandem, each of them turned to look at Peter in suspicion.

After all, he was the one that took possession of the Orb last, unless the Nova Corps somehow swiped it beforehand, which was unlikely.

"Don't look at me." Peter lies with a shrug. "I didn't even know the thing could open."

Seeing every suspect turn to the masked man in red and Blue, The Collector made a motion with his hand, directing the majority of the turrets toward Peter.

"Where is my Infinity Stone?" Tivan asked threateningly.

"I don't know. Have you checked that bird's nest on your head?" Peter answers uncaringly and without an ounce of fear. 'This may be a good opportunity for them to learn how to fight together..'

"Wrong answer..." The Collect says as the turrets all fire at Peter, ripping him into shreds.

Everyone watched in shock as the strongest member of their crew was turned into Swiss cheese and collapsed onto the ground in a puddle of his own blood.

"Carina, dear." Tivan runs a hand through his hair as he turns to his pink slave girl. "Clean up this mess and make an appointment with my stylist. I'm having second thoughts about my hair. Maybe something shorter would be better."

"Y-Yes, Master..." She stutters in fear as she rushes off to get the proper supplies.

"Spider!" Drax was the first of the Guardian's react as he drew his blades and rushed forward.

"Wait, Drax!" Gamora exclaims as she tries to stop him.

"Motherf*cker!" Quill broke from his shock as he pulled his blaster and started firing at the turrets, hoping to give Drax some cover as he goes for the attack.

Meanwhile, Rocket watched on before scrambling toward the door.

"I am Groot!" Groot shouts as his roots grew and tangled themselves around his longtime friend's ankles.

"Groot! let me go, right now!" Rocket reprimanded his tree companion as he was pulled backward. "We need to get the hell out of here, you brainless moron!"

"I am Groot." Groot pulls Rocket up to his eye level and says decisively.

After a brief staring contest, Rocket was released and crashed onto the floor headfirst.

"Fine, stay here and die for all I care!" Rocket huffs as he looked over his shoulder one last time before rushing out of the room on all fours, leaving his friends behind.

"Agghh!" Drax let out a loud war cry as he rushed forward.

"Fool." The Collector commented as the turrets shifted toward Drax.

"No!" Gamora gave up on stopping Drax and pulls out a handful of throwing knives, joining Quill in destroying as many turrets as they could.

Pew pew pew...

As the turrets locked onto Drax, they instantly let loose a hundred lasers in a single second.

Just as everyone thought another person would be joining Peter in the afterlife, countless brown tree roots swiftly crept their way across the metal floor before shooting upwards, interweaving with one another and creating a thick wooden shield for Drax.

"I am Groot!" Groot shouted as his roots took all of the damage.

"Haha!" Drax laughed as he was saved. "This dumb tree is my ally!"

Hearing that unneeded insult, Groot grunted as his roots began to burn, catching fire from the hundreds of lasers that he just endured.

"Rah!" Gamora roared as she kicked off Drax's shoulder and leaped over the burning root barrier.

"And this Green wh*re is as well!" Drax exclaimed happily as Gamora expertly threw one of her larger knives in the Collector's direction.

"Hey! Don't call her that!" Quill reprimands Drax as he ran to the edge of Groot's barrier and fired a few shots at Tivan as well.

As the knife and blaster shots were only inches away from the Collector's body, a blue force field lit up, deflecting all attacks easily.

"Your efforts are useless-"

Just as he was about to continue taunt the Guardians, Tivan caught sight of Groot's fire spreading to one of his bookshelves, igniting it fairly quickly.

"How dare you ruin my collection!"

"Is he always like this?" A voice asks, scaring Carina as she cowered behind one of the doors with cleaning supplies still in hand.

Turning around quickly, the poor slave girl came face to face with a ghost.

"Y-You're dead..." She stuttered in fright as Peter waved at her disarmingly.

"Nah, just a little sleight of hand, see." Peter says as he points to where his corpse once was.

"H-How?" Carina asks in shock as she turned to see a clean and empty floor, where a mangled body once lay.

"Just a bit of magic." Peter says as he gives her a magician's bow. 'The Reality Stone is really useful for times like this.'

"Are you not going to help your friends?" She asks hesitantly.

"Are you not going to help your Master?" Peter counters with a question of his own.

"No..." She admits, hoping that Tivan would die in this encounter.

"Same, though I think that we both have a different reason for that." Peter says knowingly.

"C-Can they win?" Carina asks nervously.

"Sure, as long as they work together." Peter says as they watched Groot save Drax's life. "So, why do you want your Master dead so badly?"

"H-He's horrible..." Carina went into detail about all of the abuse she and the Collector's former slaves were put through.

It seemed like the Collectors is an extremely sadistic psychopath.

Not only did he torture his slave woman in all sorts of horrid ways, but there was a reason why each of them was of Krylorians descent.

