

Marvel Manifestor

chapter 1

New York—hailed as the world's center of economics, finance, and commerce. It was the largest city in the United States, and also one of the most densely populated.

Yet, behind its glitz and glamour lurked filth and decay, chaos far worse than in many other cities.

Hell's Kitchen was the most disorderly district of New York. Crime ran rampant, gangs fought daily turf wars, and addicts and criminals prowled the streets at every corner.

"Chief, we've tracked the signal here. Surveillance shows the target hasn't moved."

A fully armed officer held up a portable monitor for a blond man beside him.

That blond man was George Stacy, Commissioner of the NYPD. He had been tracking this group of drug dealers for some time, even managing to plant a tracker on one of them. Tonight, he was personally leading the raid into Hell's Kitchen.

"Alright. Prepare to move in. Try to take them alive."

Through his radio, Commissioner Stacy gave the order. Three teams of armed narcotics officers stormed the abandoned church from different directions.

At that same moment, Lucas suddenly opened his eyes.

The first thing he saw was a massive crucifix looming above him. The figure nailed to it seemed to tilt its head in his direction. Around him, he saw shattered gray pews and broken stained glass windows.

"Where is this...? I must be half-asleep."

Lucas shut his eyes again, intending to drift back to sleep.

Da-da-da-da!!

Da-da-da!!

Suddenly, bursts of noise rang out.

Lucas' eyes snapped open, scanning around in shock.

"That sounds like... gunfire?!"

He had never heard real gunshots before, but from countless videos, the sound was unmistakable.

The shots grew closer. Lucas tried to get up and see what was happening, but his body refused to cooperate—he couldn't move a muscle, only kick his tiny legs.

He lifted his hand and froze. His arm was stubby, like that of a newborn. His little fingers were pitifully small.

"Ah—yaa—aaah!"

He tried to shout, but only babyish babbling came out.

"No way... I transmigrated?!"

At last, the truth hit him. This wasn't a dream. He had really crossed over—and into the body of a baby.

Turning his head with effort, he spotted a frail woman lying beside him, seemingly asleep. But the needle marks on her arm told the story—she was a seasoned addict.

Lucas' heart sank. Others who transmigrate either end up as heirs of noble families, descendants of royalty, or at least in middle-class homes. But him? He'd landed in a junkie's household. Worse, he didn't even know if this woman was alive or dead.

"Seriously, could anyone's luck be worse than mine?!"

Tears welled in his eyes.

"All I did was drink a few extra bottles! Did I deserve this?!"

He looked up at the crucifix overhead, glaring at the nailed figure.

Almost as if the nailed man pitied him, footsteps rapidly approached from outside.

Lucas used all his strength to cry, hoping to draw attention. But he was too weak—even his wails were feeble.

Thankfully, the footsteps drew closer, as if guided by his cries.

"Chief, there's movement here."

A cop stepped in with his gun raised. He spotted the lifeless woman immediately.

George Stacy followed in, and that was when he saw Lucas lying beside her.

Exhausted from crying, Lucas squeezed his eyes shut and fell asleep.

George picked him up. The baby was alarmingly thin and malnourished, far smaller than George's own infant daughter.

"Chief, look at this."

Another officer pulled a crumpled paper from the woman's belongings.

It was a shabby birth certificate from a back-alley clinic.

"Carl Norman..." George read aloud.

When Lucas opened his eyes again, he was in a clean, tidy room. Sunlight poured through the window, curtains tied neatly to the sides, and the faint fragrance of jasmine filled the air.

Turning his head, he spotted another baby about his size sleeping soundly beside him.

The door creaked open. A blonde woman with blue eyes stepped inside, her mature aura captivating Lucas instantly.

She was in her thirties, with fair skin flushed with a healthy glow. When she saw him awake, she quickly came over and gently picked him up.

"Little Carl, you're awake. Let Mommy check if you need a diaper change."

She began undoing his diaper.

Lucas panicked. Who the hell are you?! You show up and start pulling off my pants?! You pervert!

He squirmed wildly, crying at the top of his lungs.

His cries woke the baby next to him, who immediately wailed even louder than Lucas.

That shut Lucas up. He stared at the noisy infant in disbelief.

The woman sighed helplessly. She quickly changed Lucas' diaper, then scooped up the other baby. With a soft lullaby, she calmed the little girl, who blinked her big eyes at Lucas curiously.

"Gwen, look at your baby brother. Isn't he just as cute as you?"

The woman smiled.

"Brother? Excuse me, I'm way older than this brat!"

Lucas protested, but only babbles came out.

Just then, the door opened again. George Stacy walked in, papers in hand.

"The adoption's finalized. From now on, this little one is officially part of the Stacy family."

Though George and his wife had adopted him, his surname remained Norman. They hadn't changed it to Stacy.

Listening to them, and remembering the woman had called the baby "Gwen," Lucas' mind went blank.

Wait a sec. Gwen Stacy?

Holy crap, I've transmigrated into Marvel!!!

A giant red "DANGER" sign flashed in his head. Marvel's New York—crime everywhere, superpowered battles on every street corner. And he was just a regular, powerless human? That was practically a death sentence.

Worse still, this was the epicenter of all chaos: New York City.

But soon, Lucas calmed himself. Gwen was still a baby. According to the timeline, the real chaos hadn't begun yet. He had at least a decade to prepare. If he could grow stronger and eventually move the whole Stacy family to China, he might just survive.

"I wonder if she'll become Spider-Woman in the future... If so, maybe Peter Parker won't even matter."

He glanced at baby Gwen, who stared back at him with wide, curious eyes.

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Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 2: Adapting to Life

Time flew by, and Lucas was now eighteen years old.

When he first realized he had transmigrated into the body of a kid, it took him a long time to come to terms with it.

He had been a handsome young man , answering the call of the great "transmigrator army." Yet here he was, stuck in the body of a kid.

Lucas sulked for years over it. During that time, he refused to look in the mirror. Every time he caught sight of his reflection, irritation boiled inside him.

George and his wife even thought he was sick. They took him to countless psychologists across New York, but nothing seemed to help. Still, they never gave up on him.

In the end, Lucas figured it out on his own. "So what if I'm in a kid's body ? I got a second life—what, am I supposed to kill myself and try again?"

Once he accepted it, he realized something else—among people, he was ridiculously good-looking. Not the golden-haired, blue-eyed type, but a striking black-haired, dark-eyed guy who could rival Tom Cruise and Leonardo DiCaprio.

He reluctantly accepted his new looks. And honestly, that face made him insanely popular at school. Back in kindergarten, little girls used to share their candy and snacks with him. By middle school, crowds of girls surrounded him. Now in high school, he was officially one of the campus heartthrobs, always ranked top three in the school's "Most Handsome" forum posts.

