

Spider-Man 331

Chapter 331: Job Offer

After finally figuring out how to grow back to normal size, Scott bent down and found a tiny dead fly on the floor with a small needle running through its entire body.

"Not bad for a test drive. Keep the suit." The same voice spoke over the helmet once again. "I'll be in touch soon."

"No, no. No, thank you." Denied vehemently as he packed the suit up and rushed out of the apartment, surprising his friend with his odd behavior.

But before he could say anything, Scott was already rushing down the stairs and headed to his car, where he would quickly peel out of the area, burning tire marks onto the street on his way out.

Pym and Peter watched the entire battle with the fly, both shocked by the former criminal's ability to handle the situation.

"Quite a show, isn't it?" Pym said with a small smile. "It seems that my choice for a successor was spot on."

Peter nodded, still a bit in awe of what he had just witnessed. "Yeah, I never thought I'd see something like that. But I don't think he plans on accepting the position..."

Peter and Pym watched a few of the ant cameras, which showed Scott speeding through traffic, driving in their direction.

"Yes, that is a valid concern..." Pym replied, turning to face the young superhero. "But of course, I have a backup plan."

Pym reached across his desk and pressed a button before relaxing back into his chair. "Now we wait."

Peter nodded slowly. "Okay, so how did you set him up to steal the suit?"

Peter knew that Pym masterminded all of this, though he wasn't sure how exactly.

"Well, there's very little that money can't buy. And it also helped that I could shrink myself down and go just about anywhere..." Pym answered with a shrug.

"Well, I don't mean to be rude or anything, but I have to ask. Why Scott?" Peter asked curiously.

After all, the man is a criminal.

"I needed someone to take up the mantle of Ant-Man, and I saw something in him that made me believe he was the right person for the job. He may stumble a bit at first, but I have faith that he'll get the hang of it." Pym answered, putting his hopes and expectations on one man.

Pym sighed, knowing that this was a conversation he had been dreading, though he expected to have it with his daughter. "I understand your concerns. Scott has a criminal record, and he's not exactly the most trustworthy person. But I believe in him. I believe that he has the potential to be a great hero if he's given the chance."

Pym chose Scott Lang as his successor because of his skills as a former thief and his willingness to do the right thing.

He was reluctant to let his daughter become the next Ant-Man because he was still grieving over the loss of his wife, who was also a superhero named the Wasp.

Enter Scott Lang, a recently released ex-convict who had a daughter and was struggling to find work.

He has a background in breaking into high-security facilities, which made him a valuable asset for Pym's plan to stop Darren Cross and his Ant-Man copy.

Time would have to tell if Lang can truly prove his worth or not, but Pym seemed to be convinced already.

Overall, Pym chose Scott Lang as his successor because he sees potential in him as both a skilled thief and a hero and believes that he has the character to use the Ant-Man suit for good.

"Okay, sounds good to me." Peter shrugged in agreement, as he was never worried about Scott's criminal record, to begin with. "And if he does well against Cross, I wouldn't mind recruiting him into the Avengers."

After all, Scott needs a job and who would turn down a high-paying position in the world's first and foremost superhero organization?

Peter grinned under his mask at the idea.

"?" Pym wasn't sure how Peter was so easily convinced, but he didn't care.

As long as his plan was in motion, then he was happy.

With that, the two of them watched as Scott parked outside the house, still clutching the bag with the Ant-Man suit inside.

Sneaking back into the house, Scott returned the suit to the broken safe and sighed in relief as he washed his hands of this whole situation.

'I don't know what the hell is going on, but I want no part in it.' He thought as he walked out of the living room and made his way to the front door.

But before he could make his second getaway of the night, flashing red and blue lights could be seen approaching the front of the house.

"This is the NYPD! Put your hands above your head and exit the home immediately! You are under arrest!" One cop spoke over a megaphone.

Knowing that he didn't take anything this time, Scott exited the house and tried to explain himself.
"Wait, I didn't steal anything! I was returning something I stole."

Of course, he instantly regretted saying anything, as he inadvertently admitted to stealing.

Watching the police arrive, Peter wondered whether he should step in or not.

Although Scott shouldn't have reverted back to thieving, he did it in hopes of making enough money to see his daughter again.

Peter could definitely sympathize with his situation.

'F*ck it, I might as well help him out.' Peter shrugged as he portal'd out of the room, unnoticed.

Pym was far too busy watching the monitors with a victorious smirk on his face. After all, his carefully made plan was working perfectly.

And once Scott was in police custody, he could use that as leverage to make him officially become his successor.

'I love it when a plan comes together...'

Scott stood nervously on the front porch of Hank Pym's house, staring at the police cars in front of him.

As he saw uniformed figures approaching him, Scott's heart sank.

He knew he was about to be arrested and charged with theft and he couldn't bear the thought of it. After all, this could cause him to lose his daughter forever, not to mention the time that he would spend behind bars.

'Does the Universe hate me?' He couldn't help but curse his luck.

Just then, a red-and-blue figure swooped down from the sky and landed between him and the police officers.

"S-Spider-Man?" One of the policemen stuttered in surprise.

"Hey, what's going on guys?" Peter asked the approaching police officers.

"We received a report of a breaking and entering." One of the higher-ranked officers replied. "Once we arrived on scene, the front door was open and this man came walking out."

"I see..." Peter nodded as he turned to Scott, who looked even more depressed than before.

After all, what would his daughter think when his name is plastered all over the news as a thief caught by Spider-Man himself?

"Look..." Peter scratched the back of his head awkwardly as he turned back to the cops. "I need this guy for a separate investigation. Can you guys just leave him to me?"

"?" The officers exchanged looks with one another.

"Of course!" One of the more overzealous officers agreed excitedly. "We'd be happy to help! Do you need anything from us?"

"No." Peter shook his head. "Just return to your normal patrol. Thanks for understanding."

"Umm... can we get a picture?" Another officer hesitantly asked as she pulled out her phone.

"Sure, no problem."

After taking a few selfies with the one and only Spider-Man, they all got back in their cars and drove off, leaving Peter and Scott behind.

And once the police were out of sight, Peter turned to Scott. "Hey, man, you okay?"

Scott stood frozen in front of the house, wondering what the hell Spider-Man could possibly want with him. "Uhh, yeah?"

"Good." Peter nodded with a grin. "Follow me."

Peter walked back into the house and took a seat in the living room.

Of course, Scott followed closely behind, as he had no way of escaping someone like Spider-Man.

"Sorry about the police." Peter said as he leaned back into the couch. "I didn't know Pym's plan, so when they arrived, I came out to help."

"?" Scott looked about as confused as anyone could possibly be in this situation.

"Well, how about I offer you a job?" Peter offered. "I can also assist with your legal troubles. With my help, it should be easy to get joint custody of your daughter."

Scott was taken aback by the offer. He had no idea what was happening and even less of an idea as to why Spider-Man was helping him.

More than anything else, he wondered why Spider-Man knew so much about him, a no named criminal.

"Why are you doing this?" He asked hesitantly. "Do we know each other or something?"

Spider-Man chuckled. "No, but the man who owns that suit you took seems to like you. He thinks you have what it takes to become his successor."

"Successor to who?" Scott asked in confusion.

The more Peter talked, the more questions Scott had for him.

Suddenly, footsteps could be heard as a new yet familiar voice filled the room. "Successor to me."

Chapter 332: Welcome to the Team

As Pym entered the room, he made sure to glare at Peter, showing his annoyance at his interference.

But rather than complaining, Pym turned to Scott and smiled.

"I told you I'd be in touch, Scott." He sat across from Peter, leaving Scott to stand in confusion.

"Oh, sh*t..." Scott instantly realized why this old man's voice sounded so familiar. "You're the guy from the helmet."

Pym merely nodded as he settled into the couch, resting his old tired body.

"Look, I'm sorry that I stole the suit. I won't ask any questions, so let's just go our separate ways, okay?" Scott offers as he eyes the exit, hoping to get the hell out of this place.

Looking at him for a moment, Pym shook his head in disappointment. "You know, you're ex-wife was right about you."

Scott froze as his eyes went wide. "...How do you know about that?"

'Did he have ants watching Pym earlier as well?' Peter wondered as his impression of Pym changed a bit. 'This guy is one hell of a spy...'

As he thought this, Peter couldn't help but wonder whether the old man had ordered some ants to spy on him as well...

'I need to be careful on my way home.' He thought as he eyed his body, looking for any stowaway insects.

"I understand why she's trying to keep you away from Cassie. After all, the moment things get tough, you turn right back to crime." Pym's correct assessment hit Scott right where it hurt. "The way I see it, you have two choices. You can either waste the rest of your life as a criminal, watching your daughter grow from a distance, or you can take this opportunity."

"What opportunity?" Scott needed some time to process everything. "I don't understand..."

"No, I don't expect you to. But you don't have many options right now. And quite frankly, neither do I. Why do you think I let you steal that suit in the first place?" Pym revealed.

"What?" Scott asked in shock as he realized that all of this might have been a complete set up.

"Scott, we need a new Ant-Man. And we think you're the man for the job." Peter said, confusing him even more.

"What the hell is an Ant-Man?" Scott asks skeptically. "I've never heard of it."

Although Ant-Man was a well-known legend among spies and those with enough power and money to acquire the information, the normal population have never heard this name before.

Hank sighed, knowing this wouldn't be easy. "Well, Ant-Man was the alias I'd use back in the day."

A reminiscent smile formed on Pym's face.

"I created a suit that allowed me to shrink down to the size of an ant while maintaining my full strength. With this suit, I was able to fight crime, serve the country, and perform miracles." He explained.