The rich pervert had a thing for torturing and r*ping beautiful pink-skinned women, which only made Peter even more clear on what had to happen.

Especially after the poor slave girl started bawling her eyes out in front of him.

"I see..." He muttered as this whole conversation just became extremely serious. "How would you like to set yourself free?"

"Why can't that idiot just listen to me?" Rocket muttered under his breath as he marched through the halls of the ship, looking for the exit. "Sentimental overgrown houseplant..."

As he grew closer and closer to the exit, Rocket's hushed insults for his friend began to disappear and his speed seemed to slow.

Soon enough, Rocket stood frozen at the exit as his tiny raccoon hands gripped into fists and his jaw clenched shut in frustration.

"F* k this..."

"How dare you ruin my collection!" Tivan screamed in furious anger.

Never has anyone dared to enter the collector's museum and even so much as touch one of his pieces, let alone set a whole shelf of priceless tomes on fire.

"I am Groot..." Groot groaned in pain the fire started spreading from his roots and toward his body.

"?!" Ignoring the screaming man-child, Drax rushed to Groot's side and used his blades to sever the burning roots, saving the trees life in return. "Now we're even, My-"

Before Drax could say another word, Groot toppled onto the floor and remained unmoving.

Although he was saved from the fire spreading to his main body, Groot was still extremely dried out and exhausted from the whole experience.

He would need a lot of water and rest in order to recover, or else Groot would continue to dry out completely and die.

"Groot..." A shocked voice muttered from the nearby doorway.

Heads turned to see a devastated raccoon standing there with a large cannon-like alien blaster in hand.

Just in time for his arrival, the root barrier that shielded the Guardians crumbled into a pile of flaming ash and twigs, revealing the man behind all of this.

"You!" Rocket exclaimed as he marched into the room with his weapon pulsing menacingly. "You killed my friend!"

"What a shame that his carcass has been damaged." The Collectors lamented as he did his best to ignore his burning tomes. "It isn't good enough to be put on display in my museum anymore, but perhaps I can mount his head in my bathroom?"

"Argh!" Rocket screamed in rage as he charged up his cannon-like weapon and fired.

Boom!

As he pulled the trigger, Rocket was blown backward by the recoil as a giant basketball-sized body of energy soared across the room.

Just like before, the Collectors barrier appeared, saving his life, though it couldn't absorb all of the impact.

"Ugh!" Tivan grunted as he was thrown across the room by the force of it.

"Master!" Carina burst through the doors and rushed over to the Collector's side.

Slap!

"Don't touch me!" Tivan exclaimed as he picked himself up and backhanded the poor slave girl across the face, sending her falling to her knees. "Disgusting filth."

Turning to the group of Guardians, who were surprised to see him still alive after all of that, the Collector smirked evilly as every remaining turret shifted into place once again.

"This has gone on long enough." The Collector says as an unnoticed figure rises to its feet behind him. "First, you try to rip me off, and then you destroy my-"

Shink...

As Tivan spoke, a long knife melted through his forcefield and pierced into the back of his head, poking out of his eyeball.

"?..." A shocked look froze on the Collector's face as the life drained from his body and he fall to the floor, dead.

"I-I..." Carina stuttered in disbelief as she gripped the bloody knife, which was just in her Master's head only a second ago.

"You did a good job, Carina." Peter comforted her as he walked into the room and took the knife from the petrified girl's hand. "He deserved far worse than that. You're free now."

"..." Carina stared down at her former Master for a moment before turning her gaze back to Peter. "I'm free?"

"Yes, congratulations. No one can hurt you anymore." Peter as he waves to the Guardians. "Hey, guys!"

"?!" Before any of them could voice their feelings about Peter's fake death, a loud southern voice echoed across the ship.

"QUILL! Where are you, Boy!"

Chapter 268: Recruitment

"QUILL! Where are you, Boy!" A loud southern drawl echoes through the ship.

"Oh, sh*t..." Quill mutters as he rushes to the door and locks it shut before destroying the control panel with a few blasts of his pistol.

"Groot!" Rocket exclaims as he rushes over to his fallen friend.

"Let me have a look." Peter says as he walks over.

Putting out the fire and smoke in the room with a wave of his hand, Peter stood above Groot and casts a quick spell on him.

"Don't touch him!" Rocket yells as he turns his gun on Peter.

"He's alive, relax." Peter says as he opens a small portal above Groot's dry open mouth.

Instantly, fresh spring water from earth pours out of the quarter-sized portal and quickly fills Groot's mouth, forcing him to swallow.

Before Rocket's very eyes, Groot's dried-out body slowly but surely started to rejuvenate.

"He's dehydrated and exhausted." Peter explains as he ruffles the fur on Rocket's head. "After a good night's rest and some watering, he'll be back to normal."

