

Marvel Manifestor

Chapter 101 - 101 – Unlocking the Summon: Ramuh

Far away in Bavaria, night had already fallen. Inside a small inn, Wanda finally stirred awake. The moment she saw Lucas safe and sound, she threw herself into his arms and began to cry uncontrollably.

Lucas, at a complete loss for what to do, awkwardly patted her back in comfort. After a long bout of tears, Wanda finally drifted back to sleep again—but even in her slumber, her hands clung tightly to Lucas's shirt.

Having no choice, Lucas lay down beside her. The two of them spent the night like that, quietly leaning against each other until dawn.

When morning came, Wanda was the first to wake. Seeing Lucas still asleep next to her, she finally relaxed. Her eyes lingered on his face, and after a moment's hesitation, she reached out to lightly touch his cheek.

Lucas stirred at the contact, blinking awake. Wanda quickly pulled her hand back, flustered and embarrassed.

"You're awake," he said softly, his voice still hoarse with sleep. "Feeling any better?"

Wanda nodded. "Much better. What... what happened yesterday?"

She had no memory of the events after Lucas was riddled with bullets.

Lucas briefly recounted everything that had happened and also explained his extraordinary healing ability.

"Go wash up," he said, running a hand through his messy hair that looked like a bird's nest. "I'll go get you some clothes."

Wanda smiled faintly at the sight of his disheveled appearance before heading to the bathroom.

Lucas stepped out into the street, still half asleep, searching for a women's clothing shop. It wasn't until he walked in that he realized—he had no idea what size Wanda wore.

"Great. What am I even doing here..." he muttered under his breath.

He could only use Gwen and Skye as rough references. Wanda's figure, however, was even better than both of theirs, so he went a size larger—better safe than sorry.

Lucas wasn't entirely clueless about women's fashion; after all, he'd often accompanied Gwen and Skye shopping. Aside from the undergarments, he picked out a red dress and a matching crimson jacket—because honestly, what else would suit the Scarlet Witch better than red?

Under the curious gaze of the shop clerk, Lucas left the store carrying several bags. On his way back, a familiar chime echoed in his mind.

> [Ding~ Congratulations, Host, for completing the mission "Rescue the Scarlet Witch." Reward: Summon Unlocked — Ramuh, and corresponding skill set.]

The moment the system notification faded, a streak of lightning flashed across Lucas's eyes, and he felt a surge of blue electrical energy merge with his magic—he had just gained the Lightning element.

Unable to contain his excitement, Lucas literally jumped in place, startling a young couple walking by.

"Sweetheart, hurry! That guy's a lunatic!" the girl whispered, tugging her boyfriend away.

"You're the lunatic! Your whole family's lunatics!" Lucas yelled after them, but the two only ran faster.

Everyone else on the street quickly gave him a wide berth. Lucas scratched the back of his head awkwardly, wishing he could turn invisible, then hurried back to the inn.

The moment he opened the door, Wanda stepped out of the bathroom—wearing nothing but a towel, her wet hair dripping and carrying the faint scent of apples.

Lucas froze. His eyes went wide. He'd expected Wanda to have a good figure—but not this good. She could easily rival Natasha.

Wanda's face flushed red under his gaze.

"Have you stared enough?" she asked softly.

Lucas coughed, quickly averting his eyes. "Uh... clothes. I bought clothes. They might be a bit small, but you can make do for now."

"Are you going to... watch me change?" she asked teasingly.

"Ah? Can I?" he blurted before he could stop himself.

"Sure~" Wanda said with a mischievous smile.

Lucas instantly felt his mouth go dry. Seeing the blush creeping up Wanda's cheeks, he panicked.

"Uh—I'll, uh, go wash up! You, uh, take your time!"

He darted into the bathroom like a startled monkey.

Wanda couldn't help but laugh softly, though her own cheeks burned crimson at her own daring words.

She checked the clothes—indeed, the underwear was a bit small, but barely wearable. The red dress fit surprisingly well, and with the jacket on, it looked perfect. She loved the color; it suited her beautifully.

Meanwhile, in the bathroom, Lucas was struggling. His mind kept replaying the image of Wanda with her damp hair and bare shoulders. Desperate to distract himself, he focused on the system's reward.

He had unlocked a new summon—Ramuh, the Lord of Lightning, a being capable of commanding thunder and even altering weather itself.

Ramuh appeared as a robed old man wielding a staff, his body wreathed in lightning. In the original game, Ramuh was powerful enough to halt the protagonist's berserk state and bring him back to his senses—a truly formidable summon.

Once he familiarized himself with Ramuh's energy, Lucas relaxed in the bath with a satisfied grin.

Originally, he had planned to use the Chocobo Space to teleport straight back to the office, but since Wanda wasn't an employee, she couldn't enter. His mount, Onion, could only carry one person, so for now, they had to stay at the inn.

"If only I had a mount that could carry two..." Lucas sighed. "Would make things so much easier."

After his bath, Lucas stepped out—only to freeze again.

Wanda stood before the mirror, dressed in the red outfit he'd picked. She turned toward him with a smile.

"How do I look?"

Lucas's breath caught. "Beautiful. I've got great taste," he said—though it wasn't clear if he meant the dress or the woman wearing it.

Wanda blushed but smiled sweetly, clearly pleased.

The two spent the day strolling through the little town, looking for food and supplies. It almost felt... like a date.

That evening, as they sat in the inn's dining room enjoying dinner, Lucas asked quietly, "Wanda, what are your plans next?"

The question caught her off guard. She looked up at him, her eyes misting over.

"You... you're not leaving me, are you?"

Lucas immediately waved his hands. "No, no! I just meant—what do you want to do from now on?"

Wanda sniffled, her lips trembling before she smiled faintly. "Wherever you go... I'll go too."

Lucas let out a long sigh. Great. How am I supposed to explain this when I get back? Gwen and Skye will kill me...

He could already feel the headache coming.

Meanwhile, back in S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters, Nick Fury sat grim-faced at his desk amid chaos. Agents were being interrogated left and right, and the entire building was in lockdown.

Suddenly, an agent burst into his office.

"Director! We've found a lead on Lucas!"

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## **Chapter 102 - 102 – They’ve Found Lucas**

"Director, we've got a lead on Lucas!"

Coulson strode quickly toward Nick Fury, tablet in hand.

Fury glanced up at him, saying nothing.

Coulson immediately opened the video file on the tablet and played it.

The footage, captured via satellite, was grainy—but the devastation it showed left no doubt who was responsible.

A massive meteor plummeted from the sky, crashing straight into a mountain and obliterating the entire peak in a blinding explosion.

"Are you sure?" Fury asked, his single eye narrowing.

Coulson nodded. "Almost certain. The satellite data indicates the meteor didn't fall from outer space—it appeared out of nowhere in midair."

Fury grunted. "Has the video's authenticity been verified?"

"Tony Stark provided it himself," Coulson said. "The footage came from a Stark Industries satellite."

The moment Fury heard that, he knew it couldn't be fake. Tony might be arrogant, but he wasn't sloppy.

After learning that Lucas had gone missing, Tony had immediately activated all Stark Industries satellites, scanning the globe nonstop for any signs of him.