"So you're saying you were like an old version of him?" Scott raised a brow as he turned to Peter.

Hank nodded. "Yes, but it wasn't just about stopping crime or stopping war. My work as Ant-Man allowed me to do something even more important."

Scott looked intrigued as he inched forward in interest.

Pym continued. "It allowed me to help people on a microscopic level. I was able to explore the world of atoms and molecules, and I discovered things that no one else had ever seen before. I used this knowledge to help develop new technologies and medicines that could save lives."

Scott looked impressed. "So what happened? Why aren't you still Ant-Man?"

Pym's expression darkened. "I don't know if you've noticed, Scott, but I'm a bit past my prime these days."

Of course, that wasn't the real reason.

Whenever Pym even looked at his suit, let alone wore it, he couldn't help but think of his beautiful wife.

His wife, Janet van Dyne, disappeared during a mission in the 1980s. Her husband was the Ant-Man, making her the Wasp, a team that battled everything together on a miniature scale.

During a mission to disarm a Soviet missile, Janet had to shrink down to a subatomic level to disable the missile's trigger mechanism.

However, in the process, she became trapped in the Quantum Realm, a dimension that exists at a subatomic level, and was presumed dead.

Hank was devastated by Janet's loss and blamed himself for not being able to save her, leading him to subsequently retired from his superhero duties and refused to let anyone else take up the mantle of Ant-Man or Wasp, out of fear of losing them as well.

'Maybe I should drop some hints about her survival?' Peter wondered.

Scott nodded, understanding now. "So that's where I come in. You want me to take your place as Ant-Man?"

Hank smiled. "Yes, exactly. I believe that you have what it takes to be a great Ant-Man, and I want to train you to use the suit safely and effectively."

Scott blinked. "But, I'm just a petty thief."

"Exactly," Hank said, his eyes twinkling. "You have the skills we need. And we're willing to offer you the opportunity of a lifetime."

Scott looked at them skeptically. "Why me? Why not someone else?"

Hank leaned forward. "Because I think you're the only one who can handle it."

"And I'm willing to sweeten the deal." Peter cut into the conversation, piquing Scott and Pym's interest. "As I said, if you impress me enough, I'll hire you as an official Avenger. And let me tell you, the pay and perks that every Avenger enjoys are very generous."

Scott seemed interested, as he needed a job and no one else was hiring ex-cons, but most of all, this was a very well-respected legal job that he wouldn't be ashamed of.

"And secondly, I can help with getting joint custody of your daughter, Cassie." Peter threw out the real bait.

Instantly, Scott's heart skipped a beat. This was everything that he ever wanted.

"H-How?" he stammered.

Peter grinned. "Let's just say I have some connections, but most of all, the Avengers have some very good lawyers on retainer."

With Nelson and Murdock on the case, Scott can rest assured.

Though, he would probably have to call in a few favors as well. After all, with Scott's record it'll be an uphill custody battle.

Scott stared at Peter, unable to believe what he was hearing, his eyes slightly misty. "I... I don't know what to say."

Hank smiled. "Say yes."

Scott hesitated. He didn't know what it meant to be a superhero or the responsibilities that came with it.

He wasn't sure if he had what it took. But then he recalled the perks of the deal, and thought of his daughter, knowing that he had to take this chance.

"Yes," he said, looking between Hank and Peter. "I'll do it."

Hank grinned. "Excellent. Welcome to the team, Scott."

Peter stood up and clapped him on the back. "We're gonna have some fun, you and me."

Scott smiled, feeling like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Maybe things were finally starting to look up for him.

In a very expensive restaurant, Cross and Hope sat across from one another, enjoying their meal in silence.

Though, that silence didn't last long.

Cross looked up from his plate. "You know I've been thinking a lot about gratitude lately, and today during my morning meditation, an interesting thought occurred to me and I think it might apply to you as well."

"How's that?" Hope asked, hoping that this dinner would end quickly.

Although she didn't want to be here, it was necessary in order to keep her cover as Cross' loyal supporter.

If she had things her way, Hope would already be wearing her father's suit, thwarting Cross' plans and sending him to prison.

But sadly, her father refused her request over and over.

"Gratitude can be forgiveness." Cross says as if he were some Buddhist monk. "I spent years carrying around my anger for Hank Pym. I devoted my genius to him. I could've worked anywhere and I chose my mentor poorly..."

He turns a sympathetic look toward Hope, though she couldn't tell if it was genuine or not.

"You, on the other hand, didn't even have a choice. He never believed in you. It's a shame what we had to do, but he forced us to do it, didn't he? But we shouldn't be angry. Instead, we should be grateful. Because of his failures as a mentor and a father, Pym forced us to spread our wings on our own."

Although his words were meant to be comforting, Hope couldn't help but feel an odd air to them, as if she were talking to a sociopath, who only spoke what he thought others wanted to hear.

"You deserve everything coming your way, Darren." Hope said with a smile, a hidden meaning hidden behind her words.

Chapter 333: Breakfast

withered away, leaving me a broken and hollow shell of my former majestic self. Today, like ever other day, a new usurper wears my family's heritage upon his head, prances around my castle, and sits upon my throne. What more can these peasants possibly take from me?)

Scott Lang groaned and rubbed his eyes as he slowly awoke from a good nights sleep. He was disoriented and confused for a moment, unsure of where he was when he was met with an unfamiliar ceiling.

After agreeing to spend the night at Hank Pym's house, in order to start his training bright and early, Scott retired to a guest room and awoke to the sun's rays beading down on him.

"Huh?" Scott grunted as he found an unknown figure leaning against the wall by the door, staring at him. "Who the hell are you?"

Scott's sleep dazed eyes adjusted to see an unfamiliar woman. She was wearing a sleek black suit and had a stern look on her face. Scott couldn't help but feel intimidated by her.

"Have you been standing there watching me sleep this whole time?" He asked, creeped out.

"Yes." She replies uncaringly.

"Why?" Scott couldn't help but ask.

"Because the last time you were here you stole something." She answered, eyeing him as if he were a kleptomaniac, who would steal everything her family owned if she wasn't keeping watch.

"Who are you?" Scott asked groggily.

The woman's expression turned even colder. "I'm Hope Van Dyne," she said curtly.

Hope continued to glare at him. "And you're the man my father chose over me to become Ant-Man."

Scott blinked in surprise.

He had no idea that Hank Pym had a daughter, let alone that she was upset with him. "I'm sorry?" he said tentatively.

Hope shook her head, clearly not interested in hearing his apologies. "You shouldn't be here," she said pointedly. "My father made a mistake in choosing you. You're not fit for the job."

Scott bristled at her words, feeling defensive. "I did what I had to do to see my daughter again." He said firmly. "And I'll prove myself one way or another."

Hope turned to face him. "Proving yourself to my father is one thing," she said icily. "But proving yourself as Ant-Man is another. And you haven't done that yet."

Scott opened his mouth to argue, but before he could say anything, he noticed something odd and terrifying that he didn't notice earlier.

"Oh! What the f*ck!" As Scott was about to get out of bed, he recoiled in fright when he saw large insects crawling all over the floor. "Whoa... Are those ants?"

Hope continued to stand calmly among the bugs. "Paraponera clavata. Giant tropical bullet ants. Ranked highest on the Schmidt pain index. They're here to keep an eye on you when I can't." Without another word, she turns and walks out of the room, leaving Hank alone among the insects.

"How am I supposed to get out of here?!" Scott called out but received no reply.

Looking down at the floor full of giant ants, Scott swallowed a mouthful of saliva as he eyed them warily.

Although he was never afraid of bugs, being surrounded by so many of them was a lot different than dealing with a few flies or other household annoyances.

Even spiders weren't a problem for him, that is, as long as they weren't poisonous.

"Ugh. You don't bite me, and I don't step on you, deal?" Scott negotiated as he tentatively puts his foot down on the floor, carefully maneuvering his way out of the room.

Downstairs, Hank sat happily in his kitchen, enjoying a warm cup of coffee with Peter sitting across from him, dressed in his usual spider suit.

"You arrived earlier than I thought you would." Hank comments, as Peter didn't spend the night like Scott.

After Scott accepted his offer, Peter left immediately so that he could make it back in time for dinner with his family.

"Well, I was excited to start Scott's training." Peter shrugged as he seemed to remember something and opened a portal above his outstretched hand. "Here, I think these belong to you."

Pym watched as a corked glass vial fell into Peter's hand. Inside this vial were six tiny ants, all with even tinier cameras strapped to their backs.

"I-I..." Pym had no excuse to speak as Peter places the vial down in front of him.

Obviously, he tried to spy on Spider-Man, but what is he supposed to say now that he was caught?

"..." Tense silence filled the room as Peter watched the elderly man squirm in amusement.

But thankfully, before Pym could say anything, his daughter Hope came walking in, followed by Scott, who looked weirded out by the colony of giant ants marching behind him.

"Scott! Good, you're awake," Hank said, glad that he could find something to change the subject. "Are you ready for your first day of training?"

Hope rolled her eyes and crossed her arms. "I've already told him he shouldn't be here," she said, glaring at her father. "All we have to do is take down the company's servers and Cross wouldn't even know what happened."

Hank sighed and rubbed his forehead. "I assume that you've already met my daughter, Hope."

"Yeah, she's 'great' by the way." Scott held back his real thoughts, though the sarcastic tilt to his tone surely made his feelings known.

"She doesn't think that we need you." Pym says.

"We don't. We can do this ourselves." Hope said as she turned to the world-famous superhero, who she still couldn't believe was in her father's kitchen. "And even if we couldn't, Spider-Man is involved now, so I see zero reasons why we need this thief."

