

Marvel Manifestor

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Thor had truly grown—

and Loki, for the first time, began to believe Thor might actually become a wise king.

For a fleeting moment, Loki even considered abandoning his plan.

He was a prince of Asgard; he never wished his home to fall into chaos.

His family lived here. His roots were here.

But the moment passed.

He looked toward the far end of the Bifrost and hardened his resolve.

He would become king—

the King of Asgard.

He would prove himself to Odin, and to everyone,

that he was the one truly worthy of the throne.

With that, Loki willed a new command into the Destroyer.

On the golden bed of the Odinsleep, the All-Father saw everything within the sea of his consciousness.

Watching Thor's growth drew a tear from his eye.

All of this had been part of his design, and even Loki's actions were well within his predictions.

But the growth of both sons touched him.

He knew it was unfair to Loki.

But Thor was the heir—
the crown prince.

It was the heir's path that must be paved;
Loki, at best, would one day rule only as a vassal lord.

His duty was to support the crown prince—
never overshadow him.

Back in the town—

The Destroyer had originally been turning to leave.

But suddenly its movement stalled.

Then, without warning, it swung around and slapped Thor with overwhelming force.

Stripped of his powers, Thor was flung like a powerless toy, skidding across the ground for dozens of meters before rolling to a stop, unconscious and unmoving.

Lucas didn't spare Thor a glance.

He already knew Thor's powers were about to return.

There was no chance Odin would let his rightful heir die here.

Lucas extended a hand.

Mjolnir flew obediently back into his palm.

He walked toward Thor.

Instantly, Sif, Jane, and Fandral moved to block his path.

"Human, what do you intend to do?"

Sif's gaze was icy, her grip on her sword tightening.

Jane glared at him.

She knew Lucas was aligned with those SHIELD "thugs."

"Thor's already like this—why are you still pushing him?!"

Lucas didn't answer.

Instead—he suddenly hurled Mjolnir behind him.

The hammer, wrapped in purple lightning, smashed straight into the charging Frost Giant—reducing its body to shattered ice before it even hit the ground.

The hammer stalled mid-air, then returned to Lucas' hand like a well-trained kitten.

Lucas looked at Jane and Sif calmly.

"He has to pass this trial himself.

There's only one path left to him now—

and it's to save himself.

No one else can intervene."

He dropped Mjolnir in front of Thor—

then leapt lightly onto the restaurant roof to watch what would unfold.

From the rubble behind them, a violent explosion erupted.

The Destroyer staggered out—unscathed—and marched toward Thor again, energy surging.

Lucas frowned.

Thor still hadn't awakened.

And yet Lucas could feel it—

the Thunder God's power inside him had already reawakened.

Thor could wield Mjolnir at any moment.

A flash of golden light swept across the Destroyer's frame—

its bullet wounds sealed instantly.

Then it swung a blazing fist at Lucas, the strike roaring like a shell leaving a cannon, air rippling from the heat and pressure.

Lucas slid sideways, planted a foot on the Destroyer's incoming fist, vaulted upward, and spun sharply in midair.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Gunfire poured down like a rain of falling stars.

The Destroyer's armor was riddled with holes in an instant—

and then, with a streak of green light and a sudden gale, its armored body was sliced neatly into more than a dozen pieces.

BOOM!

The Destroyer collapsed like a disintegrating tower.

The cuts were mirror-smooth;

every rune carved into the armor was split cleanly in two.

The magic within them dispersed—

and the Destroyer was, for all intents and purposes, totaled.

Lucas had no intention of leaving the remains behind.

Uru metal was far too precious—

a rare metal with exceptional affinity for magic.

Odin once wore this armor as he conquered the Nine Realms and secured his throne as the All-Father.

Its abilities required no elaboration.

But what Lucas valued most wasn't the enchantments—

it was the raw elemental resonance of the Uru itself.

He planned to have Tony craft suits for Gwen, Skye, and Wanda—
melding Uru metal with vibranium.

Uru's ability to channel magical energy was perfect for Wanda.

And combined with vibranium, the metal could reduce the recoil from Skye's quake powers while enhancing their output through Uru's synergy.

Even Gwen—who didn't fire energy blasts—would gain shock absorption and magical resistance from such a blend.

As for the other Spider-Man, Peter...

that depended entirely on his fate with Tony.

If things unfolded like the previous life—

if he became Tony's honorary son—

then gear wouldn't be a problem.

Tony would deck him out instantly.

Lucas wouldn't need to worry at all.

With that in mind, Lucas swept all the Destroyer's pieces into his system backpack, saving them for Tony's research.

Suddenly—

thunder exploded through the sky.

Dark clouds gathered, swirling like ink.

Lightning coiled within them—endless, roaring.

Mjolnir rose slowly from the ground, acting like a lightning rod as every bolt in the heavens bent toward it—

before the hammer streaked straight toward Thor.

Jane watched in horror as—

Thor's hand shot up, grabbing Mjolnir.

Lightning surged through him.

Metal scales materialized across his body, locking into place.

The gleaming armor of the God of Thunder formed once more.

"AAAHHH—!!"

Thor roared, blue lightning crackling through his eyes.

The God of Thunder had returned.

Jane and Sif stared, each with different emotions—

Sif with joy, Jane with stunned disbelief.

"So you really are the God of Thunder..."

Jane circled him, still in shock.

"Of course! I told you I never lie." Thor puffed his chest. "I am Thor, God of Thunder!"

He was already back to his inexhaustibly energetic self.

"We need to return to Asgard," Sif said.

"Yes—and I have a score to settle with Loki."

Thor spun Mjolnir, lightning dancing around it.

Lucas suddenly had an idea.

A theory he wanted to test.

He extended a hand toward Mjolnir—

WHOOSH—!

The hammer tore itself from Thor's grip
and flew obediently into Lucas' palm.

A joyful thrum pulsed through him.

Mjolnir still acknowledged him.

Thor was dumbstruck.

His beloved hammer—

flying straight into someone else's hand—

RIGHT in front of him.

This was spiritual NTR on the highest level.

If he tolerated this, he didn't deserve to call himself the God of Thunder.

"You again?! You stole my hammer before—and now you want to take it AGAIN?
I'll tear you apart!!"