But Tony was clever—he didn't look for Lucas directly. Instead, he had J.A.R.V.I.S. compile every unusual or large-scale event happening worldwide, then cross-reference them against Lucas's previous over-the-top displays of power. After multiple rounds of filtering, J.A.R.V.I.S. finally found the meteor strike video.

Tony recognized it at a glance—the same type of meteor Lucas could summon, one he'd always wanted to study.

He sent two copies of the video out—one to Skye, and another to Coulson.

After both Skye and Gwen confirmed that it had to be Lucas, Tony began suiting up.

"J.A.R.V.I.S., prep the Mark armor. We're going to Bavaria."

"Right away, sir."

Robotic arms rose from the floor, fastening sleek armor plates onto his body.

"Suit-up complete. All systems stable. Energy levels at one hundred percent. Have a safe flight, sir."

"Thanks, J.A.R.V.I.S. Set destination."

A glowing marker appeared on his HUD map. The next second, Iron Man blasted into the sky.

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Meanwhile, the Parker household had also received news of Lucas's possible location. But the worry hadn't eased—especially not for Helen.

The commotion surrounding the search hadn't escaped her notice, particularly the sudden decision to pull Gwen and Skye out of school.

In the end, George had to tell her the truth.

Helen listened quietly, surprisingly calm. She smiled faintly. "He'll be fine. A mother just knows."

Among everyone, she was the calmest. Gwen and Skye, on the other hand, checked the Chocobo Space every few hours, hoping to see Lucas return.

Each time they looked, Onion—their loyal Chocobo—was still dozing peacefully in its pen. That alone was reassuring; if Onion hadn't been summoned, it meant Lucas wasn't in immediate danger.

Normally, Onion fought alongside Lucas in every major battle. This was the only exception.

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Bavaria

Lucas was currently brooding in frustration. He'd been dragged here by Hydra, and without proper entry papers, there was no way to leave legally. His passport was gone, and even worse—his phone had been destroyed. Wanda didn't have one either.

At least money wasn't a problem; Lucas had a habit of stashing cash in his system backpack.

"Damn it... what was the home number again?"

He racked his brain but couldn't recall. Gwen's and Skye's cell numbers? Not a chance—too many digits to memorize.

"I'm such an idiot," he groaned, stabbing at his steak with his fork. "Playing double-agent with Hydra? I should've just trashed those bastards at the office when I had the chance. Total miscalculation!"

He glared at his plate. "Next time I start getting clever, I swear I'll bark like a dog. A mutt!"

He bit into the steak with renewed fury, silently vowing: No more tricks. If I can fight my way through, I fight my way through.

"Just you wait, you little moogle," he muttered darkly. "Hydra agents walked right into the agency, and you didn't even fart in alarm. When I get back, I'm selling your stupid staff and that ridiculous crown!"

Sitting across from him, Wanda could feel the simmering storm of resentment radiating from him.

"Lucas... what's wrong?" she asked softly. "I can feel this... strange energy around you. Did something happen?"

"Oh, nothing," Lucas said quickly, reining in his irritation. "Just thinking about a few things. Eat up."

Still, he couldn't help marveling inwardly at how sensitive her power was. Even now, with her Chaos Magic still unstable, she could sense emotional fluctuations so clearly. No wonder it was one of the Three Primordial Powers—and the only one not born at the dawn of the universe, yet equal to the others.

In the Marvel Universe, the Three Primordial Powers were said to be:

The Phoenix Force, the embodiment of all spiritual energy;

The Chaos Force, capable of rewriting reality itself;

The Faerie Force, a mysterious power that devoured everything in existence.

The Faerie Force was the most obscure—its appearances few but catastrophic, capable of consuming even the Phoenix itself.

The Phoenix Force, on the other hand, was the source of all psychic power across the multiverse. Countless beings had inherited fragments of it, but none had ever possessed it completely—not even the famous Jean Grey.

The Chaos Force was unique. Unlike the others, it wasn't born with the cosmos. It originated from one of the four elder gods created by the Demiurge: Chthon, the dark god of death and chaos.

The Demiurge had created four gods—Gaea, Set, Oshtur, and Chthon. Over time, Chthon fell into corruption, becoming the first god of darkness and thus birthing the Chaos Force.

It was from this same Chaos Force that all black magic in the Marvel universe derived. Even Dormammu, the Dread Lord of the Dark Dimension, had once borrowed Chthon's power.

Eventually, Gaea sealed Chthon away in another dimension—but his influence endured. It was his attempt to return to Earth that led to the creation of Wanda Maximoff and her brother Pietro.

And now, one of those heirs sat before Lucas—unaware that her awakening powers were stirring forces older than the universe itself.

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Chapter 103 - 103 – Tony Arrives

"By the way, Wanda, are you sure you don't know a guy named Pietro? Silver-haired, kind of cocky?"

Lucas looked at her curiously. That's your twin brother, for crying out loud.

Wanda frowned and shook her head. "No, never heard of him. And that name... doesn't sound very nice. Is he supposed to be someone important?"

Lucas froze. What the hell? No Pietro? No Quicksilver? What kind of Marvel world was this?

"Did your adoptive parents ever mention you having a brother or anything?" he asked again.

Still, she shook her head. "No. They told me they found me alone when I was little."

That didn't add up. In the original timeline, Wanda and Pietro had been raised together before being handed to that gypsy couple.

If she was found alone, where did Pietro go? Did someone separate them on purpose?

Lucas's thoughts jumped to the X-Men universe. In that world, there was a Quicksilver named Pietro—also Magneto's son, just like Wanda.

"Wait... don't tell me this world split them up—different adoptive parents, different fates?" he muttered.

Could this universe actually have mutants?

He'd lived here for over twenty years and had never once heard the term "mutant" used seriously. He'd always assumed this reality was closer to the MCU version—no mutants, no X-gene. But now? He wasn't so sure.

He even remembered that first meeting with Nick Fury, when the man had taken his blood sample just to check whether he was a mutant.

"Guess I'll have to look into this when we get back," Lucas murmured to himself. If Pietro really existed here, he needed to find him—and reunite the siblings.

After dinner, Lucas and Wanda strolled through the little Bavarian town. With no identification or travel documents, they had no choice but to stay in the same small inn as before—one of the few that didn't require ID.

The town thrived on tourism, filled with friendly locals and a steady flow of visitors. There was a peaceful, almost storybook charm to it: no noise, no deadlines, no urban stress—just good coffee, laughter, and cobblestone streets.

Lucas wasn't a coffee drinker, though. He sipped water while Wanda enjoyed her espresso. "Tea here tastes worse than dishwater," he muttered.

Then suddenly—

A streak of light blazed across the midday sky, leaving a fiery tail behind it.

"Wait a second..." Lucas squinted upward. "That looks awfully like Tony, that old bastard."

He chuckled. No way. Stark wouldn't fly halfway across Europe just to—

But before he could finish the thought, a reflection flickered in his water glass—something fast, metallic, and rapidly enlarging.

BOOM!

A gold-and-red figure slammed into the ground just a few meters away, landing in the classic superhero crouch and shattering the paving stones beneath his boots.

"Damn it, J.A.R.V.I.S.—remind me to boost retro-thrust on landings by another ten percent," came a familiar, irritated voice.

"Noted, sir," replied J.A.R.V.I.S. dryly.

Lucas stared, dumbfounded.

Iron Man straightened up, brushed the dust from his armor, and turned toward him.