After explaining everything, Peter opened a portal under Groot, sending him falling into his bedroom back on the ship.

"Quill!" Yondu's yelled as he banged on the locked door a few times. "I know you're in there! Don't you move, Boy! I'm coming for you."

"Okay, now is a great time for one of your portals, Spider!" Quill rushed up to Peter and practically begged.

"What? You don't want to introduce us to your Ravager space Daddy?" Peter asks jokingly.

"He is not my-"

Boom!

Suddenly, the door was blown open and a blue-skinned man with a flat red metallic Mohawk came strolling in.

"Daddy's home!" Yondu made his entrance as his eyes locked onto Quill. "What a coincidence to see you here!"

"Hey, Yondu..." Quill waves awkwardly as about thirty Ravagers came pouring into the room.

"You betrayed me! Tried to steal my money!" Yondu exclaims as he points a blue finger Quill's way. "When I picked you up as a kid, these boys wanted to eat you. They ain't never tasted Terran before. I saved your life!"

That seemed to be the last straw for Quill, as his awkward demeanor vanishes and is replaced with furious anger.

"Oh, will you shut the f*ck up about that? God! For twenty years you've been throwing that in my face, like it's some great thing not eating me! Normal people don't even think about eating someone else! Much less that person having to be grateful for it! You abducted me, man. You stole me from my home and my family." Quill ranted.

"You don't give a damn about your Terra! You're just a scared soft little boy!" Yondu shouts as he marches toward Quill with his men at his back. "You can't even begin to understand the good I've done for you! You're only alive today because of me, eaten or not! I raised you into the man you are today, and you spit in my face!"

"!" The time for words came to an end, as Quill pulled back his fist and clocked Yondu square in the face.

Just as the surrounding Ravagers were about to pounce on Quill, a golden dome-shaped barrier blocked their path.

"This is a fight between Father and Son." Peter says as he walked up with the Guardians and Carina at his back. "Let them solve it on their own."

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Gamora asked worriedly as she watched Quill take an elbow to the face.

"Yeah, I'm getting some pretty heavy daddy-issue vibes from this." Peter explained.

He knew that Yondu cared for Quill in his own way, so the two of them would have to settle their differences and now seemed like the perfect opportunity to do just that.

While Yondu and Quill were slugging it out, a few Ravagers, who didn't look happy about the situation, tried to attack Peter and the barrier, but...

"Ugh!"

"Argh!"

"Ahh!"

Each time someone stepped out of line, Peter sent them tumbling through a pair of portals, leaving them screaming as they fell infinitely at the back of the room for all to see.

When both sides calmed down, the fun could finally start.

"Taking bets!" Peter shouts like an expert bookie. "Odds are 2 to 1 in Yondu Udonta's favor! Place your bets with me and hand your Credits to my furry friend here!"

That seemed to liven up the mood as a bunch of Ravagers rushed up to bet on their Captain.

Of course, Rocket was more than happy to take their money.

"300 Credits on Captain!"

"1000 Credits on Yondu!"

"50 Credits..."

"2000 Credits on Quill..." One of the Ravagers said in a hushed tone, though everyone seemed to hear it.

Every Ravager turned to him with betrayed looks on their faces.

"What? If he wins then I double my money..."

-Inside the Barrier-

"You took me from my home!" Quill exclaimed as he kicked Yondu in the stomach.

"I showed you the universe, you ingrate!" Yondu countered as he dipped passed a punch and elbowed Quill in the ribs.

"I'm sorry that I'm not grateful for being kidnapped!" Quill rebutted with a fist to the face.

"I saved you, Boy!" Yondu roared as he missed a punch and took a knee to the stomach.

"Saved me from what? A loving family?" Quill asked as he knocked his opponent on his back and follows after him, sending hammer punches to his face in the process.

whistle!

Yondu shielded his face with his arms as he let out a loud whistle, which caused his Yaka Arrow to shoot out of its holster and rest on Quill's neck.

"You didn't have a family! Your mommy died and I took you in!" Yondu says as Quill froze in place.

"Don't you talk about her..." Quill says threateningly, as if he was the one with an arrow to Yondu's neck.

"Face it, kid. I saved you from a mediocre life on some mediocre world." Yondu smirked as he looked up at Quill tauntingly. "Hell, I might as well be your Daddy!"

"!" Quill didn't take too kindly to that statement as he went to attack once again.

whistle!

"I don't think so." Yondu's smirk widens as the arrow at Quill's throat presses forward slightly, breaking his skin open. "I already won, Boy. Give up."

"Sadly, that isn't the case." Peter says from the other side of the barrier, confusing the Ravagers who were celebrating their win. "This was a fist fight, not an arrow fight. Quill takes the win by default."

As Peter says this, the arrow vanished from Quill's neck, shocking Yondu and his Ravagers.

"I won!" The sole Ravager that bet on Quill exclaimed in victory as he collected his winnings from Rocket, who reluctantly handed it over.