"Hope, please. We can discuss this later. Right now, Scott needs to train." Pym says in a lecturing manner.

Hope didn't look happy about it, but she didn't protest any further. With one last scowl in Scott's direction, she turned and sat at the table across from Peter.

Pym shook his head at his daughter's behavior. "Don't mind her," he said with a small smile. "She's just a little bit anxious. It has to do with this job, which, judging by the fact that you're still here, I take it that you're interested in."

"What job?" Scott asked in confusion.

Based on last night's conversation, he only knew that he would be training to become Pym's successor as Ant-Man.

...

After Pym explained the situation with Darren Cross and the Yellowjacket suit, Scott had a full grip on the situation.

"So this guy stole your company and is recreating your suit?" He summed it up simply.

"Yes, and we need you to break into the company and destroy the suit alongside all of his research." Pym nodded.

"Is that why you chose me? Because I have experience in this?" Scott asked, as breaking into companies was a specialty of his.

"It's one of the main reasons, yes." Pym nodded his head.

Scott frowned.

It might have been wishful thinking, but last night when they were convincing him to become Ant-Man and join the Avengers, he couldn't help but feel as if they saw something in him.

Some kind of heroic quality that no one else could see, but now he found out that they only needed a good thief...

Scott couldn't help but feel a wave of disappointment wash over him.

Seeing this, Peter spoke up. "I just want to make it clear that I'm not recruiting you into the Avengers because of your criminal skills."

Scott turned to him doubtfully.

"We already have many agents who are far more skilled than you when it comes to theft." Peter says, thinking of the top-level Shield agents in his employ. "I'm recruiting you because I think you have what it takes to be an Avenger. It may sound a bit cringe, but I think that you have what it takes to be a hero, Scott."

"But you don't even know me..." Scott replied hesitantly.

"I don't?" Peter asks as he whips out his phone and taps it a few times. "Scott Lang, 35 years old. Date of birth xx/xx/19xx. Social Security Number ends in 5124. An ex-con, who has already been fired from two separate jobs since his release 4 days ago. Ex-wife Maggie Lang and daughter Cassie Lang..."

Peter says as he gives everyone a brief glimpse of Scott's profile and records before getting to the good stuff.

"Before prison, you had a high-paying job at a company called VistaCorp, though you were fired when you tried to expose their unethical and illegal practices. Desperate to support your wife and daughter as well as find proof to take down the company that wronged you and so many others, you turned to burglary and were caught stealing from the company's CEO." Peter explains.

Scott's mouth dropped open in shock. Although he tried to explain all of this in court, everyone simply wrote him off as a lying criminal.

"Did I miss anything?" Peter asks.

"No, that's all correct." Scott nodded dumbly.

"Wait!" Hope cut into the conversation with a deep frown. "I looked him up and his records say nothing about any of that."

"Well, the Avengers have access to a lot more information than you." Peter answered with a shrug.

Meanwhile, Pym simply smiled as he watched his daughter's impression of his chosen successor slowly change.

Of course, he knew everything that Peter just said was 100% true, as he personally investigated using his Ant-Man suit, which is why he was so dead set on Scott taking his place.

"Now that we're all on the same page. I believe it's time to start Scott's training..."

Chapter 334: Training Begins

After eating breakfast, Pym and Hope led Peter and Scott to the basement, where everything they needed to train a new Ant-Man was waiting, including the suit.

"Hey, earth to Scott," Peter waved his hand in front of Scott's dazed face.

"H-Hey," Scott replied, trying to hide his anxiety.

He looked at the Ant-Man suit, which was placed on a nearby table. It looked harmless, but he knew better.

"Are you ready to get started?" Hope asked him, her arms crossed.

Scott nodded, not sure if he was ready but willing to give it a shot.

"Alright, let's start with the basics," Hank said, picking up the suit. "The first thing you need to know is that it works with Pym particles, which allow you to change your size."

He explained the mechanics of the suit to Scott, who listened intently, focused on the suit that scared him half to death.

"Okay, let's try it out," Hank said, handing Scott the suit. "Put it on."

Scott put on the suit, which was surprisingly comfortable. He looked down at himself and couldn't help but feel that at least he looked cool.

Pym steps forward and begins instructing him. "Now, in the right hands, the relationship between man and suit is symbiotic. The suit has power, the man harnesses that power. You need to be skillful, agile, and above all, you need to be fast. You should be able to shrink and grow on a dime, so your size always suits your needs."

Walking over to a nearby door, Hope closes it and motions toward the keyhole. "Dive through the keyhole. You charge big, you dive small, then you emerge big."

She may not like that her father chose someone else, but she would at least give him a chance. Especially after learning that his criminal record wasn't as black and white as she originally thought.

Nodding, Scott puts on the helmet and takes a few deep breaths before charging at the door.

Bang!

"Ow!" Due to his nervousness, Scott forgot to hit the shrink button, which immediately caused him to smack into the door, breaking it off of its hinges.

"Useless..." Hope commented under her breath.

"Scott, just relax and watch." Peter says as he waves his hand, instantly reverting the door back to its original state.

"?!" Everyone in the room watched in awe, as they had no idea that Spider-Man had this sort of power.

"Now watch carefully." Peter says as he jumps forward, aiming himself at the keyhole of the door.

Now, everyone was even more shocked, as they wondered how he was going to shrink himself without the Ant-Man suit.

Suddenly, Peter's body lit up in a faint red light, as he activated the Reality Stone and shrunk himself down, mimicking the function of the Ant-Man suit.

And with Peter's pinpoint precision, his now tiny pin sized body slipped right through the door's keyhole and flew out the other side.

"What the..." Hope uttered with her eyebrows extended upwards.

Seconds later, the door swung open and a normal-sized Peter walked out, smirking under his mask at their shocked faces. "See? It's not that hard."

"H-How?" Pym asks, flabbergasted by what he just witnessed.

After all, he spent all of his life keeping his precious Pym particles out of the hands of others, and now someone he barely knew either stole them, discovered them on his own, or had some sort of meta-human ability that allowed him to mimic their use.

"I have many powers that the public doesn't know about." Peter shrugged as he closed the door again and patted Scott on the shoulder. "Give it another try."

Feeling a sense of competition, Scott stepped up to the door once again and prepared himself for another try.

After all, he can't fall too far behind Spider-Man. His manly pride wouldn't allow it.

While listening to Scott continue to fail several times, bashing himself against the door as he tries to shrink and dive through the keyhole, Hope and Pym stared at Peter questioningly.

"No, I didn't steal or use any Pym particles just now." Peter explains, making them wonder if he can also read their minds. "It's just an ability of mine. That's all."

With their minds set at ease, everyone returned their attention to Scott's training.

And just as they started paying attention, Scott leaped at the door and shrunk, flailing his arms and legs as he flew through the keyhole.

...Seconds later, the door opened.

"Whoa," Scott breathed heavily, back to his normal size. "That was weird."

"Just focus on your breathing," Pym said calmly. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah, I think so." Scott nodded as he regained his breath.

"Good, you'll get used to switching back and forth like that soon enough." Pym said reassuringly.

And when Scott could finally breathe normally again, Hope stepped up. "Alright, let's move on with the lesson. When you're small, energy is compressed so you have the force of a two-hundred-pound man behind a fist a hundredth of an inch wide, you're like a bullet. You punch too hard, you kill someone, too soft, it's a love tap. In other words, you have to know how to punch."

Scott scoffed. "I was in prison for three years, of course I know how to punch."

"Show me." She says as she puts up her hands

"Oh, this is going to be fun." Peter comments as he materializes a bucket of popcorn in his hands and turned to Pym. "You want some?"

Hesitantly taking a handful of the food, and studying it to see if it was real, Pym couldn't help but be amazed by Spider-Man's spectacular powers.

'Just how far do his abilities actually go?' He wondered in awe as he ate a piece of buttery popcorn.

While the two spectators were munching on their snacks, Scott wound his arm back, balled his fist, and hit Hope's hand

"Seriously?" She raised a questioning brow as his limp fist hit her outstretched hand. "That was terrible. Your daughter can probably hit harder than that..."

"You want to show me how to punch?" Scott asks as if she couldn't do any better. "Go ahead. Show me."

Just as she did, he puts up his open hand, waiting for her to hit it.

Suddenly, Hope smirks as she steps forward and punches him in the face, knocking him off of his feet.

"That's how you punch." She comments as she stared triumphantly down at him.

"She's been looking forward to this..." Pym comments with a shake of his head.

"I can tell." Peter nodded beside him.

"Hope trained in martial arts at a... difficult time." Pym reveals.

"By a difficult time, he means when my mother died." Hope corrects her father.

"We lost her in a plane crash." Pym says, eyeing Peter as if to say 'Keep quiet'.

After all, if Peter had a high enough clearance in the government to learn about him, then he most likely knows what really happened to his wife.

And of course, this look didn't go unnoticed by his daughter, though she decided to pretend otherwise, as she can ask her questions later when her overprotective father wasn't around.

"It's bad enough you won't tell me how she died, could you please stop telling me that lie? We're working here." She scoffs as Scott is still recovering from her punch. "Alright princess, let's get back to work."

"Were you even going for the hand?" Scott asks in exasperation.

"You know what?" Peter vanishes the popcorn and steps up. "I should probably handle his hand-to-hand training."

"Why? You don't want a girl teaching your 'future Avenger'." Hope asks sarcastically.

"No, in fact he'll probably receive basic training from a girl (Natasha) but as an Avenger we have to go through a bunch of specific high-level training, so it's best if I get him started on the basics early." Peter says as he reaches a hand out and helps Scott back to his feet.