Lucas himself didn't care much. After all, he'd been handsome in his past life too. Being good-looking was nothing new.

In his past life, he'd been the college heartthrob, leaving trails of smitten girls everywhere he went. Scouts had even tried to recruit him into the entertainment industry.

But back then, Lucas had been a second-gen rich kid, with a family that owned a chain business. Who would've thought that one all-nighter would send him straight into another world? After some soul-searching, he'd accepted it. He couldn't go back, so his parents and the family business would just have to be left in his younger brother's hands.

Lucas was staring blankly at the mirror when a sweet voice broke his thoughts.

"Lucas, what are you doing?"

A stunning blonde appeared in his reflection—it was Gwen Stacy, his adoptive sister.

Yes, technically they were the same age. But thanks to that cursed birth certificate that said he was born two months after her, he was officially the "younger brother." In reality, Lucas felt he should've been the older one.

Gwen plopped down next to him casually. Though they weren't related by blood, she treated him like her real little brother. The rest of the family did too.

At eighteen, Gwen was the picture of youthful beauty and energy, her model-like figure and gorgeous face putting her at the very top of every boy's "dream date" list at school.

But she never showed interest in anyone. Instead, she clung to Lucas all the time. Outsiders often thought they were dating.

"Nothing. Just zoning out."

Lucas snapped back to reality, glancing at Gwen. He had to admit—everything about her matched his taste. Especially those long legs. Damn, they hit him right in the weakness.

"Come on! We're gonna be late for school!"

Without giving him a choice, Gwen dragged him toward the door. Lucas hurriedly grabbed his backpack.

"By my estimate, there are still about three years until the Marvel timeline officially begins... Once it does, I'll get George and the whole family to immigrate to some other city. Better to stay far away from this mess."

That was Lucas' plan.

On TV, Tony Stark was already a tabloid sensation, partying with one woman today and another tomorrow. You couldn't avoid seeing him even if you tried.

Lucas, after eighteen years here, still hadn't awakened any golden-finger cheats or special powers. He wasn't a mutant either. In a world like Marvel, if you had no abilities, the safest option was to get the hell out.

Arm-in-arm, Gwen chattered nonstop all the way to the bus stop, while Lucas listened quietly or laughed along.

A few years ago, George and Helen had another two sons, so the family had expanded again. Their old apartment was too small, so they'd moved into a two-story detached house in Queens.

When the siblings reached the bus stop, a few other teens their age were already waiting.

Though both Lucas and Gwen had their driver's licenses, George never allowed them to drive. His reason? New York traffic was a nightmare, and most drivers on the road were lunatics. As NYPD Commissioner, George knew better than anyone how dangerous the city could be.

"Hey! Took you two long enough. The bus will be here in a minute!"

A bespectacled nerd waved at them.

"Peter, you need new glasses. There are still five minutes left—and that idiot driver is never on time anyway."

Lucas grabbed Gwen's wrist and pointed at her watch.

"Fine, fine. What's a couple minutes?"

Peter shrugged helplessly, craning his neck to peer down the road.

Yes—this was none other than Peter Parker, still the nerdy, bookish kid. He hadn't been bitten by the radioactive spider yet, but it wouldn't be long. Iron Man would appear in a few years, and Spider-Man wouldn't be far behind.

The school bus soon wobbled to a stop, and everyone boarded.

Lucas, Gwen, and Peter had been classmates since middle school. Gwen and Peter were top students, while Lucas had always been the eternal underachiever.

Now, with graduation approaching, nothing had changed. Gwen and Peter were still academic stars, and Lucas... was still at the bottom.

The ride passed quickly, and they arrived at Midtown High.

During class, Lucas slumped on his desk, fiddling with his phone, while Gwen and Peter quietly studied. That stark contrast said it all.

By lunchtime, Lucas and Peter were joking around on their way to the cafeteria. The moment they walked in, Lucas noticed Peter staring off in one direction. Curious, he followed his gaze.

There, at a table, sat a group of pretty girls. At the head of the group was none other than his sister Gwen, flanked by a redhead and a dark-haired beauty.

Lucas recognized them. The redhead was Mary Jane, Peter's future girlfriend. The dark-haired girl was Felicia Hardy.

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Chapter 3: George Gets Shot

"Ohh—so you were staring at Mary Jane, huh?"

Lucas teased, patting Peter on the shoulder.

"Buddy, take my advice—forget about Mary Jane. She's not right for you. You can't handle her."

Lucas spoke with the tone of someone who had seen it all. Back in his previous life, watching the Spider-Man movies, he'd always thought Mary Jane and Peter were a terrible match. The real perfect pair had been Gwen. Only now, because of Lucas' presence, Peter and Gwen had never developed romantic feelings for each other—just a pure friendship.

"H-how did you know?!"

Peter's eyes widened in shock. He hadn't told anyone about his crush on Mary Jane.

"Of course I could tell. The way you look at her—it's like she's a candied sweet potato. If I couldn't figure that out, I'd gouge out my own eyes and quit this colorful world for good."

Lucas rolled his eyes. As someone who knew a thing or two about Marvel, he was more than aware of Peter and Mary Jane's little story.

"Buddy, you can't tell anyone, especially Gwen."

Peter grabbed Lucas' arm, practically begging.

"Pathetic. Don't ever tell people we're friends."

Lucas stood up and walked straight toward Gwen's table.

"Hey there, beauties!"

He slid casually into the seat right next to Mary Jane.

From the moment he came over, Mary Jane's gaze never left him.

"Have you ordered yet? Want me to get something for you?"

Lucas ignored her staring. He was already immune to that look—he'd grown up with people gazing at him like that.

"We've ordered already, just waiting on the food."

Gwen answered naturally, looping her arm around Lucas'.

Lucas didn't think much of it; Gwen often did this. But Mary Jane and Felicia both noticed the gesture immediately. They exchanged a glance but stayed silent.

Just then, Peter finally shuffled over, greeting the group awkwardly.

Felicia greeted him warmly, but Mary Jane didn't even glance his way. That crushed Peter, and he slumped into the seat beside Lucas, looking wounded.

Felicia caught on, smirked knowingly, but said nothing.

At that moment, Lucas' phone buzzed. It was Helen calling.

"Yo~ Mom, it's your cute and charming son speaking~"

His silly words drew laughter from Mary Jane and Felicia—they'd never seen anyone so shamelessly narcissistic. Though, to be fair, Lucas had the looks to back it up.

But then, Lucas' smile vanished. His expression hardened, and he shot up from his seat.

"Where are you right now?!"

His voice was low, urgent, deadly serious.

"...I'll be there right away."