"What the hell is going on?!" Yondu stood up alongside Quill and seemed to finally notice the barrier around them. "Where's my Arrow?"

"That would be my friends doing." Quill says as the barrier surrounding them disappeared. "He's a magician."

"Well, tell em to work his voodoo and hand over my Arrow." Yondu says threateningly as the Ravagers circle around Peter and the Guardians.

"Sure, but first let's come to an understanding." Peter says as he snaps his fingers and conjures a long table with chairs and took a seat.

"?!" Every Ravager including Yondu were shocked as the table appeared.

After all, a barrier could be explained through technology, but this was just crazy...

"Everyone take a seat." Peter says as he turns to the Ravagers. "Except you grunts. Feel free to wait outside the door while we talk."

"They ain't going anywhere." Yondu says as he took a seat at the head of the table.

Without uttering another word, Peter gestured to the few Ravagers at the back of the room, who were still falling through the portals.

They weren't even conscious anymore.

"Y-You know, Boss. We'll wait for you outside." One of the Ravagers says as he and the rest rush out of the door in fear.

"..." Yondu didn't know how to handle the situation anymore.

His men were scared sh*tless and he didn't even have his Yaka Arrow anymore.

"What do you want?" Yondu asks, knowing that he wasn't the one calling the shots anymore.

"It's good that you understand the situation." Peter says with a nod. "Since a member of my crew wronged you, we will come to an agreement for compensation."

"Your crew?!" Quill shouts incredulously. "Who's ship have you been staying in rent-free?"

"I'd say the 150 thousand credits I brought you was more than enough to make up for that." Peter says as he turns to Quill. "But if you'd like the Captain position, then we can decide it like warriors?"

"..." Quill fell silent as he turned his head away.

Even Rocket, who wanted to weasel his way into being the Captain, didn't say a word after that.

"4 Billion Credits." Yondu states plainly.

"What?!" Quill and Rocket jumped out of their seats in disbelief. "You greedy mother-"

"That Orb you stole from me is worth 4 billion, and I won't take a Unit less." Yondu enjoyed the look on Quill's face.

"The Orb was empty, so it wasn't actually worth that." Peter says as he gestures to the corpse of the Collector. "As you can see, he refused to pay."

"..." Yondu didn't look happy after hearing that.

"But, since your my first mate's Daddy-"

"Stop saying that!" Quill shouted in distaste.

"-I can offer you a few things."

"Wait, did he say first mate?" Quill asks though everyone ignores him.

"Well?" Yondu hurries Peter along.

"First, We can give you a small cut of what we take from the Collector." Peter says as he motions to the museum around them. "There's probably a vault in here somewhere as well."

"What else?" He asks in interest.

"Second, you could become a member of our crew-"

"What?! No, not happening!" Quill immediately shouted though Peter continued to ignore him.

"-We split everything equally, so your cut of the Collector's stuff would be much larger." Peter explains, hoping to recruit Yondu. 'He's one of the cooler characters in the MCU...'

"Hehe, I like you." Yondu laughs at Quill as he leans back in his chair. "Though, I don't know if I could be in the same crew as a traitor."

"Good, don't." Quill said in relief.

"Don't try to play me, Yondu." Peter says with a smirk under his mask. "I looked you up and I know all about your little kidnapping spree. It even got you exiled, didn't it? Ravagers don't traffic children. It's against the code, right?"

"?" Quill never heard that part of the code before. 'Why would he kidnap me then?'

"The money was good. What's your point?" Yondu asks.

"Why didn't Quill get to his destination?" Peter asks, knowing the answer already.

In 1988, Yondu was hired by Ego, Quill's Celestial father, to travel to Missouri on Earth and kidnap Quill.

Aware that the other children he had delivered had been murdered, Yondu chose to keep Quill and raised him to be a Ravager.

"You took a liking to him, didn't you?" Peter asks as he leans forward tauntingly. "He wasn't like the other snot-nosed brats you picked up. You saw potential in him and decided to raise him like your son instead of sending him to his death."

"?!" Yondu practically jumped out of his skin as he heard that. "How do you know that?!"

Everyone watch in silent shock, especially Quill who was learning a bit more about his origins.

"It's not hard to see that every child you took never appeared again." Peter says as he looks Yondu in the eyes. "But you wouldn't let that happen to Quill, would you? He would be your son. A Ravager through and through."

"Fine, you're right." Yondu admits, shocking Quill even further. "But that don't mean he still ain't a traitor!"

"Who were you supposed to bring me to?" Quill asks, curious to know who was killing all those children.

"You know what? Forget this." Yondu gets up and walks to the door.

"How odd. A Ravager leaving without his payment." Gamora speaks up in confusion.