"Well, well," Tony Stark drawled, faceplate sliding open to reveal that trademark smirk. "Here I thought you were being tortured in some Hydra dungeon—and you're over here flirting in the Alps. If I'd known you were this comfy, I wouldn't have rushed over. Hope I didn't interrupt your date, huh?"

Wanda blinked, startled.

Tony gave her an appreciative once-over and grinned wider. "Gotta hand it to you, kid—you've got great taste. She's gorgeous. Not gonna introduce me?"

He swaggered over and plopped down beside Lucas, one arm slinging casually around his shoulders like an old drinking buddy.

"Get off me, you tin can," Lucas said, rolling his eyes. "You took your sweet time getting here. Hydra almost turned me into a lab rat."

Tony raised a brow. "Hydra? As in the Hydra? I swear I read about them in my dad's old journals. Didn't Captain America wipe them out decades ago?"

Lucas snorted. "He wiped out a branch. The rest of those snakes just went underground. And get this—they actually had the balls to kidnap me. So yeah, I turned them into ashes. They picked the wrong guy to mess with."

Tony laughed. "Classic. So—who's the lady?"

Lucas gestured toward Wanda, who sat quietly sipping her coffee, trying to make sense of the bizarre reunion.

"This is Wanda Maximoff," Lucas said simply. "Hydra kidnapped her too. She's got nowhere to go right now, so I'm taking her back to the agency."

Tony froze mid-motion. His eyes widened.

"Hold up. You already live with two women, and now you're bringing home a third? You trying to die young? Buddy, I say this with love—your heart's not gonna survive that much cardio. You want me to hook you up with something to help with recovery? Lab-tested, Stark-approved."

Lucas glared. "I don't need your stupid supplements! You think I'm some fragile old man? I'm built for endurance!"

Tony raised an eyebrow, smirking. "Sure, sure. Everyone says that until they're running on fumes. Look, no offense, but even a bull can't plow three fields forever. You're not a bulldozer, man."

"Excuse me?!" Lucas slammed his glass down. "I'm in top shape, thank you very much. Unlike you, grandpa—your engine's about to blow a gasket."

Tony's grin widened mischievously. "Wait, wait—did you just say brand new engine? Don't tell me... the two lovely ladies at home and you still haven't—"

Lucas's face darkened instantly.

Tony gasped theatrically. "No way. You mean you haven't even—oh my god. You're one of those guys? Should I call a doctor? I know specialists—"

"Shut the hell up!" Lucas barked, half-standing.

Tony scooted his chair closer to Wanda, eyes gleaming with mock horror. He curled his finger teasingly in the air. "So what is it then? You... swing the other way?"

Wanda blinked, caught between confusion and amusement.

Both of them were now staring at Lucas, who was seconds away from exploding.

"Tony," Lucas said dangerously, standing up as his hand appeared at his side. "You'd better start running, because if I catch you—"

A flash of light.

SHING!

Lucas's Ultimate Divine Blade materialized in his hand, the edge humming with power as he pointed it straight at Tony.

Tony gulped, his smirk faltering for once.

"..J.A.R.V.I.S., maybe boost the thrusters to maximum," he muttered.

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## Chapter 104 - 104 – Back to New York

BOOM!

Tony shot straight into the air, hovering several meters above the ground. One more second and his precious armor would've been in pieces courtesy of a certain sword-swinging maniac.

"J.A.R.V.I.S., start a new project file. Code name—Anti-Karl Armor."

"Understood, sir. New file created."

Down below, Karl waved his Ultimate Divine Blade and shouted, "Get down here, you coward!"

Tony shouted back through his helmet speakers, "Come up here if you've got the guts!"

And so they stayed like that—one in the air, one on the ground—hurling taunts at each other for nearly ten minutes until Karl's throat went dry. The man finally gave up, mostly because Tony's armor had built-in loudspeakers and his voice drowned out everything else.

The townsfolk and tourists, on the other hand, had the show of their lives. Everyone already knew that Tony Stark was Iron Man, so instead of panicking, they crowded around taking photos. Some even lined up for autographs.

Tony, of course, was all smiles—signing shirts, posing for selfies, and playing the charming billionaire superhero to perfection.

When the crowd finally dispersed, he plopped back down beside Karl.

"So," Tony said, "when are you heading home? Your little family's been going crazy."

Karl shrugged. "Not like I don't want to. But Hydra destroyed my passport, and my phone's MIA. I can't even call home. If I didn't have a few emergency bills in my pocket, I'd be begging for food by now."

Tony gave him a solemn nod of sympathy—then immediately smirked. "Yeah, you look real miserable. Stuck in a scenic town with a gorgeous girl like Wanda keeping you company. Be honest, you two been... you know...?"

"Get lost! Not everyone's as degenerate as you."

"Hey! I'm not degenerate, I'm passionate! You, my friend, are what we call a coward. Do me a favor—don't ever tell people you know me. I've got a reputation to uphold. I once spent a year dating nothing but magazine cover girls."

Karl rolled his eyes. "And now look at you. Pepper gives you one glare, and you're housebroken. Don't act like you're still the king of playboys."

Tony's face turned a lovely shade of purple. Ever since he'd officially gotten together with Pepper, he hadn't so much as looked at another woman. The reformed bad boy act was real, but still—being called whipped stung his pride.

"You say one more word, and I'm leaving you here. Figure out your own way home," Tony threatened.

Karl immediately clung to his leg with a sheepish grin. "Don't, don't, I was kidding! Come on, Mr. Stark, you're a big-hearted man, don't stoop to my level!"

Tony's helmet eyes flickered blue. "My armor records everything, by the way. That little begging act? Caught in 4K."

Karl's face froze. "You sneaky old bastard!"

He jumped up, fuming. "Don't get cocky! I've got recordings of your embarrassing moments too! Remember the Middle East? I kept everything on video. Guess who's got leverage now?"

Tony's expression instantly darkened. That was not a story he wanted public.

"Nice try. Your phone's gone, remember? No phone, no footage." Tony smirked smugly.

Karl's lips curled into a devious smile. "Ever heard of backups?"

Tony's grin faltered. "...Fine. Let's make a deal. I delete your video, you delete mine. Truce?"

"Deal. But you delete yours first."

Tony did so with suspiciously quick efficiency. "Done. Now yours."

Karl nodded cheerfully. "Sure thing."

Yeah, right.

Karl's inner voice practically cackled. Like hell I'm deleting it. That footage's staying with me till the grave.

Meanwhile, Tony was thinking the exact same thing. Delete? Please. I went to MIT, kid—I keep backups of my backups. You think you can outfox Tony Stark?

Both men leaned back, smug and satisfied, each secretly convinced he'd outplayed the other.

Meanwhile, Wanda quietly finished her coffee, sensing through her Chaos energy that both of them were lying through their teeth.

Tony stood and stretched. "My private jet's already on its way. Let's hit the airport. We'll be in New York in a few hours."

Then he activated his thrusters and shot into the sky.

"I'll be waiting at the terminal! Don't be late!"

He vanished in a roar of turbines, leaving Karl shouting after him.

"You old traitor! What about us, huh?! You know how far the airport is? Tony! You absolute fossil!"

But Tony was long gone, a red-and-gold streak against the horizon.