Thor launched himself forward, fist cocked, moving so fast he left afterimages—

BAM!

—only to be flattened instantly by a single hammer strike from Lucas.

Cracks of lightning split across Thor's chestplate.

"Cough—! Impossible...

How can you summon lightning?!"

Thor's anger burned hotter.

He couldn't accept that a mortal from Midgard wielded thunder better than he did.

Lucas scoffed.

"Already upset? Odin's judgment really is terrible.

If it were up to me, I'd give the throne to Loki.

Better a cunning god than a reckless fool.

God of Thunder? Please."

Thor froze.

Lucas continued mercilessly, thinking of the infamous temperament of the old Germanic tribes whose myths birthed Asgard.

Brave but brash—

and yes, often stupid.

"And without your hammer," Lucas added, "you're nothing. No right to wield it, no right to be king.

Who rules the Nine Realms?

You?

Or the hammer?"

He tossed Mjolnir back to Thor and walked toward the edge of town, leaving a dazed, existentially shattered Thor standing there like his soul had left his body.

"Thor, don't listen to that mortal!"

Sif rushed to him.

"You are the God of Thunder! Asgard needs you!"

Her words pulled Thor out of his stupor.

He glared after Lucas.

"When I've dealt with Asgard's crisis, I'll come find you—and I'll show you my true strength!"

Lucas waved lazily.

"I'll be waiting."

"What's your name, Midgardian?!"

"Lucas."

Thor memorized it.

After a clingy goodbye with Jane, he began calling Heimdall.

Again.

And again.

And again.

But no Bifrost descended.

Thor, Sif, Fandral, and a groggy Volstagg stood there awkwardly in heroic poses... accomplishing nothing.

Meanwhile, at the Bifrost—

the frozen Heimdall heard Thor's call.

Summoning all his divine strength—

he burst through the ice encasing him.

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Heimdall summoned the last of his strength and shattered the ice encasing his body.

He immediately thrust his sword into the control slot—

and the Bifrost roared to life.

BOOOOM—!

Seven-colored light descended.

Sif and the Warriors Three stepped inside first.

Thor turned to the worried Jane standing beside him.

"Wait for me, Jane. I won't be long."

They shared a lingering look, kissed goodbye,

and Thor stepped into the rainbow bridge.

Lucas watched the beam vanish into the heavens and murmured,

"Odin... you really went all out for that foolish son of yours."

S.H.I.E.L.D. Cleanup

S.H.I.E.L.D. combed through the battlefield, gathering every trace of the Frost Giants—

their bodies were extraterrestrial specimens too valuable to ignore.

But despite their thorough sweep, they found not one piece of the Destroyer's armor.

Lucas explained that Thor had taken it.

S.H.I.E.L.D. couldn't prove otherwise, so they dropped the matter.

As for Asgard's affairs, Lucas didn't care in the slightest.

Back to New York

When he returned, the trio who'd come back from Boston were already waiting at home.

"How was New Mexico?" Gwen asked, eyeing Lucas—dust-covered and sunburned from the desert wasteland.

"Not bad.

I earned myself a jet."

Lucas sank onto the sofa.

Gwen naturally let his head rest on her lap.

"A jet?! Where is it? Take us to see it!"

Skye dragged Wanda over, both excited.

"It's still with S.H.I.E.L.D. I'm picking it up tomorrow.

If Baldy doesn't give it to me, we're going to Washington together—

I'll blow up S.H.I.E.L.D.'s headquarters."

To Lucas, Nick Fury had negative credit. Completely untrustworthy.

"I agree! He keeps trying to recruit me into S.H.I.E.L.D.—so annoying."

Skye immediately backed Lucas.

Fury knew Skye's secret—knew she was Inhuman—and had been relentless about recruiting her.

Trying to steal Lucas' people.

Gwen was also on Fury's recruitment radar, but she firmly sided with Lucas.

Wanda simply hadn't revealed her true power yet—otherwise Fury would've been on her too.

But the biggest problem for Fury was this:

All three girls had deep ties to Lucas.

Recruiting them without Lucas' approval was impossible.

And Lucas himself?

The hardest person in the world for S.H.I.E.L.D. to handle.

Other than Coulson, Natasha, and Barton,
no one from S.H.I.E.L.D. was even allowed inside Devil May Cry.

Wanda's Questions

"That S.H.I.E.L.D.... is it dangerous?"

"You all talk as if they're villains."

Wanda was genuinely confused.

"If they were bad people, why did Lucas take their missions?"

"If they were good, why did he badmouth them constantly?"

"Wanda, you're too innocent. Stay away from them—especially Baldy Fury.

He's the definition of sneaky.

"Everyone in S.H.I.E.L.D. is trouble."

Lucas warned her seriously.

"So in your eyes, I'm not a good person either?"

Natasha walked in, unamused, grabbing a juice from the bar.

"Hmph. You too—you always freeload here.

"Doesn't Baldy pay you?"

Lucas glared.

Though to be fair, Natasha had never tricked him—

in fact, she often helped him mess with S.H.I.E.L.D.

"Don't listen to him," Gwen said, tapping Lucas' forehead.

"He's just grumpy because he didn't get paid."

His beef with Fury isn't new."

Natasha stretched lazily—

a move so graceful even Gwen, Skye, and Wanda flushed a little.

"And speaking of which—your prototype is done.

You can pick it up anytime."

"Really?!"

Lucas sat up instantly, full of life.

"Tell Baldy I'm coming tomorrow."

The Quinjet.

In his past life he'd dreamed of flying one.

Now he'd finally get the chance.

Natasha rolled her eyes nearly into orbit.

"It's just a Quinjet. You literally rode one today."

"It's not the same!"

Lucas waved grandly.

"Today was yours.

Tomorrow's will be mine.

I'm parking it on the roof!"

"On the roof? Are you trying to get exposed to the whole city?"

Natasha was speechless.

Quinjets were still top-secret tech.

"It's fine. You know this place—

no danger whatsoever."

Lucas had absolute faith in the building's magical barrier.

Moguli might act like a lazy lord who demanded to be served—

but its wards were flawless.

And besides—

a prototype Quinjet had no weapons.

If someone took a picture, so what?