"If you leave, you're saying goodbye to the biggest score of your life." Peter calls out, stopping Yondu in his tracks. "Trust me, this guy was loaded. I wouldn't be surprised if he has triple the amount of credits he offered on this ship alone."

...

Silence filled the room as Yondu seemed to battle within himself. After all, a billion credits is a hard thing to turn down...

"Fine, I'll join your crew, but keep that little traitor away from me."

Chapter 269: Loot

"What the hell did you do!" Quill started screaming his complaints as soon as Yondu left the room. "Do you have any idea the sh*t storm you just brought on us... He will ruin everything... How could you think that this is a good idea..."

Waiting until Quill finished ranting, Peter finally found a chance to speak.

"I think it's a great idea for him to join, especially since I actually believe that he cares for you." Peter says as he watched Quill stare at him as if he were mentally unsound.

"What could have possibly given you that idea?" He asks incredulously.

"As I said earlier, I looked Yondu and his Ravager Clan up. When the other Ravager clans found out that your blue Daddy broke the code-"

"Ugh... Please, stop..." Quill hates hearing that.

"-by trafficking children, they exiled him and his clan. Then he went and picked you up on Earth for whatever reason." Peter explains as he places a hand on Quill's shoulder. "Why do you think he chose not to deliver you as planned?"

"Because he's a sick freak with an unhealthy obsession?" Rocket answered for him, though Quill certainly appreciated the backup.

"No, because he didn't want you to die. You were probably like the son he never had and chose to raise you instead of sending you to die." Peter explains clearly for Quill. "I'm not saying that he isn't an a*shole for what he did, but at the end of the day, I truly think that he cares about you."

"But does he have to join us?" Quill whined like a child. "Can't we just go our separate ways? He can even keep my portion of the jobs pay as long as he's gone..."

"Seriously? You would give him billions of Credits just to go away?" Peter asks as Rocket pulls out his gun again.

"Give me your share and I'll blow his head off for you right now." Rocket was ready to double his share in an instant.

"No, nobody is blowing anyone's head off." Peter sighs in exasperation. "Yondu has already joined the crew, so there's no changing that."

"What about his Crew?" Gamora brings up a slight problem. "Are we taking in his whole clan as well?"

"Maybe?" Peter says uncertainly.

"My ship isn't big enough to hold everyone." Quill states.

"Well, I was thinking we could use an upgrade anyway." Peter says as he gestures around them.

"It's a bit big..." Drax says in distaste.

"That's true..." Peter agreed as he thought for a moment. 'A smaller ship helps bring everyone together. If we switch to a huge one like this, it'll ruin the feeling.'

Looking toward Carina, who was standing at his side like an attentive servant, Peter spoke up.

"Does your old Master have any other ships?"

...

"It's like heaven..." Rocket muttered as they were shown to the ship's hangar, where around fifteen other ships were parked.

"This one could work?" Peter says as they toured the ships.

In front of them was a fully blacked-out Benatar Class ship, just like the second ship that the Guardians use in the movies, though it was a bit different.

First, it was about double the size of a normal Benatar M-Class ship, giving the Guardians more than enough room in case Yondu plans to take his Ravagers along with them.

Second, the whole thing was extremely high-tech and lavish, making it obvious that the Collector had it upgraded to a crazy degree.

"What about the other ships?" Rocket asks as he sees nothing but credits when he looks around the hangar.

"We could sell them." Gamora replies.

While the Guardians were figuring out the logistics, Peter followed Carina through the ship toward the Collector's vault.

"Have you ever been in here?" Peter asks as they arrived at a giant metal door, which was locked shut with multiple forms of security.

"No, Master never allowed anyone access." Carina replies dutifully.

"Well, he's dead now, so let's check it out, shall we?" Peter says as he waves his hand.

Before Carina's shocked eyes, the vault door transformed into a much smaller normal door, which Peter opened with ease.

Following him inside, Carina stared in awe at the contents of the vault.

In the center of the room, a giant pile of credits was stacked high up to the ceiling, which was definitely more than 4 billion as Peter thought.

"What is this?" Peter asks as he found many sealed containers of odd-colored liquids and what appeared to be white dust.

"That's what was collected from the mines." Carina explains.

"Oh..." Peter muttered in realization. 'It's blood, bone, brain tissue, and spinal fluid...'

As Peter eyed the containers filled to the brim with Celestial body parts, He suddenly had an idea...

'What would happen if I made the resurrection elixir with Celestial ingredients?' Peter wondered.

After a moment of thought, Peter opened a portal under the containers and sent them to Earth, where he would research them later on.

Carina's worship of Peter seemed to only grow as he continued to show his awe-inspiring abilities.

"You're amazing, Master..." Carina mutters as she covered her mouth, realizing what she just said.

Peter immediately felt something awaken in him. After all, a beautiful pink alien slave girl just called him master...

'It's every p*rn addict's wet dream...' Peter thought jokingly.