Wanda rubbed her temples. "You two are like children. Fully grown, yet hopelessly immature."

With no luggage to worry about, they caught a taxi straight to the airport.

At the terminal, Karl barely had time to ask about Tony before a stunning flight attendant appeared.

"Mr. Karl Norman?" she said sweetly.

"That's me."

"Mr. Stark is waiting for you and Ms. Maximoff in the VIP lounge. Please follow me."

They followed her through the private corridor, where Karl immediately spotted Tony lounging on a sofa, legs crossed, chatting up a glamorous woman while nibbling on pastries.

The woman slipped him a small note as she left, winking on her way out.

Karl folded his arms. "Unbelievable. You never stop, do you? I should tell Pepper."

"Pfft." Tony rolled his eyes. "Like that trick still works on me. Nice try."

Hours passed as they bickered and traded insults. Finally, the jet touched down in New York.

After a long nap in the air, Karl opened his eyes to see the familiar skyline outside the window.

At the airport, Gwen and Skye were already waiting—with Pepper beside them.

The instant Karl stepped off the plane, two figures threw themselves into his arms.

"Hey, hey, I'm fine," he murmured, smiling as he wiped their tears. "See? Not a scratch. Nobody in this world can take me down."

Then Wanda appeared behind him, stepping off the plane. Her eyes met Gwen's and Skye's at the same moment.

The air froze. Three pairs of eyes locked—sparks practically crackling in the silence.

Tony took one look at Karl's face and sighed.

"Buddy," he said, patting his shoulder solemnly, "you're screwed."

Then he turned, slipping an arm around Pepper with a grin.

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Chapter 105 - 105 – Where Is the Vibranium?

"Looks like Karl's in trouble again?" Pepper said with a knowing smile.

Tony grinned wickedly. "Oh, definitely. This is gonna be fun to watch."

With that, he wrapped his arm around Pepper and headed for the car, leaving another one behind—clearly meant to pick Karl up.

"Let's go home first," Karl said helplessly, sensing an impending storm. "I'll explain everything once we're there."

The ride back was painfully tense. Karl sat stiffly, while the three girls—Gwen, Skye, and Wanda—stared at each other in frosty silence the entire way.

When they finally arrived at the office, George and Helen were already waiting. The moment Helen saw her son, she ran straight into his arms.

"You're safe... thank goodness you're safe..." she repeated, tears welling in her eyes. No matter how strong a mother pretends to be, she can't hide her worry.

George, however, crossed his arms and frowned. "Now explain. How the hell does my son—a walking disaster of power—get himself kidnapped?"

Everyone in the family knew exactly what Karl was capable of. The idea that someone could abduct him sounded absurd.

Karl scratched his head awkwardly. "Well... it's kind of a long story. Actually, it's sort of my fault..."

So he told them everything—from the Hydra trap to Wanda's rescue—leaving out no detail.

By the time he finished, everyone was stunned. Hearing Wanda's story, they couldn't help feeling sympathetic. Helen immediately decided the girl could stay at the office as long as she liked, and even Gwen and Skye dropped their earlier hostility.

Before long, Helen had whisked all three girls off for a "girls' shopping day," leaving Karl and George alone in the office, staring each other down.

Then George let loose.

"You! I swear you're nothing like me. Who plans something that dumb?! 'Go along with their trap,' seriously? With your power, you could've flattened them in seconds! Instead, you got knocked out by a few tranquilizer darts! From now on, don't tell anyone you're my son—I have a reputation to protect!"

George's voice thundered through the office. As the NYPD Commissioner, he'd commanded countless operations—yet somehow raised a son who thought "going undercover" against Hydra was a good idea.

Karl shrank in his chair like a guilty schoolboy, wishing he could sink into the floor. Looking back now, he wanted to smack his past self. Who in their right mind tried to "outsmart" Hydra with a fake plan? One dose of sedative later, and bam—lights out. What a disgrace.

He mentally vowed that next time, there'd be no fancy schemes, no clever tricks—just overwhelming firepower. Conspiracy or not, absolute strength crushed everything.

That night, the family finally sat down for a long-overdue dinner. Laughter filled the room again, the air light and warm.

George and Helen eventually decided to move back to their own house—it was closer to the younger kids' school, and leaving it empty for too long wasn't ideal.

Karl reluctantly agreed, but only on the condition that if anything happened, they'd return to the apartment immediately. It was, after all, the safest place in the city.

No one disagreed. With Karl guarding it—and now both Skye and Wanda living there—the apartment might as well have been a fortress.

Speaking of Wanda, when Karl told everyone about her power, jaws dropped all around the table. The Chaos Force, as he explained, could literally rewrite reality. If she ever lost control, she could erase the entire planet.

Compared to that, Skye's vibration powers suddenly seemed... quaint.

That mention of Skye reminded Karl of something important—something he'd completely forgotten amid the chaos and Tony's teasing.

Vibranium.

He needed to find it.

Pulling out his phone, Karl immediately called Tony.

Tony was in his workshop, surrounded by glowing holograms and half-assembled armor plates. He was tinkering with a new idea—portable armor. He couldn't exactly go grocery shopping in full Iron Man gear, after all.

He took a sip of his murky green chlorophyll shake and grimaced. "God, this stuff is vile. Jarvis, there has to be* a better supplement than this."

"I'm afraid not, sir," J.A.R.V.I.S. replied smoothly. "Chlorophyll remains the most effective countermeasure for your current palladium toxicity."

"Fine, fine. You win," Tony muttered, rubbing his chest. The veins around his arc reactor were turning dark again—a reminder of the poison slowly spreading through him.

He acted nonchalant, but the truth was, the fear of dying gnawed at him. That's why he'd quietly handed Stark Industries over to Pepper, promoting her to CEO. She thought it was about trust; he knew it was about legacy.

He'd even transferred access to the Mark II armor to Rhodes—passing on the Iron Man mantle, just in case.

His grim thoughts were interrupted by a call.

"Karl? What's up?"

Tony kept working, tools whirring as he spoke.

"Got a quick question," Karl said. "How much do you know about Captain America's shield?"

Tony froze. "That's... random. Why?"

"Just curious. You know anything about the material?"

Tony frowned, recalling faint memories. "Not much. My dad wrote about it in his old notes—it's made of something called Vibranium. Why?"

Karl leaned back. "You've heard of Vibranium, huh?"

"Sure. Super rare. Practically unobtainable. Even I can't get any." Tony turned a wrench absently. "Why the sudden interest?"

Karl explained, "You know Skye's power—it takes a toll on her body. I'm thinking of making her a pair of bracers from Vibranium to absorb the impact."

Tony whistled. "Nice thought. I'll keep an eye out, but don't get your hopes up. Even I don't have a source. Maybe S.H.I.E.L.D. does."

"Got it," Karl said. "Thanks."

He hung up, sighing. Great. Back to dealing with those people again. Every encounter with S.H.I.E.L.D. meant headaches and paperwork.

He rubbed his temples, muttering, "Now what was that arms dealer's name again... the one who smuggled Vibranium?"

He tried to recall the movie—something about Black Panther—but honestly, he'd slept through half of it.

"Should've forced myself to stay awake," he groaned. "Now I can't even remember the damn guy's name."

Shaking his head, Karl sighed deeply. "Guess I'll have to start from scratch."