He hung up and turned to Gwen.

"Gwen, come with me. Something happened at home."

Gwen froze for a moment, then her face paled. She knew Lucas would never joke about family matters.

"What happened? What's wrong?"

"On the way. I'll explain."

Lucas waved Peter over. "Take care of our bags."

"Do you need my help?"

Peter had never seen Lucas so frantic. His gut told him something serious had gone down.

Mary Jane and Felicia also asked if they could help.

"No. There's nothing you can do. If I need you, I'll ask."

Lucas shook his head, then pulled Gwen along, running out of the cafeteria.

"Lucas, tell me what's going on!" Gwen cried, gripping his arm tightly. She'd known him her whole life and had never seen him like this.

"Mom just called. Dad's been shot. He's in surgery right now. We have to get to the hospital."

Lucas' voice was heavy with anger and dread.

"What?! No... no!!"

The words hit Gwen like a thunderbolt. Tears streamed down her face, her whole body trembling.

Lucas squeezed her hand, his warm grip steadying her a little, though she couldn't stop crying.

They rushed to the hospital. Outside the operating room, Helen sat slumped on a bench, head bowed, hands clasped tightly together, looking like all the life had been drained from her.

"Mom!!"

Gwen ran to her, hugging her tightly. Both broke down in tears.

Lucas joined them, holding them both as he tried to calm them down.

Only after their sobbing eased did he speak.

"Mom... how did Dad get shot?"

Helen wiped her tears, her voice trembling.

"They said your father was leading a team chasing down gang members. A firefight broke out, and their leader shot him. By the time I got there, he was already in surgery."

"And the cops? Why are you here alone?"

Lucas' anger flared. The police commissioner, their top man, nearly killed—and they hadn't even left anyone behind to look after the family? Outrageous.

"Your Uncle John was here the whole time, but he just stepped out after a call. He said they caught one of the gangsters."

Lucas' fury eased slightly. He sat beside Helen, waiting with her.

Two long hours crawled by before the operating room doors finally opened. A weary doctor stepped out.

"Doctor! How is my dad?"

Gwen rushed forward, still streaked with tears.

"He's stable now. The bullet missed his heart by less than an inch."

The doctor left, and George Stacy was wheeled out, transferred to the ICU.

Lucas clenched his fists as he stared at his unconscious father. Rage burned in his chest. He swore he'd find out who pulled the trigger.

After staying with Gwen and Helen for a while, Lucas made an excuse to leave. He headed straight for NYPD headquarters.

Everyone knew him as the commissioner's adopted son, so no one stopped him. He quickly found John, who was drowning in paperwork and stress.

"Uncle John—who shot my dad?"

Lucas didn't waste time.

John glanced at him, troubled. He already knew which gang was responsible. They had even caught one of the thugs. But the guy was tight-lipped, clearly trained to wait for his lawyer.

John didn't want to tell Lucas anything. He could already see what Lucas was planning. George was barely out of surgery—John wasn't about to let the kid throw himself into danger.

Lucas noticed John's silence and strode toward the interrogation room. He'd already heard from Helen that one suspect had been caught. He was determined to get answers.

But John grabbed his arm. "Kid, I can't let you go in there. Not only is it against the rules, but those men are killers. Do you even understand what you're getting into? You're just a high schooler. Even if I told you, what could you possibly do?"

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Chapter 4: The System Awakens

Lucas turned to stare at John, eyes burning with fury.

Ever since George had taken him home from that abandoned church, George had treated him like his own flesh and blood. And Lucas, in return, had truly regarded George as a father.

"Let me go."

Lucas' face was cold, his voice like ice.

"Kid, save your strength. No one here will give you any information, and I won't let you inside."

John's tone was just as serious. He could tell that Lucas was dead set on seeking vengeance for George. There was no way he could let the boy know anything.

"Leave hunting down the shooter to us. Don't worry—George is our commissioner. We want to catch them more than anyone."

John's eyes were firm, his voice sincere.

Lucas glanced at him but said nothing. He turned and left the precinct.

Back home, Lucas opened George's safe and pulled out a pistol. George had once given him the code, telling him that if he wasn't home, Lucas could use the gun to protect Helen and Gwen if danger ever came knocking.

Lucas weighed the gun in his hand, thoughts racing about how to track down the culprits.

The fastest way would be through that gangster the police had already arrested—but he had no way of getting into the precinct, let alone interrogating anyone.

The other option was to hunt down the gangs himself. But with his current scrawny frame, he could handle a schoolyard fight at best. Facing hardened gangsters? He wouldn't stand a chance.

As he wrestled with his frustration, a sudden voice rang inside his mind. The shock nearly made him topple over.

[Ding~ System has detected host's emotional fluctuations reaching critical level. Loading...]

[10%...]

[20%...]

[30%...]

...

[100%... System loaded. Congratulations, host...]

Lucas sprang to his feet. He'd been waiting eighteen years for this sound. He'd thought that transmigrating here meant he was just an ordinary guy. Turns out the system had just been running late.

"Hah! Finally! The tables have turned—the slave sings, and I soar! It's time to take off!!"

Overjoyed, Lucas tossed the pistol aside. Who needed that junk when he had a system? Even a dog wouldn't bother with it. Pah!

"System! Tell me your functions!"

He shouted impatiently.

Thankfully, no one else was home—his younger brothers were still at school—otherwise, they might have sent him straight to a psych ward.

[Ding~ This system is called the Demon Hunter System. Its purpose is to mold the host into the strongest demon hunter.]

"Mmhm! Exactly what I wanted!"

Lucas nodded furiously, not even paying attention to the details. He was already drooling at the thought of himself someday punching Thanos with one hand and kicking him with the other, heroic and unstoppable.

And why Thanos, specifically? Because that purple simp wasn't even human. To court Death, he wiped out half the universe, all while spewing nonsense about "balance." The hypocrisy was sickening.

Most importantly—Lucas wasn't sure if he'd be among the half that turned to dust. If so, wouldn't that be utterly unfair?

[Ding~ Host, please draw your Demon Hunter template.]

The emotionless system voice chimed again. Lucas finally focused.

On the screen before his eyes appeared three silhouettes:

A white-haired punk in a red coat hefting a skull-shaped broadsword.

A white-haired brooding man in a blue coat.

And a white-haired rascal in a black-blue coat with a mechanical arm and a massive sword on his back.

"Holy crap!! Aren't these the three posers from Devil May Cry?!"

Lucas' eyes bulged. Any one of them could walk all over Marvel—not exactly enough to stomp Thanos outright, but they could strut through the universe like kings.

"Ha ha ha—ahahahaha!!"

Lucas laughed maniacally, just like some edgy villain. At last, he hadn't transmigrated for nothing.