Quickly getting himself under control while also planning to visit MJ to relieve some stress later on, Peter turned to Carina with a stern look.

"Carina, you have no master anymore." Peter makes things clear. "Although I'm flattered, you should learn to live your life normally from now on."

"Y-Yes, sir..." Carina stuttered as she looked down at the ground like a scolded child.

"Good, now let's go back." Peter says as he empties the vault and strolls out with Carina following closely behind.

...

When Peter returned to the Hangar, the Guardians were taking pictures of the other ships.

"What are you guys doing?" Peter asks curiously.

"We're posting these ships online. We already sold two of them while you were gone." Quill explains as he pointed to two of the ships.

"Nice, I have all of the credits, but it's far more than I can count at the moment." Peter says as he walks over to their new ship. "I'll dump them in the ship for now."

...

After leaving a huge pile of credits in a locked room of their new ship, Peter followed Carina to the Museum, hoping to find something interesting.

Everything else would either be sold, left behind, or destroyed based on how dangerous the items are.

"Who's that?" Peter asks as he was lead to a room with a sleeping Dark Elf and what appeared to be Carina's twin in some sort of torture device.

"The Collectors former slave." She explains without using the word Master this time.

"I see..." Peter nods as he waves his hand, releasing the poor girl in an instant.

She didn't seem to fully understand what was happening as she sat there with a dumb look on her face.

Once Carina explained what was happened to her, the poor traumatized girl broke down crying as she thanked Peter over and over again.

"It's no problem. You're free now just like Carina." Peter says warmly as he looks around the museum. "Would either of you know about anything interesting in this place?"

...

Following the two former slaves, Peter was shocked at the amount of weird and overpowered objects in this museum.

Biogram Image: Creates a controllable image of the wielder while hiding his real location.

Birthstones: Can summon a Vulture of Nepenthe, whose claws are allegedly electrified.

Boxers: Rectangular inter-dimensional traps that can weaken a victim's strength and sanity.

Coats of Hercules: Animated animal hides that engulf their targets totally, cutting off their oxygen supply enough to render them unconscious.

Etherion Armor: An armored battle-suit made of the alien metal etherion, which amplifies the wearer's strength to superhuman levels, and it has jets that permit flight.

"Tony would like this..." Peter muttered.

Dergosian Gun: A large artillery weapon fires pellets that freeze the surroundings upon impact.

Cosmic Viewer: A mirror that can be used to monitor events on various worlds.

'That could be useful...' Peter thought.

Electrified Comb: A comb that produced a low level of electricity, which allows it to stay attached to anyone touching it.

"That's extremely useless..." Peter muttered as he moved on.

Incendiary Capsules: Grenades that burst into flames a few seconds after being discarded.

Kymellian Flute: Can translate any language.

'I haven't really had to worry much about language barriers yet...' Peter chalked it up to being in a comic book/movie world, which was originally made in English.

Magic Beans: Seeds that can conjure up warrior Giants.

Obedience Potion: An Elixir that compels the drinker to do the suppliers bidding, though it wears off over time.

'I need to keep this out of the wrong hands...' Peter wondered whether he should destroy the potion.

Philosopher's Stone: A legendary alchemical substance capable of turning base metals into gold. It is also capable of creating the elixir of life that provides the user a semi-immortality.

The drinker wouldn't age and be immune to all sickness, but getting killed by other means was always possible.

'Damn...' Peter stared in awe at the stone before quickly stashing it away. 'I'll play with that later.'

Shockwave Gong: A gong that sends out a shockwave against enemies when struck.

The Poison: The most powerful poison in the known universe.

'I wonder if this would work on Thanos?' Peter wondered as he carefully stashed away the vial.

Tibetan Crystal Balls: Crystal balls that emit mystical rays.

Vampire Stones: When hit together, can summon or banish a swarm of vampires.

'Vampires exist?' Peter hasn't seen a single one yet. 'Maybe they're aliens?'

The Collector also had zoos of alien beasts, like one snake which Peter stayed far away from and even contemplated killing...

Snake-Eyes: An enormous alien serpent with hypnotic powers.

Though there were two objects in the collection that Peter was extremely tempted to use.

Ali Babba's Lamp: A lamp that can summon a four-headed Djinn with mystical powers.

Ali Babba's Flying Carpet: A Persian flying carpet, which could morph into a cape for personal use.

Obviously, one of these things is far more appealing than the other.

'Ali Babba's Lamp!' Peter stared at the Persian-style lamp with greedy eyes. "Has the Collector used this lamp yet?"

"No, he was incapable of summoning the Djinn." The newly freed Krylorian spoke up. "He toiled over that lamp for a year before giving up."

'Maybe it needs a magical nudge?' Peter thought as he was tempted to experiment on the lamp.