"Thank you..." Scott whispered as he knew Peter was saving him from getting used as a punching bag to release all of Hope's bottled-up anger.

"I got you." Peter says as he waves his hand and heals Scott's bruising face. "Now let's start with the basics."

...

And so they trained for hours, practicing shrinking and growing, dodging obstacles, and sparring.

Scott made mistakes and stumbled more times than he could count, but he never gave up.

Hank and Peter encouraged him and gave him tips, and by the end of the day, he had improved a lot.

He wasn't exactly ready to go out into the field, but he would be soon enough.

"Good job, Scott," Pym said, patting him on the back. "You're a natural."

Scott smiled, feeling grateful for their help.

He knew he still had a lot to learn, but he was excited to keep going. He was finally starting to understand the power of the Ant-Man suit, and he was ready to use it.

"Let's not praise him too much." Peter cut in before the old man could feed Scott's ego any further. "He had a very productive day and after a few more productive days, he might just be ready..."

"Yes, you're right." Pym nodded in understanding.

Peter turned to Scott seriously. "Remember, confidence is good, but overconfidence is a slow and insidious killer."

"R-Right." Scott nodded jerkily.

"Good, now let's retire for the night and start again in the morning." Pym nodded as well, wishing somebody would have taught him that crucial lesson in his youth. 'Maybe Janet would still be alive...'

Chapter 335: Heist Begins

After a few days, Scott and his team of personal trainers stood in the basement, finished with his usual daily warm-up.

"You know, I think this regulator is holding me back." Scott fiddles with the regulator on his suit.

"Do not screw with the regulator!" Hank snapped in warning. "If it's compromised, you'd go sub-atomic."

Instantly, Scott stopped what he was doing and held his hands in the air. "What does that mean?"

"It means that you'd enter the quantum realm." Hank explains vaguely.

"?" Scott continued to look at him, waiting for an answer that he could actually understand.

"It means that you'd enter a reality where all concepts of time and space become irrelevant as you shrink for all eternity." Pym explains in a grave tone. "Everything that you know, and love, gone forever."

"R-Right..." Scott nodded dumbly as he kept his hands far away from the regulator. "Don't touch the regulator. Got it."

Basically, the regulator controls the degree of size reduction, giving the wearer of the suit a sort of safety net from any accidents.

"Alright, that's enough of that." Peter steps up. "It's time for your hand-to-hand training."

Nodding with a bit of dread clear on his face, Scott followed Peter to an open space and prepared himself for the beating that was coming his way.

"Remember to go easy, okay? I'm old, you know..." Scott asked hopefully.

"I always go easy on you." Peter shrugs as he motions for Scott to come forward. "Now quit talking nonsense and start."

Gulping anxiously, Scott let out a resigned sigh as he rushed forward and threw a fist at Peter's face.

And before he knew what happened, Scott's fist hit nothing but air as he suddenly found himself flipped upside down, crashing face up on the padded floor.

"Up!" Peter ordered as Scott's daily beating officially began.

At first, Scott was happy with his training, as he knew Peter wouldn't just beat him for fun, like a certain woman in the room, but he was soon served a big helping of reality.

As a man who would be an Avenger and go out into the field before his basic training was finished, Peter decided that he would take Scott's training very seriously.

Of course, he didn't like that Scott would be going into the field so early, but he also knew that this was needed for Scott to officially become Ant-Man.

Which is why Peter isn't going to do Scott's job for him.

After all, he could easily handle Cross and the Yellowjacket suit right now and still be back in time for lunch.

Especially since Peter can easily shrink and grow himself with the Reality Stone.

But sadly, this is a challenge that Scott needed to overcome on his own.

Though Peter would be sure to watch carefully and provide assistance when needed.

'Once Darren Cross is taken care of, I'll make sure Scott's benched until basic training is finished.' Peter reasoned to himself.

...

Once Scott was beaten black and blue and healed back to brand new with a wave of Peter's hand, it was now Hank and Hope's turn to teach.

"You've learned about the suit, but you've yet to learn about your greatest allies, the ants. Loyal, brave, and your partners for every situation." Hank explains as various ant colonies crawled across the floor, each with their own unique characteristics.

Hope stepped forward and pointed to a colony of ants that were crawling around in a frenzied manner. "This is the crazy ant, also known as *Paratrechina longicornis*. They're called crazy ants because they move so quickly and erratically."

Scott observed the ants for a moment before turning to Hank. "What can they do for me?"

"They're lightning fast, making them good mounts, but most of all, they can conduct electricity which makes them useful to fry out enemy electronics." Pym explained.

Hope then walked over to another colony and pointed to a large ant with a menacing-looking stinger. "This is the bullet ant, or *Paraponera clavata*."

"Yeah, we've met..." Scott comments, as he woke up to them surrounding him only a few days ago.

Hope continues. "They're known to have the most painful sting of any insect."

Scott nodded as he already knew this.

"The venom from these ants can be used as a powerful sedative," said Hank. "If you need to take someone out quickly, just release a few of these ants near them. The sting will knock them out cold and even kill depending on how many there are."

Hope then moved on to the third colony. "These are carpenter ants, *Camponotus pennsylvanicus*. They're known for their strength and ability to tunnel through wood."

Scott nodded like the good student he currently was.

"They can help you create tunnels and pathways through wood," explained Hank. "I mainly used them for their flight ability, though not all of them have wings."

Finally, Hope walked over to the last colony and pointed to a group of ants that were scurrying around in a frenzy. "These are fire ants, *Solenopsis geminata*. They're called fire ants because their sting feels like you're being burned."

Scott raised an eyebrow. "What can I use them for?"

"These ants can be used for defensive purposes," said Hank. "If you need to create a barrier around yourself, just release a few of these ants. Their stings will deter anyone from getting too close."

'Maybe I should make some pokè balls for him?' Peter thought as he pictured Scott throwing a ball at his enemies and screaming 'Fire Ants! I choose you!'

...

After explaining everything about the ants, Scott was forced to shrink down and bond with them.

After all, he would be taking up the mantle of Ant-Man, and the ants that Pym specially cultivated throughout the years came as a package deal.

While Scott was awkwardly bonding with the ants, and even named one of them Ant-thony, an alert could be heard sounding from the security room.

""?"" Everyone, including Scott who grew back to normal size, walked over to the usually hidden room to see what was happening.

"Hmm?" Peter hummed as he saw movement on one of the cameras upstairs. "Isn't that your bad guy?"

Pym's eyes go wide. "Wait here and keep quiet." He said and rushes away to deal with their resident villain.

Pym emerged upstairs and paced to his living room to find Darren Cross standing there, admiring an old picture of them together, looking like a proud father and his son.

"Darren. How the hell did you get in here?" Pym asked in annoyance.

"You left the front door open, Hank. It's official. You're old." Darren smirks.

"Well to what do I owe this pleasure?" Pym said, though, with his tone of voice, Cross could tell that it was more of a displeasure.

"I have good news!" Cross smiles happily.

"..." Pym raised a brow, waiting for him to spit it out already.

"Pym Tech, the company you created, is about to officially launch the first line of Yellowjacket suits. Soon enough, every global power will be outfitted with at least one of its very own Yellowjackets. We're anticipating fifteen billion in sales tomorrow alone." He says, but Pym still didn't reply. "You're welcome by the way."

Pym refused to give him any satisfaction and kept his mouth shut. 'I should've shredded this little sh*t's resume the second I saw it.'

Cross smiled, enjoying this situation. "The buyers will arrive tonight and I know this is odd, but I'd like you to be there. This is my moment and I want you to see it."

Pym couldn't help but roll his eyes at his former assistant's sadistic attitude. "Sure, I'll be there."

...

After some more small talk, which consisted of Cross continuously rubbing dirt in his former mentor's face, Cross swaggered out of the house, happy with his visit.

And when he was gone, Scott and Hope rushed up the stairs followed by Peter.

"He knows! He's baiting you!" Hope paces up to her father in worry. "We have to be careful..."

Realization suddenly flashed over Hope's face. "Do you think he knows I was here?"

After all, her position as a double agent was very important.

"There's no way." Pym shook his head back and forth.

"It's possible." Peter added. "It's better to be safe than sorry so If I were you, I'd avoid being alone with him from now on."

"..." Nobody doubted Peter's words.

After all, he had the most experience in things like this.

Well, technically Pym would be considered experienced as well, but he's been rather rusty ever since his retirement.

"I don't believe we have the luxury of training anymore." Pym said.

"I agree." Peter nodded as he took a seat on the nearby sofa. "So, what's the plan?"

"Well..."

Hours later, as the sun began to set, a tiny ant-sized golden portal opened on the rooftop of Pym Technologies.

As the portal formed, a red and black helmet poked out, cautiously surveying the area before stepping out onto the roof.

"Alright, I'm on the roof of the target building."

Chapter 336: Unintended Defenses

Darren Cross and Hope van Dyne stood in the lobby of Pym Technologies, waiting for Hank Pym to arrive.

The air was tense as they both knew that today would be a pivotal moment for their company's future, though for different reasons.

Cross was basking in his success while Hope was secretly plotting his downfall.

Suddenly, the doors opened, and in walked Hank Pym, looking as stern and determined as ever.

"Welcome, Hank," Darren said, stepping forward to greet him with a smirk. "We're ready to begin the meeting."

Hank nodded curtly and followed them to the conference room where the high-profile buyers were waiting.

As they walked, Darren couldn't help but feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that he was selling the Yellowjacket suit right under Hank's nose.

Once they arrived, Hank was met with representatives from all over the world. Whether it be governments, companies, or organizations, everyone was interested in owning a Yellowjacket.