"System! Roll the dice for me! Let's go!"

He waved dramatically, his spirit blazing.

A cursor appeared, moving back and forth over the three figures.

[Ding~ Congratulations, host, you have drawn...]

[Warning! Warning! System error detected! Warning!]

Lucas froze, still riding high on excitement, expecting either Dante or Vergil. But suddenly, the screen flashed red, giant error messages flooding his vision.

"What the—?! What's happening?!"

He panicked. He'd just been fantasizing about conquering Marvel—was the system seriously about to explode already?!

Lucas clasped his hands, muttering frantic prayers like some crazed gambler calling on every deity he could think of.

[Ding~ System auto-repair initiated. Progress: 1%... 2%...]

"Whew... At least it's not exploding. Guess I'm not that unlucky after all."

Lucas wiped the sweat off his forehead, his heart still racing.

"I knew it! I'm a transmigrator. Even if I'm cursed with bad luck, there's gotta be a limit."

He flopped onto the sofa. Not because his knees gave out, of course—he just felt like lying down for a while.

Waiting was torture, especially waiting on a system to self-repair. Time seemed to crawl, like the world had slowed to a crawl around him.

Lucas stared at the screen, watching the numbers climb, one painful tick at a time.

Finally—after what felt like a year—

[Ding~ System repair complete. Congratulations, host. Template acquired: Clive Rosfield.]

"Wait... what?"

Lucas blinked at the screen. A dark-haired, stubbled man in black and red armor stood there.

"System, are you kidding me?! How the hell is Clive Rosfield a demon hunter? The guy literally dies at the end! You want me to end up like him?!"

Lucas leapt to his feet again, higher than before.

[Ding~ The host is advised not to question the system. The Demon Hunter System exists solely to make you the strongest demon hunter.]

"Open your damn eyes, system! Where's my demon hunter? Huh?! Where?!"

Lucas jabbed his finger at the screen, fuming.

[Ding~ System does not accept rebuttal. If the host disagrees, the host may... endure it.]

"You son of a—!!"

Lucas rolled up his sleeves.

"Come out here, I promise I won't hit you!!"

[Ding~ Host must claim the template promptly. Failure to do so will be considered refusal, and the system will automatically unbind.]

Lucas froze. His bravado evaporated instantly. Sitting up straight, he plastered on the most obedient smile.

"Ahem... System, please ignore my earlier outburst. That wasn't me—it was my other personality talking. I have no memory of what he said."

He spoke with righteous conviction, shameless as could be.

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Chapter 5: Becoming a Dominant

Lucas stood tall and righteous, as if none of his earlier tantrums had ever happened.

"Clive it is, then. At least he's from an action game. That counts as devil-hunting by association. I'll just treat him as an alternate Dante."

[Ding~ Host must claim template immediately.]

A ten-second countdown appeared on the screen before him.

"Damn it, System, that's underhanded! Fine—claim! Claim it now!"

Lucas jabbed at Clive's figure on the screen without hesitation.

[Ding~ Congratulations, host. You are now the sole Dominant in the Marvel Universe. Attribute screen unlocked. Please review your stats.]

"This damn system. Zero intelligence, zero personality. Just a soulless program."

Lucas grumbled and said, "Show me my attributes."

The screen shifted, displaying something painfully simple:

Name: Lucas Norman

Unique Template: Clive Rosfield

Ability: Dominant

Manifestable Eikon: Garuda

Skills: Rook's Gambit, Garuda's Embrace, Aerial Blast

Items: None

"Holy—Garuda?! That's awesome—wait, no, it's not!!"

Lucas clutched his stomach, furious.

"System! Open your damn eyes! I'm a man. A man!! And you expect me to manifest as Garuda? She's a woman! A woman! You think I never played FF16?!"

He swung punches at the screen, fists swiping uselessly through the hologram and slamming into empty air

Not because they were weak. Just... misplaced anger. Totally different.

Holding his waist, Lucas muttered under his breath like a mantra: Don't get mad, don't get sick, nobody will take your place if you croak...

[Ding~ Host should adjust his mindset. Manifestations are Eikons only—they do not affect host's gender. If the host is dissatisfied, the system can retract the template and unbind immediately.]

"You—!"

Lucas was speechless, choking on his own fury. But setting gender aside, the fact that he could manifest Garuda at all already made him stronger than Clive. In the game, Clive could only summon Ifrit.

"Wait a second!"

Lucas froze. His template was Clive. And Clive could only manifest one Eikon... Did that mean he was stuck with Garuda forever?

He panicked.

"System, don't tell me I can only manifest Garuda from now on?"

[Ding~ Host may rest assured. With this system's optimization, host can manifest any Eikon.]

"Phew... that's a relief. Good on you, System—my boy, my A-Tong."

Lucas patted his chest, finally breathing again.

[Ding~ Host still has an unopened newbie pack. Would you like to open it now?]

"What are you waiting for? Open it! Quick, before it disappears!"

Lucas hurriedly tapped the glowing gift box on the screen.

[Ding~ Congratulations, host. You have obtained: Weapon – Ultima Weapon.
Ability – Rapid Recovery.]

Lucas' eyes lit up, hands rubbing together greedily like a fly.

"Question!!" He shot his hand up.

[Answer~]

"This Rapid Recovery... is it what I think it is?"

[Ding~ Exactly. It heals non-fatal injuries instantly. Fatal wounds will still take time to heal.]

"Wait—fatal wounds too?"

Lucas' eyes widened. He'd expected quick healing, but this... this was practically cheating. It was as close to immortality as it got.

[Ding~ Correct. Fatal wounds will heal, but missing limbs cannot regenerate.]

"Bah. I thought it was more broken than that. Guess I got my hopes up."

He sulked.

[Host should learn to be content. Healing fatal wounds is already pseudo-immortality.]

The system's monotone somehow carried a note of disdain.

"...Fine, you're right. But hey, System—could you swap this Ultima Weapon out? It's ugly as hell. Give me Ragnarok, or Blood Sword. Worst case, a Curry Stick will do. I'm not picky."

He eyed the crystalline blue blade in his inventory, unimpressed. Sure, it looked fine on its own, but compared to the other swords from the game, it was definitely the runt.

[Ding~ Host dissatisfaction detected. Convert Ultima Weapon to training wooden sword?]

"No!! Absolutely not!! I love Ultima Weapon. It's my favorite. System, you really get me!"

Lucas shook his head so fast he looked like a bobblehead.

[Ding~ Conversion canceled.]

"Damn, System, you almost killed me there! Turning my main weapon into a wooden sword? You've got jokes."

Lucas flipped the hologram off with an international hand gesture.

