

Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 261 - 261 – Kidnapping the President - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 261 - 261 – Kidnapping the President

20257-8 minutes

At this moment, the President was holding a small internal meeting, discussing strategies for capturing the terrorists. Just then, the Iron Patriot slowly walked into the room.

"Everything secure, Colonel Rhodes?" one of the congressmen asked, turning toward the Iron Patriot.

The Iron Patriot scanned the room, then casually picked up a nearby Statue of Liberty ornament and hurled it forward. The sharp end pierced straight through the congressman's heart.

The sudden attack stunned everyone for a split second. The bodyguards reacted immediately, opening fire—but their bullets were completely useless against the Iron Patriot.

Several repulsor blasts later, everyone in the room was dead. The President had crawled under the table, one bodyguard shielding him with his own body.

Bang!

The table above them was suddenly ripped away. The Iron Patriot seized the bodyguard, and at point-blank range fired a repulsor blast straight through his chest.

The President grabbed a pistol from the floor and tried to fight back, but he was effortlessly subdued. The Iron Patriot lifted him by the throat, holding him suspended in midair.

The faceplate opened, revealing a completely unfamiliar face—nothing like Rhodes at all.

"It's an honor to meet you, Mr. President."

This was Killian's subordinate, wearing the Iron Patriot armor and impersonating Rhodes to abduct the President.

"Do your worst!" the President snarled. "I won't beg!"

"Please don't rush things, Mr. President," the man replied calmly. "Killing you right now wouldn't be the Mandarin's style."

He struck the President at the back of the neck, knocking him unconscious. Then he stepped out of the armor and placed the President inside it.

"Mission complete. You may remote-control the Iron Patriot to return."

He spoke into the communicator while fastening a parachute, preparing to jump from Air Force One.

The scene shifted.

The Iron Patriot landed, and Killian was already in his laboratory, tinkering with the Extremis virus.

Boom!

The Iron Patriot descended from the sky and walked into the lab.

"Good evening, Mr. President. Welcome aboard."

The armor opened. The President, now awake, collapsed weakly onto the floor, staring at Killian in terror.

"This way, Mr. President."

Killian turned and walked off. Two guards hauled the President to his feet and followed.

They stopped in front of a large display screen. Killian pressed a remote, and footage appeared of a massive cargo ship sailing across a pitch-black ocean.

"Two years ago," Killian said calmly, "this ship dumped over one million gallons of crude oil into the waters near a Mexican port. The marine ecosystem there was completely destroyed. To this day, not a single fish or shrimp has returned. And yet, none of the wealthy individuals

or corporations responsible were ever brought to justice. They remain free and untouched—thanks to you, Mr. President."

The footage shifted between images of the oil spill, news reports, and interviews showing the perpetrators walking free.

"What do you want?!" the President demanded, panic finally breaking through.

Killian thought for a moment.

"Well... nothing in particular. I just needed a convincing excuse to execute you on television and across the internet."

He turned to face the President.

"People have to move forward, don't they? I've already found a new political patron. By this time tomorrow, he'll be sitting in your chair, ruling the United States."

With a wave of his hand, the two guards stepped forward and bound the President.

"Carl, we've pinpointed the exact location of the ship."

Back at the office, the group had already returned from the villa. Carl and Tony were sitting on the couch, while Rhodes lay unconscious nearby.

Rhodes's condition dated back to their departure from the estate.

With the Iron Patriot stolen, Rhodes—now just an ordinary man—couldn't possibly keep up with Carl and Tony. Carl decided to summon Onion and have him carry Rhodes back.

Onion refused outright. When Rhodes tried to touch him, Onion immediately attacked. Carl had no choice but to calm him down.

Onion refused to carry Rhodes, and Carl's cloak—just as temperamental—completely ignored him as well. Rhodes was so embarrassed at the time that he wished he could vanish on the spot.

In the end, Carl had to bribe Onion with half a month of unlimited strawberry sundaes and cola before Onion reluctantly agreed to carry Rhodes.

Yes—Onion absolutely loved strawberry sundaes and cola.