"Welcome everyone!" Darren smiled charmingly toward his esteemed customers.

As Hope and Pym took their seats, a familiar voice echoed in both of their ears. "Alright, I'm on the roof of the target building."

Instantly, the father and daughter exchanged a knowing glance with one another, both hoping that their plan would go smoothly.

"?" Cross seemed to notice this odd behavior.

But thankfully, he had many buyers to deal with right now, so he saved his suspicions for later.

"Why don't we just skip the formalities and go straight to the product?" Cross offers and receives nods all around. "Good, then please follow me. The Yellowjacket suits are too precious to bring out of the vault, after all."

Meanwhile, Scott crouched on the rooftop of Pym Technologies, studying the building below. Behind him stood a battalion of ants that followed him through the portal, obediently awaiting his command.

"Okay, Scott, you ready?" a voice crackled in Ant-Man's helmet.

It was Peter, who was stationed back at Pym's security room. With his ghost laptop, he was able to easily hack into the building's security and act as Scott's eyes and ears.

"Ready as I'll ever be." He replied. "What am I looking for?"

"There should be a small exhaust vent on the south side of the roof." Peter answered readily.
"*munch... munch...munch*"

"Are you eating?" Scott asks in disbelief.

"Yeah... *munch* I ordered pizza..." Peter answered between bites.

"Seriously..." Scott sighed in exasperation as he hopped on Ant-thony and went searching for the vent alongside his ant army.

As Cross lead the group of buyers toward the vault, he turned to Pym, a smug smile permanently gracing his lips.

"You know, I'm really enjoying myself." He says tauntingly. "You tried to hide your technology from me, and now it's gonna blow up in your face. How great is that?"

Pym merely scoffed and ignored him as they drew closer to the vault.

"Found it" Scott called out as he spotted the pipe sized vent.

Scurrying over, Scott swiftly rode his ants inside. It was dark and dusty, and Scott had to rely on Peter to guide him through the maze of ductwork.

"Good, follow this vent down as far as it goes and then make a right." Peter's voice echoed in his ears, giving him directions and shutting down any sensors or defenses along the way.

As they made their way through the maze of vents, they started finding signs of old spider webs here and there.

"Uhh..." Scott grunts as he watches the webs cautiously. "Spidey, we may have a problem."

"What's up?" Peter answered as he turned to watch the camera on Scott's helmet. "Oh, that's not good..."

"Yeah..." Scott agreed. "I haven't seen one yet, but you don't happen to control spiders, do you?"

"No, no I can't." Peter answered negatively. 'Well, I might be able to, but I've never tried...'

"Great." Scott commented sarcastically. "Some Spider-Man you are."

"Hey, I can do a lot of other-" Peter complained, though he stopped as he caught sight of something in Scott's camera. "That doesn't look good..."

"F*ck!" Scott blurted out as he saw what was at the end of the vent.

Across from him stood a spider.

The spider was an enormous behemoth, towering over everything in its path. Its body was the size of a few elephants, with springy, jagged legs that seemed to stretch on forever.

Its exoskeleton was a deep, glossy black, shimmering in the dim light, while its eyes were beady and menacing, glowing an eerie red in the darkness.

As it moved, the spider emitted a low, guttural growl, which sent shivers down the spines of Scott and his army of ants.

Its legs made a crunching sound as they hit the metal floor, and its sharp, jagged fangs were visible, dripping with discolored venom.

Though that wasn't even the scariest part.

As soon as the spider noticed their arrival, it fidgeted in surprise, which wasn't good, as it immediately released its offspring.

That's right, it pretty much gave birth in an instant.

Scott couldn't believe his eyes as he watched the spider give birth, releasing countless smaller spiders that were still twice the size of his ants.

The swarm of spiders immediately rushed toward Scott and his battalion of ants, followed by their much larger mother.

"Scott." Peter called out over the comms. "You may want to use what I gave you."

Snapping out of his shock, as the herd of newborn spiderlings stampedes his way, Scott reached down and grasped a Kree blaster pistol on his hip.

Knowing that the Yellowjacket suit had built-in lasers, Peter thought it best to give Scott his own blaster in order to even the odds.

Without a word, as he didn't have the time, Scott pulled his sleek blaster from its holster, turned it to fully automatic, and opened fire.

pewpewpewpew...

One by one, the red laser bolts tore through the spiderlings, butchering them right in front of their mother.

"This feels wrong..." Peter commented as his fellow spiders were slaughtered.

Of course, the ants alongside Scott weren't ones to back down from a fight either. Avoiding the area with the most lasers, they bravely charged toward the spiderlings, biting and stinging them with all their might.

The ants' fierce attacks were enough to slow down the swarm, giving Scott enough time to pick them off from a distance.

But the mother of these depleting spiders wasn't going down without a fight either.

Although she didn't care about their deaths, as she truthfully planned to eat many of them when they hatched, that didn't mean she wouldn't avenge her children.

Seeing that the mother was about to make her move, Scott left the few remaining spiderlings to his ants and ran forward, shooting in the giant spider's direction as they grew closer to one another.

Maneuvering his way through the battlefield, Scott was protected by his ants as he arrived face to ugly giant spider face with the mother.

And when he was within range, she stomped her spiky front legs down at him, hoping to end the fight with one simple move.

Of course, Scott wasn't stupid enough to remain still.

No, he continued forward under the pitch-black spider's body, and held his blaster upward, opening fire toward its underbelly.

pewpewpewpew...

By the time Scott ran out from under the backside of the towering spider, its body was full of smoking holes, producing a cooked meat smell throughout the vent.

And as the mother spider collapsed to the ground, twitching until it's inevitable death, the last of its children were swarmed by the ants, officially ending the battle.

Scott and his battalion of ants emerged victorious, but not without a few battle scars. Scott looked down at his ant friends, proud and sad at the same time.

Although they won, not all of them managed to make it out alive. Among the spider carcasses lay 8 fallen ant brethren.

whine...whine...

The ants belonging to the colonies of those that died mourned their deaths before turning back to Scott, waiting for his orders.

"Great job, team," he said, smiling warmly at them. "Now let's go finish the job."

Back in the security room, Peter felt a little jealous. 'Maybe I should build a loyal spider army too?'

Outside of Pym Technologies' high-security vault.

"This is a little over the top, don't you think, Darren?" Pym commented as he watched his former assistant go through a dozen different security hurdles to open the imposing vault door.

[Confirming authorization...]

"No." Cross answered as the vault's computer scanned his eyes and hands at the same time. "You can never be too safe these days."

[Access granted!]

Suddenly, the vault door swung open, revealing a high-tech bank-style vault.

At the back of the vault stood a sealed set of shelves, filled with dozens of tiny capsules. And each capsule contained its own tiny action figure-sized Yellowjacket suit.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to introduce the first line of Yellowjacket suits." Cross spoke grandly. "Feel free to take a closer look."

Instantly, the buyers eagerly rushed inside and inspected the Yellowjacket suits, nodding in approval as they admired the capsules.

Darren was all smiles, enjoying the success of his creation.

Meanwhile, Hank watched with a scowl on his face.

"Is this it?" Scott asked as he and his ants stood above an especially thin vent pipe.

"Yup, That should lead to the vault." Peter's voice answered in his ear alongside the clacking of fingers on a keyboard. "You can jump down whenever you're ready. I already disabled the defenses."

Scott turned to his army of ants and gave them a quick salute. "Well, here goes nothing..." he said as he hopped down the hole.

Chapter 337: Peters Heist

Embarking on one of the most dangerous heists of his life, Scott Lang leaped down the narrow pipe, readying himself for whatever he would find on the other side.

Thankfully, Peter already shut down all of the sensors and lasers. Otherwise, Scott would have tripped the alarm before being sliced into finely diced pieces.

'Will it be a trap like in the movie?' Peter wondered as he watched through the monitors.

The wind whistled past Scott as he plummeted through the darkness.

Suddenly, he saw a glimmer of light ahead and he braced himself for impact. He shot out of the bottom of the pipe and performed a perfect superhero landing.

His heart raced as he looked around, though he didn't like what he saw.

Immediately, Scott realized he had been caught in a sealed glass box at the center of the vault with everyone inside staring at him, including Darren Cross, who had his face rather close to the glass.

"Hi there, little guy." Cross said, a wicked grin on his face. "I knew you would come."

Scott tried to bang on the glass, hoping to break it open, but it seemed to be bulletproof. He looked around for a way out and noticed that the pipe up above was still open, though it was supposed to have closed by now.

"Don't worry, I won't leave you trapped." Peter's reassuring voice echoed in his ear. "He tried to reactivate the lasers, but I kept them off."

"Does he know?" Scott asks in a hushed whisper.

"He shouldn't." Peter replies.

As Scott was whispering to himself in the miniature cell, Cross turned to his former mentor.

"I always suspected that you stashed away a suit somewhere, which begs the question, who is the new Ant-Man? Who is the man that my beloved teacher trusted even more than me?" Cross pauses for a moment and looks expectantly toward the glass cell.

Seeing the bad guy call him out, Scott reached up to open his helmet.

"Stop!" Peter called out over the helmet.

"Huh? What?" Scott whispered as everyone around watched him in interest.

"He doesn't know who you are, so why are you about to reveal yourself?" Peter was shocked that he had to explain this. "First rule of being a hero. Keep your identity a secret."

"Huh? What about Stark? He doesn't hide." Scott asks in confusion.

"Does Stark have a daughter that he has to protect?" Peter asked as if Scott were a blubbering idiot. "You do know that revealing yourself could put her in danger, right?"