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## Chapter 106 - 106 – The Hearing

For three whole days, Lucas hadn't seen Natasha once. He'd been wanting to ask her about the Vibranium situation, but there hadn't been a single chance. He definitely wasn't going to call that one-eyed spymaster again—last time he talked to Fury, he ended up getting kidnapped to Bavaria by Hydra. No way was he risking another "mysterious mission" phone call.

In the meantime, Gwen and Skye had somehow become inseparable from Wanda. The three were close in age, lived together, and now spent nearly every moment in each other's company.

"Wanda, take a picture of yourself and put it up on the board," Lucas said, pointing to the wall where photos of the agency's members hung.

"Got it," Wanda nodded.

"I'll take it for you!" Gwen said brightly, grabbing the camera.

Click!

The flash went off, and a moment later the photo slid out.

"Here you go—your turn to put it up."

Wanda carefully pressed the picture next to Gwen's. It stuck perfectly to the wall.

At that moment, Lucas heard a familiar chime in his head.

> [Ding—Congratulations, Host! You've recruited a new staff member.]

And then... nothing.

"That's it? No reward? You think you can freeload off me?" Lucas snapped.

The system ignored him completely, silent as ever.

"Figures," Lucas muttered. He'd long stopped expecting consistent behavior from that bipolar AI.

Later that day, Lucas was slouched on the couch binge-watching dramas while the three girls gathered around Moguri—his adorable "piglet" companion. Ever since Wanda gained the ability to see the little creature, she too had been completely captivated by its chubby charm.

Just then, Natasha walked through the door, looking utterly exhausted. She dropped onto the couch like she'd just crawled out of a war zone.

"Where've you been the last few days? Not a word from you," Lucas asked curiously.

She rubbed her temples. "Don't even get me started. It's because of your kidnapping. Turns out the guy who took you was a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent. Fury thought there were traitors inside, so he locked down the entire headquarters until they were all caught."

Her tone was drained, her voice weary.

"So you caught them already? That was fast," Lucas said dryly.

Inwardly, he rolled his eyes. Yeah right. S.H.I.E.L.D. was practically Hydra with a new logo. If anything, they were probably rounding up the real S.H.I.E.L.D. agents among the traitors.

But he didn't say that aloud. Let them keep their illusions—he wasn't going to spoil the fun.

"Most of them," Natasha said. "The lockdown was lifted this morning. I haven't slept properly in days. I'm going upstairs to crash—don't bother me unless the world's ending."

Dragging her feet, she disappeared into her apartment.

In truth, S.H.I.E.L.D. had been gutted. Dozens of lower-level agents had been arrested, and even some mid-level officers had been exposed as Hydra moles. Only the senior agents were cleared—though that was precisely because Alexander Pierce wanted it that way. He'd sacrificed the expendable pawns to protect Hydra's elite.

Life quickly settled back into routine. Lucas mostly stayed home or at the office; his only real social circle consisted of Skye and Wanda—Natasha occasionally stopped by for coffee or a mission debrief.

Gwen and Peter were back at college, now sophomores. They'd start internships soon, but that was already handled—Pepper had arranged for them to intern at Stark Industries. Having that name on their record would skyrocket their credentials. After all, not everyone got to say they worked for the world's most powerful tech company.

Then Lucas's phone rang. It was Tony.

"Yo, what's up, Stark?"

"Hey, buddy. You free tomorrow? Want to tag along to a Pentagon hearing with me?"

Tony twirled a subpoena between his fingers. The Pentagon wanted him to attend a hearing at ten a.m. to "discuss" the ownership of the Iron Man suits.

Lucas raised a brow. "A hearing? Let me guess—it's about your armor?"

"Bingo," Tony grumbled. "Those self-serving politicians think they can just take my suits. They're calling it a 'discussion,' but what they really want is to nationalize Iron Man tech. Typical bureaucratic theft."

Lucas smirked. "Ah, so it's that part of the story. The Iron Man 2 arc, huh? You sure you're feeling okay? Not seeing any glowing veins yet?"

Tony didn't catch the reference, still ranting. "It's ridiculous. I built that tech myself. Never shared the blueprints, never sold the designs—it's mine. And now they want to 'review' it? Dirty politics, my friend. The dirtiest kind."

Lucas shrugged. "Fine, I've got nothing better to do. I'll come with you. Always wanted to see what the Pentagon looks like from the inside."

"Perfect. Oh, and if things go south, you've got my back, right? I'm not wearing the suit tomorrow, so you're my bodyguard for the day."

Lucas groaned. "So that's what this is about. You're dragging me along as your muscle. What about Happy? Isn't he your official babysitter?"

"Happy's head of corporate security now," Tony replied smugly. "He's in charge of protecting Pepper. So... you in or not?"

"Fine, fine, I'm in."

"Good! Knew I could count on you. See you tomorrow."

The line went dead.

Lucas glared at his phone. "Unbelievable. The man could buy his own army, but no—he calls me to play bodyguard."

The next morning, Tony and Lucas arrived punctually at the Pentagon hearing. Just like in the movie, the chamber was packed—a massive hall lined with journalists, military brass, and grim-faced officials. At the center sat a particularly smug senator, the one leading the charge to "reclaim" Iron Man's technology for the government. Of course, Lucas knew he was really a Hydra operative in disguise.

The air buzzed with tension as Tony strutted to his seat, confidence radiating off him like a spotlight. Lucas plopped down beside him with a tub of popcorn, ready to enjoy the show.

The officials on the dais frowned in unison.

"Who is that man?" one of them barked. "This is a classified government hearing, not some circus! Remove that civilian immediately!"

Security moved toward Lucas—who only grinned wider, leaning back in his chair, perfectly at ease.

## Chapter 107 - 107 – Morocco

Lucas wasn't about to indulge that pompous senator. He gave the man a cold, dismissive glance, then calmly set his bucket of popcorn on the table and started eating, clearly treating the whole hearing as a movie.

"So this is a hearing, right? Why hasn't it started yet? My time's very valuable," Tony said with a smirk, also munching popcorn as if he were at a comedy show.

"Ahem! We'll now begin the hearing," the senator declared, his tone full of self-importance. "In light of the fact that Tony Stark is in possession of a weapon of mass destruction, Congress has voted unanimously that the Iron Man armor must be surrendered to the United States government. Such technology, in private hands, poses a grave threat to public safety. Only under government control can it cease to endanger society!"

Tony let out a dry laugh. The man sure knew how to spin things—he'd turned Iron Man into a national threat with just a few words.

"A threat?" Tony scoffed. "I'm the superhero who protects New York. I stand for justice. My armor belongs to me and me alone—no one can take it from me, and no one can replicate it. I am Iron Man!"

He rose to his feet, spreading his arms wide as cameras flashed around the room.

"Order! Order!" the senator bellowed, his face dark with anger. "This is a hearing, not a circus!"

Tony's attitude clearly humiliated him. The senator clenched his fists. "Very well, let's call our first witness—Colonel James Rhodes!"

Rhodey entered the chamber and took a seat a few chairs away from Tony.

"Colonel Rhodes," the senator began in a booming voice, "do you recognize the man seated at the center?"

"Yes, Senator. I know him," Rhodey replied firmly.

"Then tell us, Colonel—what's your assessment of Mr. Stark's Iron Man armor? Would you say it qualifies as a weapon of mass destruction?"