"Fine. It's yours. Do what you want," Natasha sighed.

Lucas' brain clearly didn't operate on normal wavelengths.

The Next Morning

Lucas was up at dawn—fresh, dressed, and waiting excitedly inside the office.

His commotion woke the three girls, who stumbled out with messy hair to accompany him.

Nearly an hour later, Natasha walked in slowly.

"Well, well...

The sun must've risen in the west.

You're awake before noon?"

Lucas grinned shamelessly.

"I try~ I try~"

"When are we leaving? I can't wait!"

He'd spent all night practicing flight controls—

on a game console—

just to avoid embarrassing himself later.

Natasha stared at him.

This man had definitely been dropped on his head at some point.

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"What's the rush? We're eating breakfast first."

Natasha gave him a teasing smile.

He was impatient—so of course she dragged it out on purpose.

"What? You're mooching breakfast again?

Has S.H.I.E.L.D. gone broke? They don't even feed their agents now?

Just how much money has Nick Fury embezzled?!

And the Security Council isn't even sending an investigation team?

You're all just letting Baldy drain public funds?!"

Lucas got more worked up the longer he spoke.

"And what about the IRS? Why aren't they on him?

Has he paid taxes on all that stolen money?!

I'm reporting him.

I'll let the strongest force on Earth—the IRS—destroy Baldy Fury!"

"??"

Everyone stared at him, stunned.

Whatever trauma Fury had inflicted on Lucas... it must have been catastrophic.

Reporting someone to the IRS was equivalent to a death sentence.

In America, the IRS was the most terrifying institution—
armed well enough to rival the military.

Every business, every government department fell under their rule.

Find a penny on the street?

You owed tax on half of it—

or the IRS would hunt you to the ends of the earth.

Even the Pentagon knelt before the IRS.

In the end...

Natasha won by absolute dominance and mooched breakfast anyway.

With three little traitors—Gwen, Skye, and Wanda—siding with her,

Lucas lost every vote with no room for appeal

and had to obediently cook.

Off to the Airport

After breakfast, Lucas followed Natasha to the airport—

where the same sleek black Quinjet waited.

Since Quinjets had entered official service,

S.H.I.E.L.D. used them for almost every operation that didn't require larger aircraft.

Lucas continued trying to learn flight controls on the way.

The pilot taught him patiently...

but by the time they landed, Lucas had learned one thing:

How to start the engine.

Everything else?

Not. A. clue.

"If I ever ride in a plane piloted by you, I'll call myself a dog."

Natasha sighed.

She had watched the pilot guide Lucas step by step.

Any normal person would have learned something.

Only Lucas stared blankly the entire time.

"You can't learn even the basics—what do you want a Quinjet for?

Even if they gave it to you, you couldn't fly it home."

"I don't need to. You can fly it.

You've freeloaded at my place forever—

time to show your worth!"

Lucas gave her a pointed look.

Like Tony, she paid rent—

but ate and drank entirely at his expense.

Every time Lucas complained, the girls ganged up on him.

Triskelion

They toured the Triskelion—

agents rushing everywhere, no one idle.

Truly, S.H.I.E.L.D. didn't keep slackers.

Whether they kept people or snakes, however... was another question.

Eventually they reached Nick Fury's office—

and to Lucas' annoyance, someone else was there:

Alexander Pierce.

"So you're the famous Lucas Norman?

Meeting you in person is far better than the stories."

Pierce shook his hand politely, eyes filled with curiosity.

He already knew Lucas had single-handedly destroyed Strucker's base.

And like Strucker, he was very interested in Lucas' power—

interested in controlling it.

"Mr. Norman, would you consider joining S.H.I.E.L.D.?

I can authorize you as a Level 10 agent immediately."

Pierce smiled warmly.

With Lucas on his side, all his plans would unfold smoothly.

Lucas didn't even look at him.

He brushed past Pierce and flopped onto the sofa.

"Baldy, don't say I didn't warn you—

this guy isn't a good person.

Be careful."

He practically slapped a HYDRA sticker on Pierce's forehead.

Fury glanced at Lucas, then at Pierce, hesitated, and said:

"Enough. He's the former Director of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Now a World Security Council envoy."

Lucas knew Fury understood the hidden message,

so he shrugged and said nothing more.

"Whatever you say.

Is my stuff ready?"

Lucas strolled over to Fury's desk, sat in his chair,

looked around,

then casually pressed the comm button.

"Agent Coulson, get to my office immediately!"

He mimicked Fury's voice perfectly.

Fury's face darkened—Lucas treated his office like his own home.

A moment later, Coulson hurried in.

"Director, your voice sounded congested—did you catch a col—"

He stopped as three pairs of eyes stared at him.

"Uh... Director? Did you call me?"

Then he saw Lucas sitting behind the desk.

Of course.

Who else would pull this nonsense?

"Coulson.

Take Lucas to see his jet.

Right now.

Get him out of my office.

Motherf—!"

Fury was done.

If Lucas touched one more wrong button, something catastrophic might happen.

Lucas lounged with his feet up on the desk.

"Aren't you scared someone will snipe you from behind? The window's right there."

He looked back.

Nothing but buildings and that pointy four-sided tower sticking up like a giant spike.

"This is bulletproof glass.

Three inches thick.

No sniper rifle can penetrate it."

Fury rubbed his temples.

Did Lucas think he was stupid?

Lucas nodded,

then pulled out Punisher and pointed it at the glass.

He wanted to test it.

The system had said Punisher could damage anything non-human.

"Don't you dare!"

Fury lunged to stop him.

Natasha and Coulson rushed forward as well.

Only Pierce remained unmoving.

"Uh—don't panic.

I wasn't really going to shoot.

Probably..."

Lucas scratched his cheek awkwardly.

He had been about to fire.

"Coulson!

Get him out of here!

NOW!"

Fury was seconds away from shooting Lucas himself.

"Yes, sir! Right away!"

Coulson and Natasha each grabbed one of Lucas' arms and dragged him out of the office.

As he was hauled away, Lucas still yelled back—

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"Baldy! Don't forget what I said!"

Lucas's voice faded as he was dragged away, and only then did Nick Fury's bellows slowly settle from forge-bellows back to human lungs.