[Ding~ Reminder. Apart from issuing quests and rewards, this system provides no additional assistance. Host is on his own.]

Lucas gawked.

"System, you dare call yourself the Strongest Demon Hunter System? Look at other systems—they babysit their hosts. And you? You just wash your hands of me. Strongest, my ass! Where's your shame?!"

He pounded at the screen in a flurry of punches, impotent rage fueling every swing.

[Ding~ Host must not grow over-dependent. This system's role is to help you become the strongest demon hunter. If you rely on me for everything, who's truly strong—you or the system?]

Lucas paused, frowning. Damn it, that... actually made sense.

"...Didn't think you had it in you, System. That was almost touching."

He smiled—until his face stiffened in realization.

"Wait. Did you just try to lecture me?!"

[Ding~ Host is overthinking.]

The flat tone carried a suspicious tinge of guilt.

"Forget it. I'll let it slide. It's better than no system at all. And now—I finally have the power to take revenge."

Lucas calmed himself and focused inward. Strength surged through him, filling every fiber of his body. He felt like he could punch through a brick wall.

From his inventory, he drew the Ultima Weapon. The crystalline blue blade gleamed with a cold radiance, its black hilt coiled in strange patterns.

Gripping it, Lucas felt an uncanny resonance—like the sword was an extension of his very being, flowing seamlessly with his will.

"System, I think I'm falling for this sword."

The longer he held it, the more he liked it.

[Ding~ The weapon has perfectly synchronized with its host. All rewards from this system will achieve 100% compatibility. No side effects.]

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Marvel Manifestor

"System, you really are the best~!"

Lucas stroked the blade of the Ultima Weapon.

As if resonating with his emotions, the sword let out a faint hum.

"Tonight, I'm heading to Hell's Kitchen." He muttered to himself.

Everyone knew Hell's Kitchen was the most chaotic place in all of New York— basically a criminal's paradise. If he wanted to find out who had gotten into that gunfight with the cops, aside from breaking into the precinct to interrogate that unlucky punk who got arrested, the fastest way was to poke around Hell's Kitchen.

With all the gangs in the area, news of a shootout that big must have spread like wildfire. Shouldn't be too hard to dig something up.

After settling on his destination, Lucas sheathed the Ultima Weapon and shifted his focus to practicing Garuda's inherited abilities.

The first skill: Garuda's Embrace. Use Garuda's talons to yank an enemy toward him—or pull himself to an enemy.

The second: Rook's Gambit. Lightning-fast slashes with Garuda's claws. In short: shred city.

The third: Aerial Blast. Summon a massive tornado to devastate everything in its path.

Lucas figured he should find somewhere isolated to test them out.

Without hesitation, he headed to an abandoned scrapyard. No people, no cameras—perfect.

"You'll do nicely."

He picked out a junked sedan and activated Garuda's Embrace.

A massive, translucent green talon materialized, clamped onto the car, and yanked it straight toward him.

"Holy crap!"

Lucas dove aside just as the car slammed into the ground, landing an arm's length from where he had been standing.

He scrambled up and checked the distance. Safe—barely.

Testing again, he found that whether pulling an object toward him or himself toward it, he always stopped one arm's length away. Built-in safety, apparently.

After a few more reps, he felt confident enough to try the second skill.

"Rook's Gambit!"

Claws flashed into existence, striking the sedan with such speed that afterimages blurred together. Within seconds, the car was reduced to mangled ribbons of steel—worse than scrap, like soggy noodles tossed in a heap.

"Damn! At this rate, if I hit someone with that, they'll be a pile of meat paste. They can take my last name!"

Satisfied, he prepared the final test. Standing well back, Lucas unleashed Aerial Blast.

A towering tornado erupted, ripping across the yard, green talons flickering inside its roaring winds. Everything in its path was torn free, hurled skyward, and shredded apart.

After ten-plus seconds, the storm calmed. What remained of the scrapyards was total ruin. Cars were no longer recognizable as cars—just heaps of shredded metal scattered everywhere.

Lucas nodded in satisfaction and gave his system a mental thumbs-up.

He'd considered trying a full Garuda manifestation, but her massive form and the storm she'd bring with her? That was begging for S.H.I.E.L.D.'s attention. Not worth it.

"Oh, right—System, I won't end up petrified from using magic too much, will I?"

He was genuinely worried. In the game, every Dominant eventually turned to stone—even Clive. If that fate awaited him, it would be game over.

[Ding~ Host may rest easy. All drawbacks have been removed. No petrification.]

Lucas exhaled in relief.

With no looming side effects, he kept training his three skills until Gwen called, asking him to bring food for her and Helen.

Hospital meals were bland slop, designed for patients: bread, porridge, mush. Gwen had no appetite for them whatsoever.

Soon Lucas arrived with takeout—fast food, but better than porridge.

"Just this? You got home hours ago. Didn't cook?" Gwen eyed the burgers and fries, clearly disappointed. She wanted Lucas' cooking.

After all, as a transmigrator, Lucas had mastered various cuisine. He had conquered the entire family's taste buds—winning the title of head chef, even with two picky younger brothers. Every so often, he'd cook to elevate the family meals.

Hearing Gwen's complaint, he scratched his head. What could he say? He couldn't exactly admit he'd been out testing superpowers. So he just made up an excuse.

Seeing George stable had finally calmed Gwen and Helen, so their appetites returned. Starving, they dug into the food without much complaint.

Lucas, meanwhile, sat by George's bedside. The man still relied on a ventilator. Out of danger, yes—but unconscious. The doctors could only wait. Some of it was lingering anesthesia, the rest from his injuries.

If he woke up, things would be fine.

Lucas looked at the man he considered his father in this world. Fury flared in his eyes, his resolve to head into Hell's Kitchen tonight even stronger.

[Ding~ Host's determination detected. System quest issued: Identify the shooter who targeted George Stacy and eliminate their entire gang. Reward: an office on Manhattan Avenue—Devil May Cry.]

"...System, what the hell is this reward?"

Lucas blinked in disbelief. An office? That office?

[Ding~ As a demon hunter, the host requires a base of operations to receive commissions.]

"System, let me ask you again—are you possessed? You've straight-up mistaken me for Dante! An office named Devil May Cry? And what's this about 'taking commissions'?"

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Chapter 7: Hell's Kitchen

Lucas was once again speechless. Did this system have a screw loose? His template was supposed to be Clive Rosfield from Final Fantasy XVI, yet somehow Dante from Devil May Cry kept creeping in.

[Ding~ Accepting supernatural commissions is one of a demon hunter's core duties. It will also increase the host's reputation.]

"Reputation my ass! System, do you not realize that the biggest threat in the Marvel universe is S.H.I.E.L.D.? If I open some flashy 'Devil Hunter Agency,' the best I can hope for is that they don't skin me alive and dissect me in a lab!"