Genies or djinns are supernatural creatures from pre-Islamic and Islamic mythology. They are associated with shapeshifting, possession, and madness.

In later Western popular representations, they became associated with wish-granting and often live in magic lamps or bottles.

'This could be dangerous...' Peter thought as he quickly stashed the lamp and carpet away.

On one hand, he could get three wishes and that would be amazing...

On the other hand, the whole idea of granting wishes could be a lie, and releasing the Djinn could bring about some sort of untold calamity.

'I need to talk to the Ancient One...'

Chapter 270: Death In The Family

While Peter was carefully looking through the Collector's museum, making sure to take what he wanted and destroy anything that could cause problems in the future, the Guardians finished up posting the extra ships for sale and headed out to the bar to unwind.

"So, can we pick up where we left off?" Quill took Gamora into his arms as they stood outside the same bar once again.

"I know who you are, Peter Quill. And I am not some starry-eyed waif here to succumb to your pelvic sorcery." She refused him harshly.

Reaching up, Gamora pushes his face away before it could get too close and strutted into the bar.

"..." Quill's head snaps to her swaying hips. 'Damn... She's gotta be doing that on purpose-'

Just as Quill was enjoying the view, a furry figure flew past Gamora as a commotion started in the bar.

"Woh! Woh! What are you doing?" Quill rushed in to see what was happening.

"This vermin had a few drinks and started picking fights with my boys." Yondu spoke up from the bar.

Seconds after speaking, his many Ravager subordinates stood up from their seats and drew their weapons.

"Ain't we supposed to be on the same side here?" Yondu asks as Rocket pulls out his gun and aims it in his direction.

"That is true!" Rocket shouts drunkenly as he swayed on his feet.

"He has no respect." Yondu continued while leisurely enjoying his drink.

"That is also true!" Rocket yelled as Drax stood beside him with his blades drawn, ready to fight if needed.

"Hold on! Hold on!" Quill stood between the Bloodthirsty Ravagers and his drunken friend.

Meanwhile, poor Carina and her look-a-like were hiding in the corner, regretting accepting the invitation to join the Guardians for a drink.

"Keep calling me vermin, tough guy! You just wanna laugh at me like everyone else!" Rocket waved his gun around, scaring a few of the regulars who were watching the spectacle.

"Rocket, you're drunk. Alright?" Quill says as he slowly steps forward to take the gun for him. "No one's laughing at you."

"He thinks I'm some stupid thing! He does! Well, I didn't ask to get made! I didn't ask to be torn apart, and put back together, over and over, and turned into some...some little monster!" Rocket broke down as he recalled some bad memories.

"Rocket, no one's calling you a monster." Gamora spoke from the side.

"He called me vermin! They called me rodent! Let's see if you can laugh after five or six good shots to your f*ckin' face!" As Rocket went to wave his gun around again, Quill rushes forward and ripped it out of his hands.

Just as everyone let out a calming breath, suddenly, the loud and powerful engines of a large spacecraft shook the building, confusing everyone inside.

"What the-" Quill muttered as he peeked out of the windows and found a fleet of Chitauri ships entering the mouth of Knowhere.

Even those on the streets outside were rushing back to their homes and ships, hoping to avoid the well known planet-culling army.

"Gamora!" He yelled nervously.

"?!" Rushing up to Quill with the rest of the bar following closely behind, Gamora saw some very familiar ships getting closer and closer. "We need to leave, NOW!"

"Why? What's so scary-" Yondu spoke casually as he strolled up and caught sight of the incoming army. "Back to the ship!"

Instantly, everyone rushed out of the bar just in time for the Chitauri riders to pour out of the ships and rush to the defenseless city with their weapons drawn.

"Ahhhh!"

"Aagghhrr!"

"No, please-"

Gamora and the Guardians did their best to ignore the dying screams of the unsavory civilians of Knowhere as they hurriedly rushed back to the Collector's ship.

"Watch out!" Quill shouted as he drew his pistol and fired a few inches above Gamora, who was about to be beheaded by a Chitauri soldier on a hoverbike.

Luckily, his aim was perfect as the soldier took an energy bolt to the face and crashed into one of the many bars in the city.

Boom!

...

whistle

"Quill!" Yondu yelled as an arrow came shooting his way.

'I knew it...!' Quill froze as the arrow whizzed past his ear and tore through five different Chitauri soldiers behind him before returning to Yondu's holster.

"Get moving, you idiot!" Yondu said as he pushed Quill forward.

"Y-Yeah!" Quill stuttered as he rushed to catch up to everyone else with Yondu at his back.

As the group of Guardians and Ravagers ran through the city, defending themselves from the invading army, they could hear and see that everyone else in the city wasn't fairing so well.

Of course, they wouldn't rush to save these people, especially when their lives were on the line.

When they finally caught sight of the Collector's ship in the distance, the Guardians sighed in relief, though it might have been too early for them to relax...