Once Lucas left the office, he finally behaved.

The three of them entered the elevator, and Lucas immediately turned to Coulson.

"Where's my jet? I can't wait another second."

Coulson pointed downward—

the hangar level, where rows of Quinjets were parked.

One of them—a gray-white frame without any paint—stood out.

The Triskelion's elevator was fully transparent, offering a clear view outside.

"That one. Since it's a prototype, it hasn't been painted yet.

You can choose whatever color scheme you like.

Like I said before—aside from normal flight capabilities, it has no weapons installed."

Lucas stared at his Quinjet, excitement swelling.

He was finally going to fly his own aircraft.

They reached the hangar, and under Natasha and Coulson's instructions, Lucas barely learned how to open and close the doors.

Coulson couldn't stop complaining—Lucas looked smart, so why did he turn into a complete idiot when it came to aircraft?

Actually, it wasn't just planes.

Lucas was terrible with all vehicles.

He still couldn't figure out Skye's van.

Passing a driving test at all was a miracle.

A high-tech plane was basically wizardry to him.

Finally, Natasha couldn't stand it anymore.

She slapped Lucas out of the pilot seat, sat down herself, and took off.

Lucas sat off to the side, enduring her relentless ridicule.

The Quinjet landed smoothly on the apartment rooftop.

Skye, Gwen, and Wanda were already waiting—they wanted to see the machine Lucas had talked about nonstop.

"So this is the aircraft you wanted? Looks pretty good."

Gwen circled it several times.

Aside from being smaller than standard jets, everything else looked great—and Quinjets had a uniquely sharp silhouette.

After examining it, the three girls immediately rushed onboard and began learning the controls from Natasha.

Lucas' hopeless vehicle-idiot attribute doomed him to be a passenger, never a pilot.

"Okay, you can get off now. We're gonna fly and learn."

Gwen waved him away like he was in the way.

Lucas stepped off the jet with a face full of betrayal, tearfully devastated.

So love does fade, huh?

Yesterday he was darling sweetheart—

today he was the annoying husband.

The Lonely Days

For the next few days, Lucas sat alone in the office while the three maniacs flew the Quinjet around the world daily.

Thanks to S.H.I.E.L.D.'s diplomatic flight clearance, any UN member state was open airspace for them.

They had global access.

Meanwhile, the pitiful Lucas stayed home, bitter and jealous.

He wanted to roam too—

it was his jet!

Why couldn't he enjoy it?!

He buried his face into Moguri's fluffy belly.

Moguri struggled desperately, but Lucas' grip was like an iron vise.

Eventually, the poor creature gave up resisting and lay there in despair.

Lucas was about to close the shop early when Matt and Frank walked in.

Matt wore casual clothes and dark glasses.

Frank was also dressed casually—though his bulging waistband clearly held a gun.

"What are you two doing here? Is your law office that idle?"

Lucas asked curiously.

Frank had been working for Matt recently, taking investigative jobs for the firm—lawyers in Hell's Kitchen often needed less-than-legal help.

Frank finally had steady work instead of robbing gangs to survive.

Life was stabilizing...

and he'd even started flirting with Karen Page.

"We've got something.

Remember the vampire incident?

We've spotted new vampire activity."

Frank went straight to the point and handed Lucas several photos.

The photos showed the corpses of several women,

each with two puncture marks on their necks—

and every neck had been broken, some so violently the bone was exposed.

"A mercy kill to stop them from turning?"

Lucas raised a brow.

That wasn't normal vampire behavior.

Vampires didn't drain a victim and thoughtfully finish them off.

That wasn't their nature at all.

"We thought the same.

This doesn't match vampire behavior.

And after last time, New York's vampires were wiped out.

S.H.I.E.L.D. cleaned up the stragglers too.

I suspect these are outsiders trying to reclaim New York."

Frank analyzed.

He, Lucas, and Blade had completely annihilated the New York vampire council.

Anything showing up now was new.

"These blood-sucking roaches... never-ending."

Lucas tossed the photos aside.

Vampires were pests—

kill one batch, another would rise.

As long as humans existed, so would vampires.

"Did you contact Blade? What did he say?"

Lucas asked.

If anyone understood vampires, it was Blade—half vampire himself.

"He says he can't come.

He's dealing with a tough nest in Atlanta.

But he recommended another vampire hunter—said the guy is strong.

Problem is... we haven't met him yet."

Frank looked annoyed.

Blade promised help, delivered nothing.

"So? Any other leads?"

Lucas asked.

He hadn't heard anything about vampires recently—he'd been in New Mexico playing with hammers.

Frank shook his head.

"No leads at all.

This vampire leaves zero traces.

His feeding pattern is irregular.

No way to predict him."

Frank, a former spec-ops soldier and Fury's old comrade, was extremely competent.

If even he found nothing, then there was nothing to find.

"Maybe ask Baldy Fury?"

Lucas suggested.

As the top spy on Earth, Fury might know something.

Worth a shot.

Frank agreed—S.H.I.E.L.D. had resources.

Matt hadn't said a word the entire time—

he simply sipped tea, lost in thought.

Then suddenly—

Time froze.

Matt and Frank stopped moving entirely.

Matt remained stuck mid-sip, cup at his lips.

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Suddenly the world around Lucas rippled like cracked glass.

He instantly knew where he was—

the Mirror Dimension.

Only the sorcerers of Kamar-Taj could pull him in this cleanly.

Moguri lifted its head, sniffed in Lucas's direction, sensed no danger, and flopped back down lazily.

A golden sling ring portal unfurled, and the Ancient One stepped out, calm and unhurried as always—nothing in the universe ever seemed capable of rattling her.

"Master... why are you here? Something happen?"

Lucas faced her.

She never came unless it was important.

"The matter with Thor—thanks to you.

Odin informed me you shattered the enchantment he placed on Mjolnir.

He also said there's a power inside you... one even he fears."

Her gaze rested on Lucas with a trace of curiosity.

A power Odin feared—she wanted to know what it was.

"A power inside me that scares Odin? News to me."

Lucas blinked.

His abilities came from his summons—Garuda and Ramuh.

Did Odin sense them?

Or... was he sensing the system?

He had no way to know.

The Ancient One shook her head.