In the movie, Cross managed to figure out that it was Scott who was in the Ant-Man suit, which subsequently put his daughter, Cassie in danger, but luckily, that didn't seem to be the case anymore.

'It's probably because I saved him from getting arrested...' Peter thought.

"Oh, right." Scott muttered as he quickly removed his hand from the button that opens his mask.

"What? Feeling shy?" Cross asked sinisterly. "Well, That doesn't matter. I'll just have to look you up after peeling that suit off your rotting corpse."

"Darren, don't do this. If you sell to these men, it's going to be chaos." Pym spoke, eliciting cold glares from the many buyers.

"I already have." Cross scoffed with a smirk. "This was all just a show to draw you out. The money was already transferred and all that's left is for them to take their property." He motioned to the wall filled with Yellowjacket suits.

But before that, Cross reached into his pocket and pulled out a small capsule full of a luminescent yellow liquid, showing it off to the buyers.

"But I'll be keeping the particle to myself. After all, they don't run on diesel. If you want the fuel you'll have to come to me." Cross says as he turns to Pym. "What do you call the only man who can arm the most powerful weapon in the world?"

"The most powerful man in the world." Pym answered in dread.

While Peter was watching all of this happen from the safety of Pym's security room, he couldn't help but eye the shelves filled with Yellowjacket suits, as well as the fuel, which was on display next to them.

"I'm sure he won't miss a suit or two?" Peter thought as he waved his hand.

Instantly, four tiny portals opened in front of him, depositing four capsules into his lap.

Two sets of Yellowjacket suits and the fuel to go along with it.

With the goods in hand, Peter pulled out a flash drive and opened yet another portal. This time leading to Darren Cross' personal lab/workshop.

Reaching his hand in, Peter plugged the drive into Cross' workstation and watched as the screens lit up, bypassing every bit of security before downloading a copy of everything that he wanted.

Minutes later, Peter's theft was finished and he took the drive back before closing the portal, leaving the lab exactly as he found it.

'I'll have to study the fuel and make some alterations to the suit before finding two people worthy enough to use them.' Peter thought as some ideas came to mind.

One of which is Natasha, who would make good use of this type of tech. Especially after he alters the suit to fit the Black Widow esthetic.

Hiding his spoils in a portal, Peter turned his attention back to the monitors, where chaos was starting to ensue.

"Darren, what are you doing?!" Hope exclaimed as she watched Cross' men pull their guns and take aim at her father.

"It's too late for him, Hope. Your father sealed his fate when he lied and refused to pass down his research to me. Now, he's going to pay for his mistake." Cross said indifferently.

Hank stood his ground, determined not to show any weakness. "Of course, I wouldn't give you my research, and it seems that I made the right decision. The only regret I have is taking you in. I should've wiped my a*s with your resume as soon as I saw it."

"..." His former mentor's words seemed to strike a chord in him, causing Cross to grind his teeth as he turned to his men. "Kill him!"

And just as they were about to pull the trigger, two bright golden portals opened up beneath both Hank and Hope. Sending the two of them falling as they disappeared from the vault, leaving Darren and his men bewildered as the portals snapped shut soon after.

"What the hell just happened?" one of the buyers exclaimed.

Boom! But before they could think properly about what they witnessed, a loud explosion was heard from behind.

"Ugh!" Hank grunted as he fell onto the padded training mat in his basement, his daughter beside him.

As they landed on the ground, Hank looked around, trying to figure out where they were.

"We're back home?" Hope muttered in confusion.

"Yeah, you're welcome by the way." A voice calls out from across the room.

Turning their heads, the father and daughter found Peter peaking his head out from the security room.

Instantly, they realized that they were saved by Spider-Man.

"If you can just open portals like that, why didn't we use that to steal the suits?" Pym asked incredulously.

If it was so easy to get into the vault, then they could've ended this days ago.

"Well, this is Scott's admission trial for the Avengers. If I helped him too much, then that would be cheating." Peter shrugs uncaringly.

"This is serious!" Hope spoke up in anger. "Scott's still trapped there!"

"Yes, and those suits are about to be sold. This isn't a time for trials..." Pym lectured.

"Well, to me this is a rather tame situation. As for Scott..." Peter peaks over at the monitors. "Who said he was still trapped?"

""?!"

As Hope and Pym disappeared from the vault, Scott didn't seem to notice as he was too busy preparing his escape.

Although the pipe leading to the glass cell was still open, going that way wasn't exactly viable, so he decided to do something rather dangerous.

Pulling a small disk with a blue shine from his belt, Scott didn't think much as he tossed it at the glass wall.

As he did so, Scott recalled Pym's earlier words. 'Here, use these if you need them. Just throw them at your target. Red shrinks and blue expands. Careful not to damage them. The outcome could be rather explosive...'

"Don't die... Don't die... Don't die..." Scott repeated as he pulled his Kree blaster and opened fire.

As the blue expansion disk hit the wall, it was immediately struck by a bright laser bolt, breaking it in half.

Boom!

A loud explosion rocked the cell, shattering the thick bulletproof glass, and breaking it open.

"What the-" Cross muttered as he turned just in time to see Ant-Man dive out of the destroyed trap, growing back to his normal size in an instant.

"Hey, motherf*cker!" Scott greeted him with a heavy punch to the face, sending Cross falling to the floor.

Chapter 338: Battle of the Bugs

Suddenly, as Cross collapsed to the floor, holding his bleeding nose, his armed henchmen raised their guns once again, surrounding his attacker.

"What are you waiting for?!" Cross berated them as he picked himself off of the vault floor.
"F*cking kill him already!"

Without hesitation, the henchmen gripped their guns tightly and pulled the trigger, but Scott was too quick for them. He shrunk down to the size of a pinhead and watched as a barrage of bullets flew past his tiny body.

Scrambling to search the vault, none of the gunmen noticed a small figure dashing between their legs, punching and kicking their lower bodies, which caused them to trip and stumble over.

"Ugh!"

"F*ck!"

"Where is he?!"

Some simply tripped due to the blow they took, but others wailed in pain as their legs broke in random places.

And as they tried to regroup, Scott surprised them by growing to his full size, appearing out of nowhere and launching a quick punch before shrinking again, disappearing from view.

Over and over, this continued as the highly trained Pym Technologies security team was made to look like inexperienced newbies in front of the power and abilities of Ant-Man.

Meanwhile, Cross watched from the shadows, gritting his teeth in frustration as Ant-Man made quick work of his men.

Realizing he needed to even the odds, Cross reached into his pocket and pulled out a capsule, which held his own personal Yellowjacket suit.

Cross scowled as he looked between the capsule and his diminishing security team. 'If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself...'

Rushing out of the vault, followed by his many buyers who didn't want to be Ant-Mans next target when the henchmen were finished, Cross quickly opened the capsule, enlarged the suit, and threw it on over his very expensive slim-fit business suit.

All whilst listening to the many complaints of his customers. Of course, they wanted to take what they'd purchased and leave, but the case that held the first line of Yellowjacket suits was locked up tight.

So, they could only lodge their complaints and hope that Cross wasn't beaten. Or else their trip and payment would be all for nothing.

And as his helmet locked into place, Cross stood menacingly in front of the crowd of clients, his two bug-like blasters arched on his back. "Shut up!" He yelled. "Leave, I'll take care of it."

Of course, they wouldn't argue with a man in a high-tech killing machine, so the group turned and left.

But as they rushed out of the building, one giant golden portal opened up under their feet, dropping them into a big cell back at the Avengers tower.

Back in the security room of Pym Manor, where Peter, Hope, and Pym were watching the whole situation.

"Did you just do that?" Hope asked in shock as they all watched the buyers get swallowed by a giant portal.

"Yup." Peter shrugged nonchalantly. "Anyone who wants to buy something like this is probably up to no good. I'll have some agents at the tower check their backgrounds and interrogate them."

"..." Hope and Pym exchanged a look, realizing just how easy it would be for their web-slinging acquaintance to deal with this entire situation.

After sending the complainers away, Darren Cross returned to the vault, donning in his Yellowjacket suit, feeling dangerous.

He had left his henchmen behind to distract Scott, and now he was ready to fight.

As he entered the vault, he expected to see his men struggling against an unbeatable opponent, but instead, he found them on the ground, unconscious and injured.

There was no sign of Ant-Man.

Darren knew better than to let his guard down. Ant-Man was probably still lurking around, waiting for a chance to attack him. And just as he thought, a tiny Ant-Man jumped down from the top of the vault door and attacked.

He tried to swat his small assailant away, but Ant-Man was too quick. He was the size of a pin and darted around, avoiding Cross' blows.

Frustrated, Cross shrunk down as well, hoping to get a better shot at Ant-Man.

The two stood across from one another, atop the left butt cheek of one of the fallen guards.

"There you are." Cross said. "Are you ready to die all alone?" The two antenna-style blasters on his back glowed dangerously.

Without waiting for a reply, he started firing toward Scott, though his target managed to dodge the with a few sidesteps, each laser burning a tiny hole in the unconscious guard's pants, zapping his butt cheek underneath.

Dodging one last laser, Scott turns to his enemy. "Who said I was alone?"

Suddenly, a swarm of countless ants climb up the guard's body, surrounding the two of them completely.

"Oh... sh*t." Cross mutters, realizing that the fight might end up being more challenging than he originally thought.

"Get him!" Scott ordered and the ants rushed forward. "Go! Go! Go!"

Cross tried to make a break for it, but the ants blocked his path, swarming over him like a living wave.

Jumping all over the place, Cross did his best to run from the swarm as he unloaded his blasters on them, but they just kept coming, biting and crawling all over him.