"Hello, Sister..." A voice spoke.

Gamora froze as Corvus Glaive dropped in front of their path with a spear in hand.

"C-Corvus..." Gamora spoke nervously, still refusing to call him family.

Just as the Guardians were looking to turn back and run, another voice appeared from behind.

"Why so scared, Sister?" Proxima Midnight dropped down behind the group with a sword hung at her waist.

"You should welcome your family with open arms." Corvus reprimanded her.

"Unless, of course, you're a dirty little traitor who betrayed her family for some riffraff!" Proxima exclaimed angrily, though she was certainly enjoying the moment.

"Father took you in and raised you as his own child, Gamora." Corvus was the next to lay on the guilt. "Your actions disgrace his kindness."

"Kindness? Kindness!?" Gamora snapped after hearing that. "That lunatic killed my parents in front of me! Is that kindness? Was it kindness when he slaughtered half of my planet? No, you're right! It had to be kindness when that sick son of a b*tch ordered his men to behead the children I went to school with! My friends!"

...

"I didn't know you felt this way, little one." A deep rumbling voice spoke as a third much larger figure walked up the path behind Proxima.

Gamora's eyes widened as her entire body shook with fright.

Corvus instantly turned and dropped to his knees followed by Proxima, who looked absolutely shocked at Thanos' arrival.

"Father." Corvus greeted Thanos respectfully.

"Father, what are you-"

"Shush, Proxima." Thanos dismissively waves at his eldest daughter.

"Father..." Gamora ground out those words in distaste.

"Gamora..." Thanos looks at her like a regretful father. "Where is-"

"What's all this ruckus out here?!" Another new arrival entered the fray. "I was in the middle of-"

"-Spider-Man?" Thanos finishes his question as he turns to see the man himself come strolling out of the ship behind Corvus.

"Oh..." Peter grunted as he realized that Thanos was actually there. "I expected those two."

He points to Proxima and Corvus, who continued to bow to Thanos.

"But not you." He then points to Thanos. "What's the matter? Come to take your favorite daughter home, or looking for this?"

Peter held his hand up as the sealed Orb appears in his palm.

"Both." Thanos speaks plainly.

"I see..." Peter nods as he looks at the trapped Guardians and Ravagers.

Well, except Drax, who had his eyes trained on Thanos, ready for a battle.

"Can you guys fight?" Peter asks, knowing they've been through a lot today.

"Aaagh!" Drax lets out a war cry as he grips his blades tightly.

"Yeah, what he said." Quill nods as he held his pistol at the ready.

"Hey! Give me my gun back!" Rocket yells as he snatches his weapon from Quill.

"Ravagers are always ready for a fight. Right boys!" Yondu yelled as his clan let out their own war cry.

"Gamora?" Peter asks the stunned and frightened woman.

Thanos looked straight at her, waiting for her to make the choice.

"I-I..." Gamora was petrified by the mere presence of her 'father'.

"I see." Peter says as he waves his hand.

Suddenly, a portal appeared under Gamora, sending her away before snapping shut.

"Gamora!" Quill yelled as she disappeared.

"Where did you send her?" Thanos asks demandingly.

On earth, Nebula woke up early to watch the sunrise as she sipped a hot cup of coffee with extra milk and sugar.

Ever since she betrayed her father, Nebula has been staying in the Avengers tower, though she wasn't a member just yet.

Peter practically ordered her to enjoy life for a while before making any big life decisions, so that's what she's been doing.

Touring the world, Nebula tried all of the foods and drinks that caught her eye as she took in the sights.

Luckily, everything was paid for by Peter so she was able to enjoy her life like a rich young lady.

Of course, her inhuman appearance drew a bit of attention, but with the introductions of meta-humans, she wasn't bothered much.

'This planet is beautiful...' Nebula thought as a golden portal opened over her couch. "?"

She watched as a very familiar green figure tumbled out.

"What-" Gamora muttered as she looked up to see her scowling sister looking down at her with a mug in hand.

"What are you doing here?" Nebula asks in annoyance. 'I was having such a good morning...'

"She would either get herself or someone else killed, so Gamora can go visit her sister for a while." Peter says as Thanos nods his head in understanding. "You should come to visit as well. I could use a few more ships. You can never have a big enough space fleet, after all."

"I plan to but sadly, you won't be there to welcome me." Thanos states threateningly.

"We'll see." Peter shrugs as he looks at the kneeling Corvus Glaive. "Let's even the odds, shall we?"

As Peter spoke, a portal opened underneath Corvus, causing him to fall through just like Gamora.

Though, unlike his rebellious sister, the golden portal snapped itself shut a bit earlier, wrapping around his neck and decapitating the son of Thanos in an instant.

"CORVUS!" Proxima screamed in anger, disbelief, and despair as her husband's headless body fell in front of her and Thanos.