Lucas cursed under his breath. This damn system seemed hellbent on getting him killed.

He wanted to lay low, grind quietly, and build up power step by step. But no—the system wanted him to open a giant neon sign screaming Superpowered Guy Right Here, Come Get Me, Fury!

[Ding~ The strongest demon hunter cannot be defeated by a mere minor threat.]

"I... you... go... to hell..."

Lucas lost it, ranting at the system like a pro keyboard warrior.

[Ding~ Host has verbally insulted the system. All rewards will now be revoked, and binding terminated. The system will search for a new candidate.]

"Daddy, I was wrong!! It was a moment of weakness, I swear! I've reflected deeply on my mistakes—I repent, I reform, I'll never do it again!"

Lucas instantly dropped to his knees in submission. Not because he was spineless—no, he just believed in following his heart. And right now, his heart screamed Don't lose the system!

[Ding~ Considering the host has realized his mistake, this system shall be merciful. However, the agency is non-negotiable. You are grown now, and must face the storms of life yourself. Relying on the system for everything will stunt your growth.]

Lucas almost rolled his eyes out of his skull. Face the storms of life? Buddy, you ARE the storm!

But since resistance was pointless, he had no choice but to accept it. Besides, he needed to hunt down the people behind George's shooting anyway. The "Devil May Cry" office would just be a nice bonus. Owning property in the middle of Manhattan? That was every New Yorker's dream.

He was nearly of age anyway. In the States, most young adults moved out once they hit eighteen—sometimes out of pride, sometimes just to prove independence. Lucas might as well do the same.

Hospitals needed someone to stay with George, so Helen volunteered to remain behind. But the two younger brothers at home still needed care, so she sent Lucas and Gwen back to the house.

The two kids were gnawing on cereal when Lucas and Gwen arrived. Lucas quickly cooked them a proper meal, then sent them off to bed.

"Lucas... do you think Dad's really going to be okay?" Gwen asked, worry in her eyes. She was terrified that George might never wake up.

"Don't worry. He'll be fine. He's been through worse as a cop and survived every time. This won't be any different."

Lucas comforted her until she dozed off on the sofa. After carrying her to bed, he returned to his own room. There, he changed into dark clothes and pulled out a pumpkin mask Gwen had given him for Halloween—the only decent face-covering he had. A cloth or surgical mask would be too easy to rip off. The pumpkin covered his entire head.

When night finally deepened, Lucas slipped out the window to avoid waking anyone.

With his boosted physical strength, it didn't take him long to reach Hell's Kitchen. The place loomed before him like a monster's gaping maw, ready to swallow him whole.

He summoned the Ultima Weapon and crept cautiously toward the heart of the district.

At night, the streets were nearly empty—save for the occasional gang member or some poor soul forced to travel late. Despite its reputation, the area was still brightly lit. Crime central or not, people still lived here.

"Damn it! Where the hell are those punks? If they don't get back soon, I'll beat their asses raw!"

A group of thugs rounded a corner, cursing loudly. Their eyes immediately fell on Lucas and the glowing sword in his hand.

"Hey, kid. Out here all alone at this hour, huh? What's that you got there? Let us take a look."

One thug reached for the blade.

Shing—!

A flash of white. His hand flew through the air, spraying blood.

"AAAAHHH!!" The thug collapsed, clutching the bloody stump, screaming in agony.

"Where's the gang that fought the NYPD today?" Lucas asked coldly, not even sparing him a glance.

"You—you bastard, you just chopped his hand off! Do you even know who we are?!" another thug shouted.

Shing—!

The Ultima Weapon cleaved down again. The loudmouth dropped in two clean halves, dead before he could scream.

The remaining punks fell to the ground in terror. One of them even pissed himself, the stench spreading across the alley.

"P-please! Don't kill me!"

Lucas leveled his blade at him, eyes glinting with icy resolve.

"Where are the ones who fought the police?"

The thug stammered nonsense, unable to answer. Lucas whipped the flat of the blade across his face. Teeth scattered across the ground.

"Clear enough now? Speak!"

The point of the sword hovered at his throat, the cold steel radiating a killing chill that made the thug shiver uncontrollably.

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Marvel Manifestor

"B-big bro... I-I really d-don't know anything... I'm just a nobody... please let me go~!!"

The thug could barely form words, trembling with sheer terror.

"Alright."

Lucas spoke faintly—and with a single slash ended his life.

"Next time, try to be a better man."

He even put the one writhing on the ground out of his misery, cutting him down as well.

Lucas had thought killing would make him uncomfortable, but to his surprise, it felt no different than killing a chicken .

Maybe it was because he had no real attachment to this world. Aside from caring about his family and friends, he felt nothing for strangers.

After leaving three corpses behind, Lucas kept wandering through Hell's Kitchen, aimless.

He considered trying to track down someone like Daredevil or the Punisher, maybe even Kingpin, to dig for answers. But where would he even start? Daredevil was

the easiest—he was a lawyer and ran a practice. But Lucas had no idea where that office was.

"This isn't getting me anywhere."

With a few agile leaps, Lucas landed on the roof of a nearby apartment, scanning the streets below for gang activity.

Sure enough—being higher gave him the advantage. Not far away, dozens of figures were clashing, a mob swarming a lone man.

With his sharp eyesight, Lucas immediately recognized the one being beaten down—Daredevil.

"Well, speak of the devil."

He dashed across rooftops, swiftly closing in on the scene.

Down below, Daredevil was locked in a desperate melee against black-clad figures dressed like ninjas. No guns, no modern weapons—just blades and fists, raw steel against will.

Even Daredevil couldn't hold out forever. Dozens against one was too much, and he was slipping, his defense breaking.

A blade swung down, aimed for his neck—

Clang!

A clear, ringing sound. A crystalline blue sword plunged from the heavens, striking the ground before Daredevil. The ninja's weapon shattered against it instantly.

"Who goes there?!"

The ninjas snapped their heads upward, as did Daredevil.

"I've got a few questions for him. So how about you wait until I'm done before you kill him?"

Lucas's calm voice echoed from above as he leapt down, landing gracefully.

With his strengthened body, such a drop was nothing to him.

"You dare interfere in the affairs of the Hand?!"

The leader stepped forward, clad in silver light armor, his face uncovered unlike the others. This was Xin—disciple of Murakami, and one of the Hand's "Five Fingers."

"Do they ever listen to reason?"

Lucas sighed, glancing at Daredevil with a helpless look.

Daredevil just shrugged silently. Lucas's arrival had given him breathing room—time he badly needed to recover.

"Pumpkinhead, you've made an enemy of the Hand. You won't live long."