It all started when Carl once brought a sundae and soda into the Chocobo space, enjoying them while soaking in the hot springs. Onion wandered over out of curiosity, took a bite—and that was it. From then on, whenever he saw Carl, he clung to him, demanding strawberry sundaes and cola without end.

Carl gestured for Rhodes to climb on. The moment Rhodes tried, Onion pecked him squarely on the head. Rhodes's legs twitched, and he immediately passed out.

Onion let out a call, as if to say: I only carry unconscious living things. No one rides me while awake. My reins aren't for just anyone.

Carl could only sigh helplessly. Onion truly wouldn't let anyone but him touch him—a completely ungrateful creature.

So they brought Rhodes back with him still unconscious. Onion was now sprawled inside the office, waiting patiently for his strawberry sundae.

"Wake Rhodes up," Tony said, glancing at the coordinates Skye had found. "Let's move."

The ship was deep in the Atlantic, far from New York.

"Skye, order some strawberry sundaes for Onion," Carl added. "If he doesn't get his dessert, he's not going back into the Chocobo space."

Carl rubbed Onion's massive head, and Onion happily leaned into him.

Skye nodded. Even she could only sneak a few pats in while Onion was eating. Touch him too much, and he'd dodge; keep going, and he'd attack.

Onion recognized only Carl. No matter who else it was—even close companions—he wouldn't allow them near. Cute as he was, only Carl could touch him.

Tony slapped Rhodes lightly on the face. No response.

He slapped him harder.

Rhodes shot upright. "What the hell—did you hit me?"

"Nope," Tony said, shaking his head.

"...You didn't?"

Rhodes touched his face, the pain unmistakable.

"Forget it," Tony said. "We've found Killian. We're moving now."

"Oh. Then let me grab some equipment first."

As he spoke, Rhodes reached for his phone, preparing to contact the military.

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## **Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 262 - 262 – Confirming the Location - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 262 - 262 – Confirming the Location**

20256-7 minutes

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"Forget it. Do you really think those people can still be trusted?" Tony stopped Rhodes before he could act.

"How else do you think Killian knew the President's itinerary? Someone was clearly feeding him information."

"Then what am I supposed to do?" Rhodes spread his hands helplessly. "I can't exactly go with you unarmed. I used to be inside a suit—now I don't even have something for self-defense."

"Here, take this. Make do with it for now."

Carl tossed Rhodes a small fruit knife. The blade wasn't even as long as one of Rhodes's fingers.

"Don't mess with me," Rhodes rolled his eyes and tossed it aside. "That thing wouldn't even cut through clothing. If you want me dead, just say so."

"JARVIS, bring Mark Five over here," Tony said, tapping his bracelet.

"Yes, sir. Estimated arrival time: ten minutes. Please remain cautious."

High above Earth, a Stark Industries satellite suddenly activated. A cocoon-like metal pod was launched from it, hurtling toward New York at extreme speed.

"I'll loan you Mark Five for now," Tony said. "Once this is over, I'm taking that damned Iron Patriot back. The military will never get so much as a single fragment of my armor ever again."

Just thinking about the military's meddling made Tony furious. His armor had been butchered beyond recognition, stolen by terrorists, and used as if it had been designed for them from the start.

"Sir, Mark Five is approaching. It will land at the entrance in ten seconds," JARVIS reported.

Moments later, with a thunderous boom, a red-and-gold suit of armor dropped from the sky and stepped through the door.

This suit resembled Tony's early Mark II—the War Machine prototype—differing mainly in paint. Its weapons were basic: repulsors as the primary armament, with a few small missiles and a laser cutter. Overall, its loadout was fairly simple.

It wasn't that Tony didn't want to give Rhodes a better suit—most of his remaining armors simply didn't suit Rhodes's combat style. Rhodes favored heavy firepower, while Tony's

newer suits relied almost entirely on energy weapons, many of which no longer even included laser cutters.

"It's yours for now. JARVIS, update the system—add Colonel James Rhodes's biometric data."

"Yes, sir."

Moments later, the armor unlocked. Rhodes stepped in, excitement written all over his face. This suit was clearly superior to the Iron Patriot in both performance and power supply.

After moving around to get used to it, Rhodes deployed all the weapons.