The senator's smirk showed he already knew the answer he wanted.

"I don't think so, sir," Rhodey said flatly. "If it were, it'd look a lot different—maybe a shoulder-mounted cannon, heavy machine guns, missile pods stacked head to toe. But that's not what Stark built."

"Very well," the senator interrupted. "Then please direct your attention to this footage."

The big screen flickered to life, showing a video of Iron Man's mid-air clash with two fighter jets—the same incident from his return flight over the Middle East.

Tony's eyes narrowed. Where the hell did he get that? That video shouldn't even exist—Rhodey himself had only heard about the incident from radar chatter and the pilots' reports.

"Where did you get that video?" Tony demanded.

"That's not your concern," the senator sneered. "Now, Colonel Rhodes—based on this evidence, would you say the Iron Man suit poses a threat to military operations?"

"...Yes, but—"

"That's all. You may step down," the senator cut him off before he could finish.

Rhodey sighed and shot Tony an apologetic glance before leaving the stand.

"Next, we'll hear from Mr. Justin Hammer, CEO of Hammer Industries, for an expert analysis of Stark's so-called 'Iron Man' armor."

A tall, slick man in a designer suit and glasses strutted in, throwing Tony a sidelong glance full of smugness.

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to dissect the engineering behind Stark Industries' so-called revolutionary weapon..."

Hammer launched into a long-winded lecture full of technical jargon and self-congratulation. Finally, Tony couldn't take it anymore.

"Excuse me, everyone," he interrupted casually. "Let me show you something better."

He pulled out his phone and tapped a few times. The live broadcast cut off abruptly—replaced by video footage of Hammer Industries' own armor tests.

Every single one ended in disaster—explosions, malfunctions, and fatal accidents.

"Turn that off! Shut it down right now!!" Hammer screamed, lunging at Tony in a rage.

Bang!

Before he could reach him, Lucas's foot shot out, catching Hammer square in the chest. The man flew backward and slammed into the front table, knocking over microphones and water glasses before collapsing unconscious.

Tony casually adjusted his tie. "As you can see, Hammer Industries has been secretly developing unauthorized weapons. The real question, gentlemen, is—  
who's pulling the strings behind them?"

His words were pointed straight at the senator.

"You're talking nonsense! You—filthy liar!" the man roared, his composure crumbling as he shouted like a fishmonger in a market.

Tony stepped forward. "No one takes my armor from me. It's my creation, my legacy. I am Iron Man! And I alone can protect New York!"

His declaration brought the reporters to their feet in applause, flashes erupting like fireworks.

Lucas rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah. Let's see how long that confidence lasts."

The hearing ended in chaos. The Senate failed to get what it wanted, and the senator's outburst made the government look ridiculous. Though they tried to impose a media blackout, the press couldn't care less—capitalism always trumped authority. Within hours, Tony Stark was once again the number-one headline across the world.

A few days later, he was in Morocco, gearing up for his first Formula 1 race.

His palladium poisoning had gotten worse—his skin was pale, his veins darkening around the reactor in his chest. Pepper was furious, thinking he'd finally matured, only to watch him spiral back into recklessness.

"Hey, how do I look? Handsome, right?" Tony's muffled voice came from inside his racing helmet.

Lucas, in his own blue-and-white racing suit, fastened his gloves. "You look like a guy pretending he's not dying. But sure, handsome."

When Tony had invited him to join the Morocco Grand Prix, Lucas didn't hesitate. Come on—it was F1! Who could resist?

He glanced at Tony's ashen face and deepening eye circles. The poisoning was spreading fast, but this wasn't the time to mention the new element. He'd wait until after the race.

The two climbed into their cars. Lucas's blood surged with excitement. This was Formula One—the dream of every speed junkie!

The lights went green.

He slammed the accelerator to the floor—engine roaring, tires screaming. His car shot forward like a bullet.

The Moroccan track, mapped through the city streets, was narrow and brutal. Passing another car here wasn't just difficult—it was deadly.

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Chapter 108 - 108 – Whiplash Appears

Lucas knew what was coming. In just a few minutes, that hulking Russian would walk straight onto the track near the finish line and start tearing cars apart. So after one exhilarating lap, he gradually eased off the accelerator, letting several racers overtake him.

He'd already had his dose of Fast & Furious—and he had to admit, F1 really lived up to the hype. The thrill of controlling a top-tier machine at insane speeds was unlike anything else. That moment when man and machine became one, the world blurred, and nothing existed except the rush forward—it was indescribable.

As Lucas's car approached the finish line, chaos erupted. A massive man in an orange maintenance jumpsuit stepped over the barrier and strode onto the track—Ivan Vanko, better known as Whiplash.

The crowd gasped in horror. A man appearing on an active F1 track? That was a death sentence waiting to happen.

Zzzzzt!

The giant ripped off his shirt, revealing a crude but glowing arc reactor embedded in his chest. With a flex of his arms, two high-voltage electric whips snapped into place with a sizzling crack!

BOOM!

He lashed out at the nearest car. The electrified whips sliced through metal like paper, splitting the vehicle—and its driver—in half. The car exploded in a fireball, debris scattering across the track.

Screams filled the stands. Some spectators ran, but most—true to the modern disease of "entertainment above all"—pulled out their phones to record the carnage. Saving lives or calling for help wasn't their instinct. No, what mattered most was the views, the likes, the clicks. To them, a viral video was worth more than a human life.

"TONY STARK!" the Russian roared, his voice booming through the chaos. "I know you're here, you thief! Come out and face me!"

He swung his electrified whips again, each strike detonating another car in a storm of sparks and fire.

Tony's car rounded the bend and screeched to a halt right in front of the raging giant.

"Who the hell are you? And how do you have an arc reactor?" Tony demanded, eyes narrowing at the crude device glowing on the man's chest. The tech was rough—but real. Had someone stolen his blueprints?

"Hahaha! Tony Stark, the world's beloved genius, the pioneer of modern technology—just a filthy thief in reality!"

Ivan cracked the whip toward him.

Tony dove aside, rolling across the asphalt just in time to avoid being cleaved in half. His car wasn't so lucky—the whips cut it neatly down the middle.

"Do you have any idea how much that car cost?" Tony snapped as he scrambled to his feet. "I mean, I don't care, but I'll still have my lawyer send you a letter just for fun."

He was already speaking into his comms. "Happy! I need the suitcase! Now!"

"Come, send your lawyer!" Ivan mocked, twirling his whips. Then he struck again, forcing Tony to sprint across the track—straight toward Lucas.

"Hey, buddy," Tony panted, ducking behind him, "you're not just gonna stand there and watch, right?"

Lucas glanced over his shoulder, unimpressed. "Really? Using me as a shield? You do realize you're about to lose your best friend."

"Details, details," Tony waved him off. "You're my bodyguard right now, remember? Just stall him until my suit gets here. I'll handle the rest."

Lucas sighed. "Fine. I'll play with him for a bit."

He strolled toward Ivan, unhurried, not even bothering to summon his weapon.

"And who are you supposed to be?" Ivan sneered, electricity crackling around him. "Tony Stark's little errand boy?"

"Errand boy? You're the errand boy! Your whole family are errand boys!" Lucas snapped, instantly triggered. "I'm a shareholder at Stark Industries, thank you very much!"