Even when he left the ground, hoping to get a moment of reprieve, Cross was surprised to find some of the ants taking to the sky, following him like fighter jets.

Soon enough, Scott joined the fray among his insect allies.

Riding Ant-thony, Scott joined his air team in the sky, chasing after their target in a V formation with Scott at the front.

"Where are you running?!" Scott asks as he pulls his Kree blaster and starts firing in Cross' direction. "I thought you were going to kill me?!"

"Is it just me, or is this a bit comical." Peter muttered. "I mean, when they're so tiny it feels like it's not even real. It's like I'm watching a battle between the world's smallest action figures."

"..." Hope and Pym didn't know how to reply to that.

In and out, Darren dodged the many lasers coming at his back. 'Where the hell did he get that thing?' He wondered.

landing quickly, Cross understood that he was probably better off on the ground.

Watching as a herd of ants rushed his way, whilst Scott and his air unit were a bit farther behind, Cross waited for the perfect moment before growing back to his normal size.

And as he did, it just so happened that the army of flightless ants was only a step away.

"Take this, you little pests!" Cross swiftly raised his leg, hovering over the ants.

"No!" Scott screamed as he nudged Ant-Thony forward. "Hit the gas, buddy!"

As the bottom of Cross' boot descended on his army, Scott kicked off of Ant-Thony's back, launching himself forward.

Cross smirked victoriously, thinking he had won, though just as he was about to crush the weak little ants beneath his feet, Scott came flying over, grew to normal size in an instant, and used all of his momentum to send his boot into Darren's helmeted face.

Pow! The hit connected and Cross was sent flying across the vault.

Acting quickly, Scott re-shrunk himself again so that his fall wouldn't cause any sort of friendly fire.

Hitting the floor, Scott frantically climbed to his feet. "Are you guys okay?!" He asked and turned to find his army in perfect shape.

Letting out a sigh of relief, Scott turned to Cross, who was picking himself back up off the floor. "It's time to end this. You guys can leave the rest to me."

The ants seemed reluctant as Scott kicked off of the ground, launching himself at his opponent.

And before Cross could fully balance himself on his feet, Scott crashed into the front of his knee with all his strength.

Crunch! Instantly, Darren's knee caved backward as his leg bent in a very wrong direction.

After all, if Scott used all of his strength at this size, then his attacks would have the and strength as a fired bullet.

"Argh!?" Cross screamed in pain as the weight on his mangled knee sent him tumbling to the ground once again.

Growing back to normal size, Scott looked down at his enemy. "You know, our suits may have their differences, but one thing is the same. The armor on them is practically nonexistent."

"Ugh! You Motherf-" Cross yelled as he cradled his contorted leg, though he couldn't finish speaking as he felt little legs climbing up his suit, seeping in through the cracks. "Argh! Get them off!"

"I told you guys to leave it to me..." Scott shook his head, though a fond smile graced his lips.

As the ants started doing their work, especially the bullet ants, whose venom could sedate their victims, Scott noticed Cross reaching for something.

In a last-ditch effort, Darren tried to shrink down, hoping to somehow escape while crushing the ants inside his suit in the process.

But sadly, Scott was too quick.

He darted to the floor and grasped Cross' hands, stopping him from hitting the button.

"GET OFF ME!" Darren screamed at the top of his lungs as he thrashed against his enemy's hold.

Though it didn't last long...

Within a few seconds, his arms and legs went limp, swiftly drifting off into a deeply sedated sleep.

"Okay, boys." Scott called out to his army. "Bite 'em a few more times for good measure then come out. He's finished."

As he spoke, a golden portal opened in the center of the room and out came the spectators, Peter, Hope, and Pym.

"Well done, Scott." Peter congratulated him as he stepped over a few of the unconscious henchmen. "You passed the test. Welcome to the Avengers."

Chapter 339: Recruitment

The grand lobby of the Avengers Tower hummed with energy and purpose. Peter stands near the entrance, clad in his spider suit, his eyes scanning the crowd.

Those passing by stare in awe, as Spider-Man very rarely ever comes to the lower floors of the tower, not to mention the main lobby, where thousands of people come and go every day.

Finally, his gaze lands on a trio approaching him.

Scott Lang, looked like a kid on Christmas morning, his eyes wide with awe as he looked around the building.

Beside him, Hope van Dyne, aka the future Wasp, exudes confidence with every step she takes. And there, walking alongside them is Hank Pym, a skeptical expression etched onto his aged face.

After detaining Darren Cross and all of his cohorts, Peter and the group celebrated their win before going their separate ways. But before they split, Peter invited all three of them to the tower.

Of course, Scott needed to come, as he would be joining the Avengers, but Hope and Hank were a different story.

Hank didn't want to come, as he barely agreed with Scott joining the Avengers in the first place.

After all, he's never liked the Starks and Tony is a high-level member of the Avengers, which makes a Stark his successors boss.

'What is the world coming to...' Pym thought at the time.

As for Hope, thankfully, she wasn't as pessimistic as her father, though she wasn't overly excited either.

"Hey, guys. Welcome to the Avengers Tower." Peter greeted them. "Come on, I'll show you around."

Scott takes in the splendor of the tower, his voice filled with wonder. "Whoa, this place is amazing. What's is that?"

He eyed an odd-looking checkpoint that everyone had to go through in order to enter the rest of the building.

People in business suits walked into pods, which sealed shut and seemed to scan them before opening on the other end, allowing them into the building.

"Just some needed security." Peter shrugs.

Hank, however, remained skeptical. He casts a discerning gaze around the lobby, his voice tinged with doubt. "Let's see if this place lives up to the hype, shall we?"

He knew that the whole building was built and owned by the Starks, and he refused to allow any of it to impress him. No matter what.

Undeterred, Peter led the group through the bustling lobby, maneuvering through the security while admiring the cutting-edge technology displays that adorn the walls.

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After showing them around, Peter brought Scott to his new apartment.

"And finally, we have your apartment." Peter opened the door, enjoying the shocked look on Scott's face.

"M-My apartment?" Scott asked as they walked inside, eyeing the place in awe.

"Yes, your apartment," Peter smirked under his mask. "Didn't I say that becoming an Avenger had many perks?"

Scott couldn't keep the smile off his face.

With this, he completed one more of his goals.

Now, all that was left to do was to pay off his owed child support. Then he should be able to at least spend a little time with his daughter.

"Thank you..." Scott turned to Peter and said wholeheartedly.

"You're very welcome." Peter nods. "But we're not done yet."

Leaving the three of them in the living room, Peter walked over to the front door and came back with two other people.

Matt Murdock, better known as Daredevil, and Foggy Nelson, his loyal partner. Both of them carried a pile of legal documents, looking ready for business.

"Scott, this is Matt Murdock and Foggy Nelson." Peter introduced them. "They'll be representing you in court."

They exchange glances.

"Aren't they a bit young?" Pym asked as he had experience when it came to lawyers.

In his experience, when choosing a lawyer, it's best to pick someone with more time under their belt.

"Yes, but I assure you, Nelson and Murdock are the best lawyers in New York." Peter vouched for them.

Scott nods, attempting to steady his nerves.

There was nothing more he desired than to get joint custody of his daughter. After all, this was his chance to rectify the many mistakes he's made over the years.

"So, what's the plan?" Scott asks eagerly.

Foggy took a seat. "Well, If we're going to reopen your criminal case, then we'll need solid evidence to prove your innocence. And not just for the theft charges, but for your intentions as well." He said, as Peter already explained the situation to them.

"Wait!" Scott exclaimed in confusion. "I thought this was about Cassie?"

"Yes, but don't you think it would look better in court if you've been proven innocent?" Matt spoke from the side, leaning on his walking cane.

"Yeah, but how long is that going to take?" Scott asks worriedly.

After all, he didn't care about his criminal record. All that Scott wanted was custody of his daughter.

Peter stepped forward. "You don't have to worry. I'll call in some favors to speed the whole thing along."

Opening a small portal, Peter reached inside and pulled output a flash drive.

"I've gathered all the information that you'll need," Peter says as he hands the drive to Foggy. "I've compiled evidence of the corruption within the company Scott was trying to expose. We can show that Scott was driven to commit those acts for the greater good."

Matt's lips curved into a small smile, as he enjoys fighting corruption.

Meanwhile, Foggy leans forward, his eyes locked on Peter. "And if his ex-wife refuses to share custody even after he's acquitted and his record is cleared?" He asks, his voice tinged with concern.

Peter's face hardens under his mask. "Then we'll have to take it to court," Peter says, his tone resolute. "We'll fight for Scott's rights as a father and show all of the evidence of his changed circumstances and his commitment to his daughter's well-being. And if it comes down to it, we can invite some high-profile character witnesses to help things along."

After all, what would the judge decide when Spider-Man comes walking into court?

Silence filled the room as everyone absorbed Peter's words.

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Once Nelson and Murdock took their leave after some necessary documents were signed, Peter introduced yet another member of the Avengers.

Entering the apartment, Natasha Romanoff, the formidable Black Widow, approaches, dressed in her tactical gear.

"Hello." Natasha greets everyone with a nod. "Ready to hand off our newest recruit?"

Peter turns to Scott, offering him a reassuring smile. "Scott, this is Natasha Romanoff. She's going to take over your basic training from now on."

Scott's nervousness becomes palpable as he addresses Natasha. "Uh, hi..."

Natasha returns the greeting, her smile warm and comforting. "Don't worry, you're in good hands. We'll get you up to speed in no time."

"Natasha is the best trainer that we have. She even taught me." Peter steps aside, allowing Natasha to take the lead. "Why don't you show Scott the training facilities? After all, he'll be using them from now on."