"Firepower's a bit lacking, but it'll do. Still, I miss my Gatling gun. That—that was romance."

"Let's move. Skye, share the coordinates," Tony said, not bothering to respond.

The three of them took off. Carl left Onion behind at the office—this fight didn't require him yet.

They headed straight for their destination. Soon, the vast Atlantic Ocean stretched endlessly beneath them, fish occasionally breaking the surface of the water.

Near midnight, they finally spotted the cargo ship.

They halted high above it, keeping their distance as Tony and Rhodes scanned the vessel.

"Plenty of people onboard. This is definitely the place," Rhodes said, looking at the dense cluster of red dots in his HUD.

"Let's move. We'll sneak aboard first," Tony said.

Tony and Rhodes cut their thrusters and dropped straight into the ocean. Their boosters would be too visible in the dark, so they chose to approach underwater. Carl, on the other hand, had no such concern—his cloak allowed for completely silent flight.

By the time Carl reached the deck, Tony and Rhodes had already climbed up from below.

At the center of the ship, a crane suspended the Iron Patriot armor. Its faceplate was open, revealing the unmistakable face of the President of the United States.

"Damn..." Rhodes muttered. "They've got the President hanging over a bunch of oil pipes. Looks like they're planning to roast him alive."

"Well, would you look at that," Carl said, giving Rhodes a thumbs-up.

"Didn't expect Americans to know how to make roast duck—hanging it up and cooking it from below. Very authentic."

"This is not the time for jokes!" Rhodes snapped. "That's the President!"

"Huh. Now that you mention it, I kind of want roast duck," Tony nodded thoughtfully. "When we get back, I'll have the chef make some."

"...You're unbelievable," Rhodes said, then sighed. "Now you've got me hungry too."

"Alright, what's the plan?" Rhodes asked, forcing himself to focus.

"A plan?" Carl shrugged. "Why bother? Just charge in. With your suits, regular bullets won't do a thing."

As the group's so-called master strategist, Carl offered his brilliant idea: go in head-on—full brute force.

"No stealth, no nonsense. Just go all out."

"That'll get the President killed," Rhodes shot back immediately.

"The moment we show ourselves, Killian could detonate the oil lines."

"It's fine," Carl replied casually. "It's just a President. You really think anyone wouldn't replace him immediately if he died? He's just a puppet of big capital anyway. The world won't stop turning without him."

"Get lost!" Rhodes snapped. "We came here to save him. If he dies, then what was the point of all this?"

"Wasn't the main goal settling scores with Killian?" Carl said with a grin.

"When did this turn into a rescue mission?"

Just then, Killian's voice echoed over the ship's broadcast system.

"All personnel, prepare yourselves. The live broadcast is about to begin. Take your positions."

"Excellent. Start with Camera One, then slowly pull back. Switch to Camera Four. Camera Three, give me a close-up of the President's face..."

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Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 263 - 263 – The Rescue - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 263 - 263 – The Rescue

20257-8 minutes

Killian was directing a technician on how to adjust the camera angles, ensuring the President's image was perfectly framed on screen.

"There's no time left. We have to move now," Rhodes said anxiously when he heard the broadcast.

"If this goes live, the whole country will be thrown into chaos."

"What are we waiting for? Let's do it."

Tony's nanotech armor deployed instantly, enveloping his body. He shot straight into the air as the drone cannons unfolded behind him and opened fire.

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack!!"

The alarm blared across the cargo ship. Terrorists poured out like a tide, raising their weapons and firing wildly at Tony.

Rhodes took off as well, firing repulsor blasts nonstop, dropping more than a dozen enemies in moments.

But to his shock, those who were hit began to glow red. Within seconds, their wounds regenerated completely.

"Damn it! They can do that too? This is cheating—I'm reporting them!"

Rhodes muttered under his breath, continuing to fire while launching small missiles to carpet the area.

"JARVIS, lock onto all thermal signatures carrying the Extremis virus. Neutralize them," Tony ordered.

Red markers flooded Tony's HUD as the drone cannons behind him unleashed a storm of precision fire.

Four additional drone cannons split off and flew outward, independently hunting targets.