"Odin didn't explain further.

But he asked me to thank you.

Because of this ordeal, his son has finally matured—at least compared to before."

Lucas nearly laughed.

Thor? Mature?

That guy would always be reckless.

At best he'd calm down for a few days.

If he truly changed, he wouldn't be Thor anymore.

"You didn't come all the way here just to tell me that, right?"

He wasn't buying it.

A message like that could've been delivered by any New York sorcerer.

"Of course not."

She waved her hand.

A table, chairs, and a full tea set materialized.

She gestured for him to sit and poured him tea.

"I'm here because of the vampire incident you were just discussing."

Lucas paused mid-sip.

The Ancient One worrying about vampires?

That didn't add up.

Don't tell me...

Dracula?

Or worse—

the Progenitor, Cain?

Just thinking about it made his scalp numb.

According to scripture, Cain—Adam and Eve's eldest son—killed his brother Abel and was cursed by God to wander eternally and live only on blood.

Thus the first true vampire was born.

The more one thought about it, the more absurdly unfair Cain's story was.

God punished him for bringing wheat instead of meat—

even though Cain had no sheep.

Abel's sheep literally ate Cain's crops, yet Abel received divine approval while Cain was ignored.

A rigged system from the start.

Abel had the advantage from birth.

No wonder Cain snapped.

When God "compensated" Adam and Eve by giving them Seth, it was already too late.

The curse stayed.

For vampires, Cain was the original progenitor—the god they revered.

If that Cain appeared?

Lucas wasn't sure he could handle it.

Cain would practically be God's grandson—his power would be terrifying.

The Ancient One watched him drift deeper into wild speculation and spoke again:

"The vampire you seek—I know a little."

Lucas snapped out of his thoughts.

"You know? Since when do sorcerers care about vampires?"

"We don't.

As long as they don't attempt mass extermination of humanity, we don't intervene.

But the ones your friends saw aren't ordinary vampires.

They're outsiders—not of Earth.

Or rather... not of this Earth."

"You mean they're from a parallel universe?"

He suddenly understood.

Vampires from another world.

But how did they arrive?

The Ancient One nodded, sipping her tea.

"Correct.

A few days ago, the Eye of Agamotto revealed images—
a mansion deep in the mountains.

Those vampires originated from there.

But its exact location, and how they arrived... the Eye didn't reveal."

"Is the mansion in New York?"

He frowned.

Her clue was vague—so vague it was basically nothing.

"Unknown for now.

I've already sent people to investigate.

When we have a lead, I'll tell you.

Because this involves an external power, I'll assign sorcerers to assist you—but Kamar-Taj will not directly join in the extermination.

You will handle the hunting.

My people will gather the vampires and lock them in a barrier for you."

Kamar-Taj was stretched thin, always prepared for dimensional invaders.

Helping Lucas set the table was their limit—they couldn't fight the battle for him.

Lucas nodded.

"Works for me.

But Master... when this is done, how are you planning to thank me?"

He grinned slyly.

He didn't want to treat her the way he treated S.H.I.E.L.D., but—

he did need a favor from her.

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The Ancient One smiled as well.

"I know what you're thinking. And I agree.

When this matter is over, bring that young girl—Wanda—to Kamar-Taj.

I have a gift for her. Consider it your reward."

Lucas couldn't hide his grin.

She was right—he wanted Wanda to learn at Kamar-Taj.

Not only because the Ancient One was the most capable teacher she could have, but also because Kamar-Taj safeguarded the Darkhold, left behind by Chthon.

Wanda, who inherited his Chaos Magic, was one of the very few beings able to read it.

The plan was dangerous—extremely dangerous.

The Darkhold corrupted minds, magnified darkness within the heart, and drove readers into insanity until they became slaves to the book.

Lucas feared Wanda's mind might not withstand it.

That was why he needed the Ancient One—to teach Wanda properly, to keep her away from the Darkhold's corruption.

Wanda's current use of Chaos Magic was crude, instinctive at best.

And Lucas? His magic came from the system—he couldn't teach her anything practical.

So Kamar-Taj was the only choice.

The Ancient One agreed quickly.

She knew Wanda's origin.

In fact, she had been there when Chthon "blessed" Wanda as an infant, and she had helped other sorcerers drive Chthon back into another dimension.

She felt responsible for Wanda.

She also feared the possibility of Wanda eventually embracing darkness.

Chaos Magic was the root of all dark sorcery—its temptation immeasurable.

After the Ancient One departed, the distorted space rippled and vanished.

Time resumed.

Matt and Frank didn't notice a thing—

one continued sipping his tea,

the other kept talking.

"That's the situation," Frank said, putting away the photos. "No leads at all.

We haven't even seen a vampire's shadow."

Lucas took out the video communicator Natasha left him and called Nick Fury.

"Hey, baldy. Miss me? How've you been?"

Lucas waved with an exaggerated fake smile.

"If you've got business, say it. I'm busy."

Fury's face was as dark as charcoal.

If he could beat Lucas, he'd have kicked him through the screen by now.

"Last time I warned you—you need to take that man seriously.

He's bad news.

If you still don't get it, then I really can't help you."

Lucas said it plainly, unconcerned about who might be standing beside Fury.

"If you're too embarrassed to deal with him yourself, I can do it for you.

No payment needed this time—just let me blow up the Triskelion."

He still hadn't given up on blowing up S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ.

He wanted it so badly that he was willing to waive his usual fee.

"If you've got nothing important to say, I'm hanging up."

Fury finally realized he must be stupid for answering Lucas's calls at all.

"There is something. Frank, show him."

Lucas turned the camera.

Frank skipped any greetings and shoved the photos toward the screen.

"These are from a case a few days ago.

Victims are young women.

Dead from blood loss.

Two bite marks on the neck—likely vampire—and their cervical bones were snapped."

A concise summary.

"Motherf—! Those damned bloodsucking pests again?!

Do they think S.H.I.E.L.D. is a decoration?!"

Fury's face darkened even more.

They had just cleaned out an ancient nest, and now another batch appeared.

It made S.H.I.E.L.D. look incompetent.

"Where did it happen?"

"Hell's Kitchen."

Fury immediately called out off-screen:

"Coulson. My office. Now."