A spark of violet lightning flashed in his hand.

CRACK!

A bolt of lightning exploded from his palm, blasting Ivan off his feet and sending him skidding across the track.

Bzzzt!

The sound of crackling electricity filled the air. Then Lucas realized, to his horror, that Ivan's arc reactor was glowing even brighter.

"Oh, for—dammit! I just charged the guy up!" Lucas cursed aloud. "I'm out here playing power bank for free!"

Just like Thor accidentally recharging Tony's armor in another universe, Lucas's lightning had juiced Ivan's whips to full power.

"Wow," Tony called from behind, grinning like a fool. "Didn't know you came with a built-in charging function. We'll have to test that later."

Lucas glared at him. "You're half-dead from palladium poisoning and this is what you find funny?"

Ivan climbed back to his feet, feeling the new power surging through his weapons. "Your tricks don't work on me, boy. If you've got more, use them now!"

He swung his charged whips, the crackling arcs slicing through the air with blinding intensity.

Lucas simply waved his hand. Two invisible wind blades shot forward.

Ivan dodged the first—barely—but the second sliced through his left whip cleanly.

At that moment, Happy Hogan's car screeched up to the crash barrier. He jumped out, clutching the red suitcase armor.

"About time!" Tony barked, snatching it from him.

He dropped it on the ground, stomped once, and the case unfolded with a hiss, revealing two metal grips. Tony grabbed them and pulled upward—armor panels snapping into place over his torso, arms, and legs in rapid sequence.

The faceplate locked down with a satisfying clank.

Iron Man was back.

"Hey, look who's here—Daddy's home!" Tony quipped as his thrusters roared to life.

He shot upward, then slammed down like a meteor, his metal fist connecting squarely with Ivan's chest. The Russian was launched several meters back, crashing to the ground in a heap.

It took him a long moment to stand again.

"Tony Stark!" he roared, voice cracking with rage. "You stole my family's work! You'll pay for what you did!"

He lashed out wildly, his remaining whip unleashing torrents of electricity that warped the air around them.

"What the hell is he saying?" Tony muttered, exasperated. "Forget it—doesn't matter."

He raised both hands, repulsors glowing.

BOOM! BOOM!

Twin blasts of energy erupted from his palms, striking Ivan dead-on.

The briefcase armor wasn't designed for heavy combat—it lacked missiles and built-in weapons—but the repulsor blasts and chest beam were still more than enough to make a point.

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## Chapter 109 - 109 – The Answer Lies in His Father's Legacy

The repulsor blasts weren't enough to take Ivan down. With a snarl, Vanko's electrified whips coiled around Tony's neck, the current surging through the suit like liquid lightning.

But just like Lucas had done before, Ivan made the same mistake—he was charging Tony's armor.

In seconds, the suit's power levels spiked to two hundred percent. More energy meant more firepower—but it also meant imminent overload. Once the surge burned out, the Mark V would be nothing but scrap metal.

Tony grabbed hold of the whips and began wrapping them around his arms. Against the strength of the Iron Man armor, Ivan's brute force was meaningless. The whips were bolted into his mechanical frame, so as Tony pulled tighter and tighter, the Russian was dragged forward, step by step.

"Come here, big guy," Tony growled.

With a sudden heave, Tony yanked Ivan off balance and smashed his fist straight into the man's jaw.

BOOM!

Ivan crashed to the ground, teeth scattering across the track as he slipped into unconsciousness.

Bzzzt—crackle—pop!

Sparks burst from Tony's armor. Smoke hissed from the seams as systems began to fail.

"Sir," Jarvis's voice crackled through distorted static, "armor damage at ninety-seven percent. Immediate ejection recommended. Continued use will result in severe bodily harm."

"Do it," Tony barked. "Activate emergency disassembly."

The armor burst outward in a controlled explosion of panels, metal fragments scattering across the track before they locked safely into shutdown mode.

The crowd erupted in cheers. Cameras flashed like a thousand tiny suns. To them, this wasn't life or death—it was entertainment. Humanity, as always, chose spectacle over sense.

Since the arrest happened in Morocco, Ivan Vanko needed to be extradited back to the U.S. Among those pushing hardest for it were none other than the Hydra-linked senator and Justin Hammer.

Their motive was clear: they wanted the technology—the arc reactor itself.

So far, no one but Tony Stark had successfully replicated it. The suits were easy enough to copy; the power source was the problem. Hammer Industries had tested every kind of high-density battery imaginable. The best they managed could only keep a suit running for four hours—and that was without flight or weapons. Try to fly, and you'd be out of juice in twenty minutes flat.

The day after Vanko's extradition, Tony visited him in prison.

"Where did you get the arc reactor?" Tony asked, staring at him through the glass. To him, the question was absurd—the reactor was his invention.

"Heh," Ivan laughed darkly. "A thief asking about stolen goods? You and your damn father are the same—both thieves who steal from better men!"

Hatred burned in his eyes, a hatred that seemed to have been festering for decades.

"I don't know what you're babbling about," Tony snapped, losing patience. "Just tell me where it came from."

"You really think only you can build one? You think only the Starks are geniuses?" Ivan spat, his voice rising. "Your father stole that design—from my father! You're both parasites living off another man's mind!"

Tony frowned, unimpressed. Without another word, he turned and walked out.

Days passed—and Tony spiraled. He started showing up at parties in full armor, drinking, dancing, and even urinating in the suit in front of hundreds of people.

Pepper finally had enough. After a screaming match that shook the mansion, she packed up and left.

Now, surrounded by the aftermath of yet another destructive party, Tony sat slumped on the floor, still half-dressed in the armor. His eyes were hollow, the room silent but for the hum of the fading arc reactor in his chest.

"Jarvis," he murmured, "scan the palladium levels."

"Yes, sir," came the soft reply. "Your blood toxicity has reached sixty percent. At eighty percent, fatality becomes inevitable."

Tony's expression went cold. Chlorophyll therapy had stopped working days ago. There was no cure for heavy metal poisoning—not with current medicine. The only way to live was to remove the reactor. But without it, the shrapnel in his chest would pierce his heart.

"Jarvis," he said quietly, "create a new file. Store my will in it."

"Yes, sir. However, I would remind you—there are many forces on this planet beyond our understanding. Perhaps... a cure exists where science has yet to look."

Tony managed a weak smile. "Thanks, Jarvis. You're all I've got left."

"It's my honor, sir," Jarvis replied gently. His tone, for once, carried warmth.

Tony leaned his head back against the couch cushion, lost in thought—until a familiar, annoyingly cheerful voice echoed from the doorway.

"Well, well, if it isn't the great Tony Stark. What's the matter? Party's over already?"

Lucas strolled in with that trademark smirk, plopping down on the couch beside him.

"You heard?" Tony asked dully.

"Of course," Lucas said, crossing his legs. "I've known for a while."

"Then tell me," Tony said, turning toward him with a spark of hope. "Is there a way to fix this?"

Lucas grinned. "If there wasn't, I wouldn't be here, would I? Relax, Tony—you're not dying yet."

"Seriously?" Tony sat up, eyes suddenly alive again. "You actually have a cure?"

"It's simple," Lucas said casually. "Your father already left you the answer. All you have to do is look through his old things."

Tony froze, staring at him. He didn't doubt Lucas—but he couldn't believe the solution had been sitting in his father's possessions all along.