Xin's katana flashed, a blur of steel arcing toward Lucas.

Lucas didn't even flinch. He raised the Ultima Weapon and caught the strike with ease, then countered with a slash of his own.

Xin dodged nimbly, his blade flashing again and again, each strike faster than the last.

"Wind Claw!"

Lucas barked the command.

In an instant, spectral talons slashed out before him, ripping through the air with terrifying speed. Xin's armor shredded apart, his chest torn into a mangled mess of blood and flesh.

Boom!

Lucas kicked him away. Xin's body crashed against the wall, his chest nothing but ruined meat. He wasn't getting back up.

"He killed Master Xin! Kill the pumpkinhead!!"

The other ninjas only processed what had happened after Xin's body fell. Rage and fear blended as they charged.

Lucas didn't waste time. Another flurry of Wind Claw shredded through them, ending the fight in moments.

Though blind, Daredevil could feel the storm of slicing wind and hear the screams cut short. His face showed shock—this boy couldn't be more than twenty, yet he had wiped out an entire squad of Hand ninjas with a single move.

"Who exactly are you?" Daredevil asked, voice steady but edged with awe.

His heightened senses told him Lucas's age despite the mask.

"Who I am isn't important. I just have a question for you."

Lucas dismissed the Ultima Weapon and turned toward him. He noticed this Daredevil resembled the version from the Netflix series—one Lucas had always preferred, maybe because of the darker tone and better fight choreography.

"Come with me. This isn't the place to talk."

Daredevil could sense Lucas's lack of hostility. If this kid had wanted him dead, he'd have walked away during the slaughter.

Soon, Lucas followed him into a hidden apartment safehouse. Nobody lived there, so Daredevil used it as a base. No electricity, just pale moonlight streaming through the windows.

"Not bad. Makes for a decent safehouse."

Lucas scanned the room easily despite the dark.

Daredevil chuckled faintly as he lowered himself into a chair, wincing with every move. A normal man with his injuries would be unconscious, but years of battles had left him scarred and stubborn.

"You're hurt. Want me to patch you up?"

Lucas pulled off the pumpkin mask—sweat poured down his face. The thing was suffocating. Not like Daredevil could identify him anyway. Blind or not, the most he could sense was a general outline.

Daredevil stripped off his top, revealing deep cuts across his arms and chest, blood still seeping out.

"If you don't mind. There are supplies in that cabinet."

Lucas grabbed gauze and antiseptic, helping him dress the wounds. For all his frailty, Daredevil's body did heal faster than an ordinary human.

Once patched up, Daredevil sagged against the sofa, careful not to tear open the fresh bandages.

"You said you had questions. What is it?"

"Earlier today, a gang opened fire on the NYPD. Do you know who they are?"

Lucas's tone grew sharp. He was throwing a desperate dart—hoping Daredevil, who lived and bled in Hell's Kitchen, might know.

To his surprise, Daredevil nodded.

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Chapter 9: Midnight Operation

"I heard it on the news—apparently the NYPD commissioner was shot by a gang member and is still in critical condition. Don't tell me..."

As a lawyer, Daredevil instantly pieced together Lucas's identity, guessing it almost perfectly.

Lucas didn't bother hiding it. With someone as uncompromisingly righteous as Daredevil, he wasn't worried about betrayal.

"You guessed right. That's why I need to find them."

His voice was calm, but his intent clear. Daredevil knew exactly what came next—vengeance.

He wasn't naïve. Daredevil himself never killed, not even Kingpin or Madame Gao. He only wanted them in prison. But his refusal to kill didn't mean he'd stop someone else from doing it.

Once Lucas confirmed his suspicions, Daredevil didn't hold back and told him everything he knew.

The men responsible were a local Hell's Kitchen gang, constantly clashing with the Russians and the Mafia. Though Kingpin controlled most of the district, a few independent crews still existed.

This one was run by Adam West—an old-school crime boss from Kingpin's generation. Even Fisk didn't move against him lightly. His business was drugs, and the shootout had happened because of a shipment.

"You know where their base is?" Lucas asked.

The system's mission was to wipe out the entire gang. That meant finding the nest and burning it down.

Daredevil hesitated before nodding.

"I know. But their compound is stockpiled with weapons. Going there alone is suicide."

He clearly didn't want Lucas charging in. Especially knowing Lucas was only eighteen.

Lucas hadn't hidden his age when they exchanged information earlier.

"Go home, kid. Revenge isn't for someone your age, even if you're not normal."

Daredevil's tone softened, almost paternal.

"Don't live in hatred. It'll consume you, blind you, and turn you into a demon who knows only killing."

He was projecting his own story. He too had watched his father die as a teenager and had nearly lost himself down that road.

But Lucas just smiled faintly.

"I get what you're saying. But hatred won't blind me, and it won't corrupt me either. I know that much."

Seeing Lucas unmoved, Daredevil sighed in disappointment.

"Then at least agree to one condition—let me go with you. Do that, and I'll tell you where they are."

Lucas agreed immediately. He understood Daredevil wanted to keep him grounded, but he also welcomed the extra firepower.

Since Daredevil needed time to recover, the two set their meeting for the next night, at the same safehouse, before striking the gang's hideout.

By the time Lucas slipped back home, dawn was already breaking. He climbed quietly through his window, cracked the door open a sliver to check the hall, and then finally collapsed into sleep.

The next day he took his younger brothers to school as usual, then joined Gwen at the hospital. Both had already asked for time off from school, which was readily approved.

George's condition had improved slightly, though he remained unconscious. After Lucas and Gwen had left the previous night, colleagues from the precinct and city hall had come to visit.

Helen told them the NYPD had gotten the gang's location from the captured thug. They were preparing to act in the coming days.

She didn't say what happened to that thug, but Lucas could guess—it wouldn't be pretty.

He nodded. Tonight, he and Daredevil would strike first. Everyone inside would die. None of them were good men anyway. This wasn't China, and they weren't his people—he had no burden.

Sensitive as ever, Gwen noticed something off in Lucas's expression. A strange dread tugged at her chest, though she said nothing.

Lucas spent the day at the hospital. Doctors said George had a good chance of waking up soon. The injuries were serious, but his recovery was unusually fast.

Hearing that, Helen and Gwen both wept in relief.

"Thank God... Dad's going to be okay!" Gwen held George's hand tightly, eyes red with tears.

Lucas just sat on the sofa, lost in thought. He was already running scenarios in his head. Daredevil might not allow him to kill freely. Maybe not allow him to kill at all.

Lucas didn't share Daredevil's views. The "no killing" creed wasn't unique—Batman lived by it too. But sometimes, sparing monsters was crueler than killing them. Leaving them alive often meant worse suffering for the victims.