In a few moments, Coulson entered.

"You called, sir—oh, hey Frank! How've you been?"

Frank lifted a hand in silent greeting.

"Drop everything you're doing," Fury said.

"Take Romanoff and Barton.

Find Frank.

Investigate a vampire case.

I suspect vampires have slipped into New York."

Coulson nodded.

"Understood. Going now."

He turned and left.

"Whatever you need, ask Coulson.

I'll assign people to investigate on my end as well.

That's all."

The screen went dark—Fury had hung up.

The three waited.

Soon enough, a Quinjet descended onto the roof of Lucas's apartment building.

The tenants barely reacted—they were used to it.

Their landlord Lucas wasn't ordinary:

son of the NYPD commissioner, friend of Tony Stark, and clearly connected to some shadowy government organization.

Just one of those titles could make someone untouchable in New York.

Lucas had all of them.

It was no wonder these tenants scrambled to live here.

Even Stark rented an apartment here—being his neighbor was bragging rights.

Rent was reasonable, not cheap but not overpriced—perfect for the tenants' egos.

Many even prepaid months early just to avoid losing their spot.

When they saw the Quinjet parked on the roof 24/7, their suspicions solidified—

Lucas definitely had military connections too.

Living here felt safer than the richest gated communities in the city.

Nobody wanted to move out.

Not ever.

The Quinjet belonged to Lucas—

or rather, it used to before three certain girls vandalized it with their "artistic vision."

Now it was black, white, green, and red—

like a disco ball.

Spider-web patterns and shockwave rings covered its surface.

If Wanda weren't so restrained by nature, she might've painted on glowing Chaos Magic flames too.

Lucas had zero say in any of this.

As Skye put it:

"You can't even fly the jet.

What right do you have to comment?"

One sentence, and Lucas shut down completely.

He let them do whatever they wanted.

They even assigned roles like they were playing a video game:

Skye as main pilot, Gwen as co-pilot, Wanda as "main attacker."

A ridiculous arrangement.

The jet didn't even have a machine gun.

What exactly was Wanda supposed to "attack" with—
her forehead?

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Chapter 148 - 148 – Peter Joins

Aside from the three little tyrants on the jet, Coulson, Natasha, and Barton also disembarked and followed Lucas down into the office on the first floor.

Lucas had the system modify part of the office and apartment layout—an exclusive elevator was installed inside the firm, allowing direct access to every floor without stepping outside. It could only be activated with a crystal, making it strictly for their group.

"You all came together?"

Lucas raised a brow. The girls had been flying around nonstop—had they ended up joyriding at S.H.I.E.L.D.?

His guess wasn't far off.

While the trio were soaring around the city, they received a call from Natasha telling them to pick her up from S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters. So Skye casually changed course and flew straight there.

Fortunately, S.H.I.E.L.D. acted generously. They didn't restrict or interrogate them—Lucas's Quinjet had an official clearance record allowing unrestricted access to any S.H.I.E.L.D. airport or landing pad. This discovery delighted the three girls beyond expectation.

"I picked Natasha and the others up. Figured I'd take a little tour of S.H.I.E.L.D. while I was at it."

Skye winked at Lucas.

Lucas immediately understood. She must have hacked their system again, probably planting a dozen new backdoors.

He discreetly gave her a thumbs-up.

Skye smirked proudly.

The two understood each other perfectly.

"When we arrived, the Director briefed us on the situation. We've already deployed around Hell's Kitchen. Once those vampires show themselves again, they won't get away."

Coulson held up a tablet displaying a map of Hell's Kitchen covered with densely packed red markers.

"It'll be a tough few nights. Don't sleep too deeply. The moment there's a lead, we move."

He distributed bone-conduction earpieces to everyone—encrypted S.H.I.E.L.D. comm units, perfect for rapid coordination.

"Hell yeah! I can finally go on a real mission with everyone again!"

Gwen clenched her fist excitedly.

Aside from the vampire incident last time, she had been stuck attending classes. A rare chance like this was precious.

Lucas understood the subtext and turned to the group.

"Let's call Peter over. He's combat-ready, and this time the enemy's a bit troublesome."

His last sentence immediately drew everyone's attention—

not because Peter was joining,

but because Lucas said the enemy was troublesome.

"How do you know they're troublesome?"

Frank picked up on it quickly.

Clear as day—Lucas knew something they didn't.

Lucas didn't hide anything; he planned to explain once everyone arrived anyway.

"Call Peter first."

Gwen phoned him.

Peter, currently cuddling with Felicia, answered instantly without thinking.

"Do you need Felicia to request another leave for you?"

His first reaction was about school leave. Gwen had already taken several days off, all easily approved—the privilege of being the top student.

"No, this time you need to take the day off. We need your help."

Peter perked up immediately.

He hadn't worn the Spider-Man suit since starting college—finally he had a chance to get back into action.

"No problem. I'm heading over now."

After hanging up, he looked at Felicia. She'd obviously heard everything.

"Be careful. I'll be waiting for you."

Felicia didn't protest.

Ever since learning Peter was Spider-Man, she had mentally prepared herself.

Spider-Man protected New York.

He couldn't stay by her side every moment.

"Got it!"

Peter gave a mock salute, changed into his suit, and used a crystal to enter the Chocobo space.

After he left, Felicia stared out the window silently.

Eventually, she seemed to make a decision, picked up her phone, dialed a number, and said:

"I agree to what you proposed."

She hung up immediately and lay back on the bed in a daze.

Peter returned from the Chocobo space and appeared in the office.

Felicia would handle the leave request—he didn't need to worry.

"Hey guys, what's the emergency?"

He didn't wear his mask—everyone here knew each other's identities, so it didn't matter.

"Vampires again. And this time it's different. Lucas insisted on waiting for you."

Gwen explained.

Lucas nodded.

"I received new information—these vampires are from another universe."

The statement hit the room like a bomb.

Everyone froze, stunned, unsure they'd heard correctly.

"You mean they're aliens?"

Coulson frowned.

As Fury's top agent, he knew secrets even Natasha and Barton didn't—especially regarding extraterrestrials.

He even knew the woman constantly patrolling outer space.

Lucas shook his head.

"Not aliens. They're from a different universe. A parallel Earth."