"Do yourself a favor," Lucas added, standing. "Fix your heart first. Pepper's been staying at my place, by the way—she's been yelling your name every day. You'd better show up in person to apologize."

Turns out, after storming out of Tony's mansion, Pepper had rented an apartment in Lucas's building. "Rented" was generous—she'd paid three times the normal rate to convince a tenant to move out. The guy left grinning ear to ear, using the payout to buy a villa in the suburbs.

Tony raised an eyebrow. "She's staying with you? Fine. At least she's safe there. That apartment's yours long-term now. Name your price."

Lucas rubbed his hands together, eyes gleaming. "For you, double the usual rate. And I'll throw in a full security package—100% guaranteed safety, as long as you don't leave the premises. Premium service, Mr. Stark."

Tony rolled his eyes. "You're already a Stark Industries shareholder, and you still nickel-and-dime me?"

"Hey, business is business," Lucas said with a grin.

"Whatever. Go," Tony waved him off. "I've got a few ghosts to dig up."

As Lucas left, Tony turned toward his father's old chest of relics—the legacy of Howard Stark. Somewhere in there lay the key to saving his life.

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Chapter 110 - 110 – The New Element

"Hey, hey! What's this about?!" Lucas jumped up, pointing an accusing finger at Tony, face full of mock heartbreak. "You used to call me Sweetie, and now it's Madame Ox! How could you do this to me, you ruthless capitalist!"

"Get lost!" Tony snapped. "Sweetie? That's disgusting! And calling me a capitalist? You're one too, you idiot—you're literally insulting yourself!"

It wasn't even wrong. Lucas really was a capitalist now. Besides the rent money from his apartments, he also held a sizable amount of Stark Industries stock—technically making him one of the company's shareholders, albeit the last on the list.

Still, a shareholder was a shareholder. He was now part of the capital class.

"Wait, I'm a capitalist now?" Lucas blinked, genuinely surprised. "How come I don't feel rich? I don't even feel a hint of capitalist joy! I still wake up thinking I'm just a broke young guy who wants to dye his hair and ride a cheap scooter!"

Tony rolled his eyes. "Just shut up, I've got a life to save. Stay or leave, I don't care."

He brushed past Lucas and headed toward the storage room.

"Hey! At least clean up before you go!" Lucas shouted after him. "If I ever left my place this messy, Wanda and Skye would literally kill me!"

He surveyed the wrecked mansion—broken glass, overturned furniture, gadgets everywhere—and made a face.

"Jarvis, call a cleaning company. This place looks like a pigsty."

"Yes, Mr. Norman. I'll make the arrangements immediately," Jarvis's calm voice suddenly replied from the speakers, making Lucas jump.

Later, back at his office, Lucas found Pepper sitting on the couch chatting with three other women. The topic? Gossip, of course. Apparently, that was a universal constant among women—no matter the time or place.

When she saw Lucas return, Pepper stood immediately. "You saw Tony? How is he?"

For all her scolding and anger, she still cared deeply about him.

"He's fine," Lucas said with a reassuring smile. "I gave him a good talking-to. He'll probably come pick you up in a few days."

He didn't tell her the full truth. Some things Tony needed to say himself.

Meanwhile, Tony had dug out his father's old videotapes, watching them one by one. And finally—in the very last recording—he found the clue: The City of the Future.

That message also made him realize something he'd never understood before: his father had loved him. He just didn't know how to show it.

"Even in death, you're still teaching me lessons, old man," Tony muttered as he stared at the 3D hologram Jarvis had rendered—a model of an entirely new element.

For the next several days, Tony turned his entire mansion into a science lab. He tore down walls, installed pipes, set up energy channels, and mounted a massive focusing prism in the center of the room.

"Ready, Jarvis?"

"All systems online, sir."

Tony gripped a heavy wrench around the prism's control valve. "Let's do this."

The reactor hummed to life.

BZZZZZT—!

A beam of blinding blue light shot through the pipes, searing through concrete and metal alike, cutting perfect lines across the walls.

Tony strained with all his strength to hold the valve steady as the energy built to critical levels. Sweat poured down his face.

Finally, the light converged into the prism.

As the brilliance reached its peak, Tony knew he'd done it. His father had saved his life—posthumously.

He had successfully created a new element.

Without hesitation, he replaced the palladium core in his chest with the new arc reactor. The moment it clicked into place, he felt a rush of power—pure, clean energy flooding his veins.

Overwhelmed by the surge, Tony collapsed and passed out on the floor.

When he woke, the pain was gone. The poisoning—completely cured. No more chlorophyll shakes.

"Jarvis!" he shouted hoarsely. "Get a cleaning crew! I want to watch them pour every single bottle of chlorophyll down the toilet—every drop!"

He staggered to his feet, half laughing, half screaming. "If I ever drink that green garbage again, I swear I'm a dog! Never again!"

The new element not only saved him—it reignited his genius. In the days that followed, Tony's creativity exploded. He opened dozens of new project files, sketching and designing upgraded armor after upgraded armor.

Then, without warning, Tony showed up at Lucas's apartment—bags in hand.

And with his smooth tongue and shameless charm, it took him less than a day to win Pepper back.

Since his mansion had been reduced to rubble during the experiment, Tony decided to rebuild it from scratch. Until the new one was finished, he'd stay in Lucas's building. After all, he'd paid double rent—so he was determined to eat, drink, and live there to his heart's content.

That evening, Tony lounged on the rooftop, enjoying the ocean breeze. Thanks to his money magic, the rooftop had been transformed into an open-air lounge, complete with couches and a minibar.

Lucas and the others were a few meters away, grilling barbecue.

"You sure know how to enjoy yourself!" Lucas yelled over. "While we're slaving over the grill, you're just sitting there like a king!"

Tony didn't even look over. "I paid double, remember? I'm the landlord now—I eat when the food's ready!" He leaned back in his chair, sunglasses on, utterly relaxed.

Lucas sighed. "Fine! You're the boss!"

Money, as always, was the great equalizer.

Meanwhile—somewhere far away, in a dimly lit prison—Ivan Vanko's escape plan was unfolding.

Of course, "escape" was too generous a word. Every guard had already been bribed by Justin Hammer—from the warden to the night shift officers. No one stopped Vanko as he calmly walked out of the prison gates.

A car was waiting outside. Hammer himself stepped out with a grin that tried—and failed—to look genuine.

"Welcome, welcome, Mr. Vanko! Allow me to introduce myself—Justin Hammer, your future employer!"

He extended his arms for a hug. Vanko merely frowned, clearly disgusted by the man's fake enthusiasm.

"What is it you want from me, Mr. Hammer?" Vanko asked coldly. Of course, he already knew the answer. Aside from Tony Stark, he was the only man alive who could build an arc reactor—and Hammer had been desperate to create his own line of powered armor.

Sure enough, Hammer said exactly what Vanko expected.

"I'd like you to help me design a new line of suits," he said smoothly, pretending it was a collaboration rather than exploitation.

Vanko smirked. Perfect. He could use Hammer just as easily as Hammer planned to use him.

Two men with ulterior motives—already bound in a fragile alliance.

"Whatever you need, just tell me," Hammer said eagerly. "Anything at all."

"I want my bird," Vanko said flatly.

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