Their firepower was terrifying. Anyone struck was pierced clean through the chest, leaving no chance for regeneration.

Carl, by contrast, was far more relaxed. His crimson cloak expanded to full length, shielding him completely as he casually fired the Judicator, moving like he was strolling through a marketplace.

He wasn't here to work himself to exhaustion. He didn't care in the slightest whether the President lived or died.

Bang.

One shot, one kill.

Against the Judicator, the Extremis virus was utterly useless. The instant a bullet hit, holy energy surged through the target's body, destroying the virus completely. There was no regeneration—only death.

Carl advanced like a reaper, calmly taking lives. Body armor was meaningless before the Judicator.

"JARVIS—barrage mode," Tony commanded.

The drone cannons returned to his side and began charging. Energy visibly condensed around them.

At the critical point, countless beams erupted outward like a celestial bloom, scattering in every direction.

For a brief moment, the entire cargo ship was enveloped in a glowing canopy, its ribs formed by searing energy beams.

In less than twenty seconds, nothing on the deck remained intact. The ship looked like a battlefield relic—torn steel, gaping holes, twisted metal, and nearly a hundred corpses strewn across the wreckage.

Suspended above, the President stared at the scene in stunned exhilaration. He knew—help had arrived.

The moment he saw the red-and-gold armor, his heart finally settled. With Iron Man here, his life was no longer in danger.

Carl rose into the air. Bullets poured from the Judicator, forming a blazing hexagram beneath his feet.

The next instant, the sigil unleashed a storm of projectiles downward. Then the hexagram itself crashed into the deck, detonating violently.

Within a ten-meter radius, the deck was reduced to scorched earth. The terrorists there had already become one with the ashes.

With Tony's current power and armor, the old "House Party Protocol" from his past life was completely unnecessary. His firepower alone was more than sufficient.

Rhodes reached the President and glanced at his former armor, touching it briefly before turning back.

"How are you feeling, Mr. President?"

"Colonel Rhodes, thank you for coming to save me," the President said, nodding. He was unharmed—Killian hadn't touched him.

"I'll get you out of there right now."

Rhodes raised his hand—

—and was instantly blasted away by a streak of red light. He slammed into a nearby container, punching a massive hole straight through it.

Killian emerged slowly from the shadows, looking up at the suspended President.

"No one can save you, Mr. President."

Tony recalled the drone cannons, leaving only two active for support.

"Sir, remaining power at forty percent," JARVIS reported.

That single barrage had consumed nearly thirty percent of the suit's energy.

"Reserve enough power for the return trip. Divert everything else to weapons," Tony ordered.

As long as he could make it back to New York, the rest didn't matter.

Killian charged toward Tony, his entire body glowing like molten magma.

Suddenly, Carl stepped into his path and fired without hesitation.

Killian felt it instantly—a crushing sense of danger. He twisted aside just in time, the bullet grazing past his chest and tearing through his clothing.

"Who are you?!" Killian demanded.

"That's not important," Carl replied calmly.

"Tony's busy. I'll play with you instead."

A blade of compressed air formed beside Carl and shot forward.

Killian crossed his arms to block it. His superheated skin shattered the wind blade before it could cut deeper.

"No matter who you are," Killian snarled, "anyone who stands in my way dies!"

He lunged forward, fist blazing with heat and flame, throwing a straight punch at Carl's chest.

"A fire punch?" Carl scoffed.

"Haven't you heard the saying? A flame fruit isn't even worth a dog eating it."

He didn't dodge.

Carl caught Killian's fist mid-strike. His own hand ignited, wrapped in crimson flames—the fire of the Phoenix.

"You're playing with fire in front of me? How many times did you wet the bed before you learned this trick?"

With a contemptuous grin, Carl released the flames.

In an instant, they coiled up Killian's arm. Before Killian could pull away, the entire limb melted like molten metal.

Killian retreated rapidly. Under the influence of the Extremis virus, magma-like material surged and reformed into a new arm.

"Feel the heat yet?" Carl said, raising his hand.

Crimson flames mixed with prismatic hues danced like phoenix feathers—brilliant and terrifying.