"Parallel universe? There are really parallel universes?"

Coulson couldn't help asking.

Until now, parallel universes were only theoretical—no one had ever truly traveled to one.

"They exist. And from what I know, there's even an organization specifically tasked with handling parallel universe affairs."

He was talking about the TVA from Loki—that bunch of fools.

"Then why aren't they stopping these vampires? Isn't that their job?"

Skye raised her hand like she was answering a question in class.

"I have no idea. None of them are normal.

You can't expect competence from a group of idiots."

Lucas scoffed.

The TVA was a mess—intervening where they shouldn't, ignoring what they should.

Typical malfunctioning bureaucrats.

"How do you even know they exist? Did they tell you all this?"

Coulson fired off two questions in a row.

His attention had already shifted from vampires to the TVA.

The organization's duties overlapped with S.H.I.E.L.D.'s in certain areas.

A seasoned agent like Coulson naturally felt the urge to gather intel.

Lucas shook his head.

"No. I've never met the TVA.

The person who told me this was someone else."

"Who?"

Coulson pressed on, fully in interrogator mode.

"I can't tell you yet. When the time is right, they'll reveal themselves.

Once we confirm the vampires' stronghold, they'll show up to help."

Lucas didn't mention the sorcerers.

He knew exactly what S.H.I.E.L.D. would do if they learned about Kamar-Taj—

coercion, surveillance, pressure, manipulation.

They would stop at nothing to control such power.

Lucas had no intention of letting that happen.

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Despite the Ancient One's overwhelming power—no one on Earth could truly threaten her—Lucas wasn't the type to gossip aimlessly.

Even so, once those sorcerers chose to reveal themselves, that would be their business.

Whatever reaction S.H.I.E.L.D. might have, Lucas trusted the Ancient One already had a plan.

Coulson saw Lucas wasn't willing to elaborate further, so he didn't continue pressing.

Everyone's attention returned to the matter of the vampires.

Lucas continued, "I know their nest is a manor. I just don't know exactly where—only that it's in the middle of a forest."

He sketched the rough appearance of the manor.

Earlier, when speaking with the Ancient One, she had shown him the image projected by the Eye of Agamotto.

It was an old, massive estate surrounded by withered trees—just like those abandoned manors straight out of a 19th-century horror film.

"I'll have my people investigate immediately."

Coulson photographed Lucas's sketch with his phone.

Skye also scanned it into her computer to run image comparisons online.

But matching would take time. Until results came back, all they could do was wait.

"There's one more thing. Blade said he invited an expert on vampires to help us. But we still haven't seen this person. Keep an eye out."

Frank glanced at Coulson.

S.H.I.E.L.D.'s intelligence network was massive, and since Blade claimed this person would come, he knew Blade wouldn't lie.

He mainly didn't want S.H.I.E.L.D. accidentally shooting an ally.

"Who is it?"

Coulson asked.

"No idea."

"Male or female?"

"No idea."

Coulson was speechless.

Not even gender? How were they supposed to 'keep an eye out'?

Were they supposed to investigate every single person who walked by?

"Don't stress over it. If Blade brought this expert in, they'll show up at the right moment."

Matt wasn't concerned.

He trusted Blade—if Blade said someone was reliable, then they wouldn't disappoint.

They waited in the office for a while, and during that time Lucas once again became everyone's personal chef, serving a free, lavish meal.

The famously stingy Lucas was dying inside.

Just as everyone was enjoying the food, Lucas's phone rang—Tony was calling.

"Hey, kid~ Miss your Uncle Tony lately~~~?"

Tony's voice was as annoying as ever. Lucas wanted to punch him through the phone.

"Yeah yeah, I missed you so much I almost fell asleep. What, too bored to tinker with your useless suits today?"

Lucas fired back immediately.

This was how he and Tony communicated—constant mutual roasting.

Pepper once said they were equally foul-mouthed and perfectly suited for each other.

Lucas and Tony weren't just used to this—they needed it.

If they didn't insult each other at least a little, something felt off.

"What kind of nonsense is that? My suits are top-tier. In fact, the one specifically designed to deal with you is almost done. You'll be kneeling and crying when I'm finished with you!"

Tony kept running his mouth.

Thanks to vibranium and the Destroyer scraps Lucas had given him earlier, Tony's suits had advanced drastically.

He had even created a vibranium suit ahead of schedule, along with a suit specialized in countering magic—named the Destroyer Armor.

However, this Destroyer Armor wasn't nearly as monstrous as the one from the comics, because it lacked the key components—Odin's blessing and rune enchantments.

For now, it could only absorb magical energy and convert it to power.

"The gear you wanted is ready. Come pick it up."

That was Tony's real reason for calling.

He had finished everything Lucas requested—and upgraded it too.

He was, after all, a perfectionist and tech fanatic.

"So fast? Not bad, Stark~"

Lucas hadn't expected such efficiency.

He assumed the vibranium-Uru alloy process would take months to perfect.

"Of course! I'm Tony Stark—the smartest man on this planet!"

Tony laughed with hands on his hips, acting like the king of creation.

"Not now. I'm in the middle of something. In a few days."

"Huh? Something fun and you didn't invite me? Tell me—let your Uncle Tony hear it."

Tony was itching for action.

After days locked in the lab, even Pepper complained he'd grow mushrooms if he stayed there any longer.

"Vampires popped up in Hell's Kitchen. We're discussing a plan."

Lucas stated plainly.

"For real? And you didn't call me? Perfect—I'll grab a few specimens to study. I'm not a biologist, but come on, it's me—Tony Stark!!"

Tony's excitement spiked.

It was also a perfect chance to test his new suit.

"Wait for me. I'm heading over now—and I'll bring your gear. You'll love it."

He hung up instantly, suited up in his newly developed vibranium armor, grabbed Lucas's equipment, and blasted off.

This new vibranium model, designated Mark X, was Tony's secret weapon.

He decided to show it off today.

It retained the classic flashy red-and-gold color scheme.

The chest housed a hexagonal arc reactor.

With vibranium incorporated, the suit was even lighter than earlier models, dramatically boosting maneuverability. Combined with vibranium's properties, it became a top-tier offensive and defensive machine.