Natasha nods as she motions for Scott to follow along.

Before they leave, Peter pats Scott gently on the back. "Good luck." He says, his voice filled with pity. "You're gonna need it."

As Peter watched Natasha guide a nervous-looking Ant-Man away, he couldn't help but smile.

'The Avengers keeps growing.' Peter thought pridefully.

At this point, he was the official Avengers recruiter. Almost every member was recruited by him, which was an accomplishment that he was very proud of to say the least.

Speaking of recruitment, once Scott and Natasha were gone, Peter turned to Hank and Hope.

"Dr. Pym, Hope." Peter began, drawing their attention. "I've been meaning to ask, would you two like to join the Avengers as well? As scientists, of course. Your help would be invaluable. Especially you Hank."

Hank raised his head, his eyes meeting Peter's, his expression tinged with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism.

"I appreciate the sentiment." Hank replied, his tone carrying the weight of his many years of experience. "But I'm afraid my time has long passed. I'm too old for this anymore."

Peter's face fell slightly, disappointment etching itself upon his masked features. He had hoped to convince Hank of the importance of his contributions, but he understood nonetheless.

Hope, on the other hand, regarded Peter with a contemplative gaze.

Though she shared her father's concerns, an undercurrent of secret desires and aspirations pulsed within her.

Peter's eyes met Hope's, and he couldn't help but notice a glimmer of something hidden in her gaze. It was a mixture of determination and longing.

Though it wasn't toward him.

Hope took a step forward, her voice filled with resolve and determination.

"I'll join." she declared, her eyes darting briefly toward her father before returning to meet Peter's gaze. "I want to be closer to Scott, and this is an opportunity I can't ignore."

Peter's eyebrows rose in surprise, a flicker of understanding lighting up his face. He had suspected that Hope's feelings for Scott were deeper than they appeared. And now, her small admission confirmed his suspicions.

Although he knew this from the movies in his past life, he wasn't sure if they would still get together or not.

And thankfully, her father remained silent, neither approving nor disapproving of her choice.

"Good, welcome to the team." Peter was happy to hire at least one of them. "I'll have a private lab and apartment assigned to you by the end of the day."

Chapter 340: The Truth

After talking for a bit longer, Hank was done with his visit and was ready to go.

And of course, they escorted him out, as Hope would be staying to deal with the employment process.

On their way out, Pym's eyes widened as a carbon copy of a young Howard Stark appeared before him.

"Uugh..." Pym grunted in annoyance as he glared in Tony's direction.

"Hey, Web-Head." Tony greeted with his trademark smirk. "What's with the grumpy old man?"

"I see that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree..." Hank deeply frowned as he walked past Tony, groaning to himself about self-absorbed egotistic Starks. "You don't have to show me out. I'll leave on my own."

Entering the elevator alone, Pym ignored Tony and turned to his daughter. "Be sure to call and keep away from any Starks."

"What the hell did I do to him?" Tony asked as the elevator closed and Hank disappeared. "Don't tell me I slept with his wife?"

"No, but your father might have?" Peter shrugs.

"Oh..."

After seeing Pym off and separating from Tony, Peter led Hope to a private laboratory within the Avengers headquarters.

As they entered the large workshop/lab, Hope's eyes widened with awe at the sight before her. The lab was a technological marvel, equipped with cutting-edge tools and machinery.

Hope took hesitant steps forward, her fingers gently brushing against the sleek surface of a workstation. She turned to Peter, a mix of gratitude and anticipation on her face.

"This... this is amazing! Is all of this really for me?" She asked hesitantly.

Peter nodded with a smile under his mask. "Yes, this lab is all yours. You're part of the Avengers now, and we treat our brainiacs very well."

Hope's eyes gleamed with excitement as Peter continued. "And speaking of everything you need, here's something to sweeten the deal." He handed her a folder containing documents.

Hope opened the folder, her eyes widening further as she skimmed through the papers. It was a detailed breakdown of a generous research budget.

"A budget?" She asked in shock.

"Mhmm, but that's just a copy of Dr. Banner's budget. I need to draw up yours and allocate the money. Though yours will be similar to his, of course. Hopefully, anything you research or create will help us in one way or another."

Hope couldn't contain her joy, a wide smile gracing her face. "Thank you. This... this means the world to me." She said.

Suddenly, a mischievous grin appeared under Peter's mask, a playful glimmer in his eyes. "Oh, and one more thing... Your living arrangements."

Hope tilted her head, curious about what Peter was about to reveal.

"I checked and the apartment directly across the hall from Scott is open. How convenient, huh?" Peter spoke teasingly. "After all, you want to be with him, right?"

Hope's cheeks flushed, a mixture of embarrassment and denial evident in her reaction.

"I-It's not like that! Scott and I are just friends. Nothing more." She stuttered out her denial unconvincingly.

Peter's playful smirk grew wider. "Hmm, are you sure about that? Those red cheeks of yours tell a different story."

Hope's attempts to hide her feelings only made her blush deepen, giving away more than she intended. "Mind your own business..."

She tried to sound intimidating, but it just wasn't working.

Peter chuckled, patting her shoulder reassuringly. "Hey, take your time. Love is a tricky thing."

Once the topic of romance was officially put aside, Hope turned to Peter with a serious look on her face.

"What's up?" he asked, wondering why she suddenly became so serious out of nowhere.

Hope took a deep breath, gathering her thoughts before she spoke. She had long suspected that her father, Hank Pym, had lied about her mother's fate and now was the perfect opportunity to ask.

The plane crash story never quite added up, and she knew there was more than he let on.

With Peter being a high-ranking member of the Avengers and well-connected with the government, he seemed like the best person to approach for answers.

Especially after seeing how him and Hank interacted. Hope felt that Peter knew something, and her father didn't want him to say.

"I need to..." she began, her voice barely above a whisper, "I need to ask you something important... About my mother."

Peter's expression softened, realizing where this was going. He set aside his joking manner, giving Hope his full attention.

Hope continued, her voice filled with a mix of vulnerability and determination, "Hank always told me that my mom died in a plane crash, but I could never shake the feeling that he was hiding something. I... I knew he was lying to me. I just want to know the truth."

Silence enveloped them for a moment as Peter considered his response.

"I know what happened to your mother, Hope," Peter said softly. "And I'm more than willing to explain everything to you. You deserve to know the truth."

Hope's eyes widened with a mix of anticipation and trepidation.

She had carried this burden of uncertainty for far too long, and now, standing before her was someone who held the key to unveiling the secrets that had haunted her for years.

Taking a deep breath, Peter began. "I understand how important it is for you to know what happened to your mother, so I'll do my best not to leave anything out."

"During a mission with your father, your mother was forced to shrink herself to a subatomic level to disarm a Soviet nuclear missile." Peter explains, utterly shocking Hope.

"Wait!" She exclaimed. "Are you telling me that it wasn't just my father?"

She always thought that her father did his Ant-Man work alone.

"Yup, she was a hero too, just like your father. She was called the Wasp. They worked as a team." Peter explained.

"What happened next?" She asked, her breath hitched, a mix of pride and grief washing over her.

Peter pressed on, wanting to provide her with the closure she had sought for so long.

"Nothing." Peter answered with a shrug. "She disappeared into the Quantum Realm, never to be seen again. She could be dead or she could be stuck, waiting for someone to save her. Or she could be continuously shrinking, but that's probably the worst-case scenario. Not including death, of course."

"..." Hope collapsed into a nearby chair, processing everything that she's been told. "My mother could be alive?" She asked.

Peter nodded. "Yes, it's one of the more likely possibilities."

Instantly, Hope hopped to her feet and began pacing back and forth. "Then we have to find her! But how the hell am I supposed to do that?"

"Well, I'm almost positive that your father has been looking for a way to save her ever since the incident." Peter explains. "So it might be best to work with him."

Hope froze as she thought it over. "No, he won't let me. And if I bring it up, he'll most likely try to stop me from finding her myself..." She shook her head negatively.

Hank Pym has been shielding his daughter from anything Ant-Man related for a very long time, so she didn't trust him to actually let her help in any meaningful way that mattered.

Maybe if he was the one to tell her, then some of that lost trust would have been regained, but sadly, that didn't happen.

"If that's the case, then we could try something else." Peter offered, as he pulled out a flash drive.

"What's that?" She asks.

"This is a copy of Darren Cross' research data. Everything that you would need to make your own working Yellowjacket suit." Peter explained as he held out the drive. "You could finally make your own Ant-Man suit. No more asking Daddy for his."

Of course, Peter already copied all of Cross' data onto his laptop, so the drive was useless to him now.

Hope stared at the drive in shock.

After all, she watched her father destroy all of the data in Darren's workstation, alongside his many Yellowjacket suits, so she didn't know when Peter swiped a copy of it for himself.

Though she didn't care. This was her golden opportunity.

"...Wasp." Hope says, barely over a whisper as she takes the drive. "It'll be a Wasp suit..."

She would follow in her mother's footsteps.

"Good, but I just want to make one thing clear." Peter says, his voice turning deadly serious.

"What?" She asks curiously.

"You must be extremely careful with the regulator and anything to do with entering the Quantum Realm. Actually, let me be even more clear." Peter says as he stares her straight in the eyes. "I don't want you entering the Quantum Realm without a sh*t ton, and I mean a SH\$T TON of research and testing. I will not be responsible for any idiocy. If you want your mother back, then do things correctly. Am I clear?"

The room turned silent as Hope froze like a deer in headlights, unable to move a single inch under Peter's glare.

"Y-Yes, I swear..."