As night fell, Helen once again insisted Lucas and Gwen return home while she stayed by George's side. The commissioner's private room was like a hotel suite—George's bed, a cot for a caretaker, even its own bathroom.

Back at the house, Gwen went straight to bed, exhausted. Lucas cooked for his two younger brothers, then waited until midnight.

When the house was silent, he dressed in dark clothes and slipped out the window, sprinting across rooftops toward Hell's Kitchen.

What he didn't notice was the faint creak of his bedroom door. A sliver of it pushed open as he vanished into the night.

Lucas arrived at the safehouse quickly. Daredevil was already there, and with him—an unexpected face. The Punisher.

Two men, polar opposites. Daredevil refused to kill. The Punisher lived for it. They didn't belong in the same room, yet here they were.

"Kid, you're the one going after Adam West's mutts?" The Punisher rasped, cleaning his gun.

Lucas nodded. "Yeah. They crossed a line they never should have."

The Punisher studied him, interest glinting in his eyes. "You even know who you're up against?"

Lucas's voice was flat, emotionless. "Just a pack of vermin. Do you bother worrying about what vermin are?"

The Punisher's lips curled into a grin. Then he laughed—a harsh, brutal sound.

"Kid, I like you already."

"You two done?" Daredevil tapped a chair with his baton, the sound waves mapping the room. "It's time to move."

The Punisher strapped on his heavy pack, stuffed with enough guns and ammo to wipe out an army.

Lucas, by contrast, traveled light. He simply reached into his system's space and pulled out the Ultima Weapon.

The Punisher froze mid-motion, eyes narrowing.

"...Where the hell did you pull that sword from?"

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Chapter 10: Vengeance Begins

The Punisher glanced at Lucas again and again, baffled as to how he'd pulled out such a massive sword from nowhere.

"Just a little trick. Don't worry about it," Lucas said flatly. He had no intention of revealing anything.

The Punisher didn't press. He'd only come because Daredevil roped him in—they shared a common target, that was all. And it wasn't even Daredevil who knew the gang's base location. It was him.

The Punisher had been tracking Adam West's crew for a while, about to make his move when Daredevil suggested a team-up. Knowing Daredevil's reputation, he figured it was worth the alliance. What he didn't expect was a kid tagging along.

The three of them moved under cover of night until they reached a pier, its floodlights blazing. A gang of men were unloading cargo from a freighter.

"This is Adam West's stronghold. If I'm right, he's in that warehouse office. Tonight's a deal night," the Punisher muttered, raising a handheld thermal imager.

The screen glowed with orange silhouettes, packed tight inside the warehouse.

"Looks like it's a big one," Daredevil said quietly. Though blind, the racket of the dock painted the scene for him in perfect detail.

"Let's slip inside first, assess the situation," Daredevil suggested. Stealth was his specialty.

They quickly laid out the plan. Daredevil and Lucas would infiltrate the warehouse, while the Punisher positioned himself as sniper support.

Lucas had no real experience with stealth. The Clive Rosfield template he'd inherited thrived on direct confrontation, not sneaking around. He simply followed Daredevil's lead.

The Punisher split off, climbing to an overwatch spot where he could cover every inch of the warehouse.

Inside, Daredevil and Lucas crawled onto the rafters above. Below them, Adam West was shouting from the office window, his hulking figure nearly filling the frame.

"Move your asses! This shipment is special! One mistake, and I'll skin you alive!"

The workers scrambled faster, hefting crate after crate into the warehouse.

Neither Lucas nor Daredevil moved yet. They waited. The Punisher, now in position, whispered through comms:

"I'm set. They've got a few crates left to unload. Wait for it."

"All in good time. Adam's still in the office. When everyone's inside, we strike," Daredevil replied, hand brushing the batons at his hip.

Soon the final crates were stacked, towering high. Adam lumbered out of his office, grabbing a crowbar from a lackey.

"I sunk my whole damn fortune into this shipment. If those bastards don't pay top dollar, I'll send them to God myself!"

He pried open a crate. Inside—bricks of refined, gleaming white powder. No cutting needed. Pure product.

"Ha! Jackpot!" Adam laughed, tearing open a bag and inspecting it like a jeweler admiring diamonds. "Top shelf. Best I've ever seen."

"Where the hell are those buyers? No respect for time..." He spat, tossing the sample down.

"Move in," Daredevil signaled.

"Hold up. The buyers just arrived," the Punisher cut in. A convoy of black cars rolled up to the warehouse doors.

"Finally!" Adam barked, greed flashing in his eyes.

"Check the goods. I don't have time for your bluster," the lead buyer sneered, barely acknowledging Adam.

Murder flared in Adam's gaze.

Daredevil froze at the voice. He knew it well—Nobu, the Hand's assassin.

Lucas recognized him too. He'd already killed Nobu once, but here he was, alive and whole. Clearly the Hand had used the resurrection ritual—the dragon bone.

Lucas glanced at Daredevil, but saw no shock on his face. Daredevil already knew.

"The damn Hand. They're everywhere," Daredevil muttered, signaling the Punisher to be ready.

At his cue, he dropped from the rafters, striking down several ninjas in an instant.

Lucas followed, his massive blade skewering a gang soldier. He ignored the Hand—for now his only target was Adam's crew.

"An ambush?! You think you can rip me off?! I'll wipe you all out!" Adam roared, ordering his men to open fire.

But gunfire only brought death—for his own men.

Crack! Crack! Each shot from the Punisher's rifle dropped a body.

"Sniper!" Adam bellowed, diving for cover.

Meanwhile, Daredevil tangled with the Hand. Lucas waded into the mob of gangsters, sword flashing. Bullets clanged harmlessly against his blade before a green eagle's claw manifested, yanking a knot of men into his reach.

They didn't even have time to scream. The claws shredded them to ribbons in a heartbeat.

Lucas strode through the gore without a glance, slicing down anyone who stood in his way. The Ultima Weapon cut flesh like butter. Not a single one survived, nor did any body remain whole.

Under the Punisher's flawless cover fire, Lucas charged Adam directly. He hacked down every soldier who tried to block him, until nothing stood between them.

One brutal kick sent Adam flying, crashing into crates. Lucas casually dispatched a handful of survivors who tried to rush him.

"You were behind the shootout with NYPD, weren't you?" Lucas's voice was like ice.

Adam struggled to rise, seething. "Kid... you have any idea who you're messing with? Do you know who I am?!"

"I asked you—was it your men?"

Lucas blurred forward, seizing Adam's arm—and snapped it clean.

Crack!

"AAHHHH!!" Adam's scream filled the warehouse as he collapsed in agony.

"Now... can you understand my question?"

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