Soon, a thunderous boom echoed outside Lucas's office, and a red-and-gold figure plunged from the sky.

Pedestrians screamed, filmed, and begged for autographs.

Tony waved stylishly and, still in his armor, walked inside.

"Hey, folks~ hope I'm not late!!"

The armor opened, and Tony stepped out in a black compression suit, looking annoyingly smug.

The armor sealed itself again and followed like a personal bodyguard.

"That the newest suit?"

Lucas immediately crowded around it, examining every angle, tapping and touching it, eyes full of curiosity.

"Of course. Vibranium alloy. Way better than that antique shield of Captain America's."

The suit carried two large cases—Lucas's ordered equipment.

Everyone's gaze fixed on Tony's armor.

No surprise—this was an Iron Man suit.

The ultimate male fantasy.

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Tony greeted everyone one by one.

When his gaze landed on Matt, he paused deliberately.

"Hey, uh... how many fingers am I holding up?"

He flashed a peace sign like a mischievous kid.

Matt didn't get offended at all.

He smiled warmly and actually answered, leaving Tony stunned.

"I can't see, but I can read vibrations in the air. The world appears in outlines, but I see it clearly enough."

His explanation made Tony's eyes shine with curiosity—this man's sonic sensing was practically bat-like.

"Whoa~~ incredible. I should really study this. Yes, I've decided! My next suit is going in that direction."

Tony, a man Thanos once called "cursed with knowledge," was always quick to absorb new ideas and spark new inventions.

"You'll love what I made for you."

He snapped his fingers, and the suit behind him stepped forward, opening the first large case.

Inside was a pair of sleek, black arm bracers—streamlined, glossy like a mirror, shaped with the same futuristic elegance as Tony's battle armor.

"I added those fragments you brought me—the results were amazing. Not only can these absorb shockwaves, they can redirect them."

He tossed one bracer to Skye and handed the other to Lucas.

Skye's excited shriek nearly shook the room.

Her long-awaited dream gear was finally here—no more shattered bones every time she unleashed her power.

Even Natasha's eyes burned with envy, though for her the bracers' usefulness ended at enhanced defense.

Lucas examined his bracer briefly.

He let his inner magic surge outward—and the bracer absorbed every bit effortlessly, storing his power inside.

He could clearly feel the reservoir of magic inside the device, ready to release at will.

He handed the bracer back to Skye.

"Now you don't have to worry about breaking your hands every time you use your powers."

"Mm-hmm!! I'm gonna make those vampires regret everything!"

Skye strapped the bracers on.

They were shockingly light—no metallic heaviness at all—and she moved naturally, without effort.

"Impressive, right? That's the alien metal's effect. Turns out it can change weight. Absolutely fascinating!"

Tony had experimented extensively on the Uru metal Lucas provided.

This weight-modifying ability was one of his greatest discoveries.

"It's perfect!!"

Skye stared at her hands, brimming with eagerness.

Shockwaves hummed outward, rippling visibly around her arms, growing stronger and stronger, filling the entire office.

Before, this would've shattered her bones.

Now she felt nothing—not even strain—and instinct told her she hadn't come close to the limit.

Then Tony's armor opened the second case.

Inside were three uniforms:

one black-and-white with a hood,

one thin crimson armor suit,

and one sleek black uniform similar to Natasha's.

Gwen, Skye, and Wanda's new gear.

"We get uniforms too?!"

Gwen lunged forward instantly.

Her suit's design hadn't changed much—the material was now a vibranium-Uru hybrid.

All three suits had excellent magical conduction, thanks to the Uru.

Wanda's suit received a special addition—a red cloak.

It could absorb her Chaos Magic, store it, and convert it into a protective barrier.

The three girls rushed off eagerly to try them on.

Tony then scanned the room, his gaze locking onto Peter.

"Hey, kid! You're the little fanboy that brat Lucas mentioned? Why do you look so clueless?"

Peter froze like he'd been struck by lightning.

Tony Stark was his idol.

Being recognized by him nearly caused a medical emergency.

"M-Mr. S-Stark... h-hello..."

He stiffly stepped forward and stuck out his hand like a malfunctioning robot.

"Relax, kid. You're the little spider in pajamas, right? Fine—considering I owe Lucas, I'll make your suit."

Tony's tone was arrogant, but it couldn't hide the faint fondness in his eyes.

He liked Peter immediately—but he'd sooner die than admit it.

"R-really?! Thank you, Mr. Stark! I'm totally introducing you to my aunt—she'll be so excited she won't sleep for days!!"

Peter blurted it out without thinking and instantly sold out Aunt May.

Tony blinked, then casually drifted closer to Lucas.

"...Is the aunt pretty?"

Lucas nodded.

"Very. And single."

Tony's eyes gleamed.

Lucas added lazily,

"But are you sure you'll survive if Pepper finds out?"

That one sentence shattered Tony's fantasies.

"What nonsense! I just want to see what kind of woman can raise a kid like that. Don't slander me~~!"

He glanced around nervously.

"...Don't tell Pepper. Seriously. She'll kill me."

Lucas grinned wickedly.

Tony nearly blasted him with a repulsor.

Soon, the three girls came downstairs wearing their new suits.

Gwen's looked nearly the same but with a metallic sheen.

Skye's suit resembled Natasha's—sleek, flexible, sharp.

Wanda's had changed the most—the crimson mage cloak made her look unmistakably mystical.

Tony had nailed the "sorceress aesthetic."

"How much of that metal do you have left?" Lucas asked.

"What, you want a suit too?"

"I don't need that kind of thing."

"There's some left. I'm planning a suit for Pepper."

Lucas and Tony shared a knowing look.

In another timeline, Pepper had worn the Rescue Armor.

Now Lucas wanted Tony to build it early—and with vibranium and Uru available, why not?

The office buzzed with laughter and chatter until nightfall.

The once-quiet space had become lively and warm—almost like a family gathering.

They even enjoyed another meal courtesy of Lucas, who silently screamed inside while everyone ate happily.

When darkness settled, S.H.I.E.L.D. activated full surveillance over Hell's Kitchen and the surrounding districts—satellites included.

Skye simultaneously took control of every camera (all three of them) in the notoriously underfunded neighborhood.

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