The Phoenix's fire burned at an immeasurable temperature, growing stronger the greater the resistance. It was far beyond anything the Extremis virus could endure.

Killian's expression darkened.

For the first time, he realized that the power he was so proud of was utterly insignificant before this young man.

And for the first time, he began to fear—and to wonder—just what kind of existence Carl truly was.

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## **Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 264 - 264 – Destroying the Cargo Ship - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 264 - 264 – Destroying the Cargo Ship**

20256-8 minutes

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"My power?"

Carl curled his lip. Typical of a mad scientist—on the verge of death, yet still obsessed with someone else's strength.

"You're not learning it. Maybe in your next life."

Boom—!!

A thunderous explosion erupted across the deck, violently rocking the entire cargo ship. Tony descended from the air and landed beside Carl.

"Finally dealt with them. Those guys were a real pain," Tony said as his faceplate retracted, revealing his face.

"Where's Rhodey?" Carl asked.

"He already sent the President back. No need to wait for him."

Tony turned his gaze toward Killian.

"You owe me a mansion worth several hundred million, plus Happy's medical bills."

"Tony Stark—my idol—you're finally acknowledging me?" Killian snarled.

"Do you have any idea what it was like, waiting on that rooftop all night? You humiliated me for an entire night!"

That memory was etched into his soul—the most humiliating, helpless night of his life.

"Oh. Well," Tony shrugged casually, "I still don't remember who you are, but I'll apologize for standing you up. How's that? Satisfied?"

He waved his hand dismissively. If anything, Tony was glad he hadn't taken Killian seriously back then. Had he done so, the consequences might have been even worse.

"Tony Stark—you're still mocking me!"

Killian's body flared crimson as rage consumed him. He charged forward, hurling two blazing fireballs from his fists.

Tony casually swatted them aside and fired a repulsor blast—but Killian dodged.

Bang!

Killian slammed a punch into Tony's abdomen. The intense heat turned part of the nanotech armor red-hot, though the suit quickly absorbed the energy. Tony seized Killian's arm and hurled him away.

Killian rolled across the deck, sprang back up, and unleashed a stream of fire from his mouth. Tony raised his palm, countering with a repulsor blast.

Boom—!

A violent explosion erupted between them, briefly obscuring Killian's vision. Tony seized the moment, rocketing upward and grabbing Killian, carrying him onto the crane platform. Killian smashed through the railing and crashed onto the platform.

"Tony Stark!!"

Killian tore away his tattered clothes, revealing a chest that looked like flowing magma. His body glowed brighter, red light blazing even in his eyes.

He easily dodged Tony's repulsor blast and smashed a fist into Tony's chest. The nanotech vibranium armor glowed red under the impact. Killian followed up with three more strikes to the same spot, leaving visible damage across the armor.

Tony ignited his thrusters and drove a powerful kick into Killian's chest, sending him flying into the crane behind him.

Tony pinned Killian down and raised his palm to fire—but Killian grabbed his hand and twisted it aside. The repulsor blast severed the steel cables anchoring the crane.

Crack—crack—!!

The crane began to groan and tilt visibly. Killian ignored it, lunging forward and flipping Tony onto the deck.

Straddling Tony, Killian hammered down with relentless punches, each impact sending red-hot shockwaves through the nanotech armor.

"We're finally face to face, Tony Stark—on a rooftop, just like before."

He continued raining blows.

"How does it feel? Do you feel the helplessness and despair I felt back then?!"

Killian opened his mouth, spewing searing flames directly into Tony's face. The heat turned the nanotech vibranium nearly molten.

"Sir, kinetic energy has reached critical levels," JARVIS warned.

The nanotech armor had been absorbing energy—just like Black Panther's suit.

Suddenly, Tony slammed both hands into the deck.

Boom!

A crimson shockwave exploded outward from his body, blasting Killian away. It didn't stop there—the wave expanded nearly ten meters, ripping through much of the crane structure.

Rumble—!!

The crane finally collapsed. Another nearby crane detonated, its massive fireball instantly engulfing Killian before he could react.

Tony rocketed into the air, escaping the blast radius. From above, he watched the flaming crane crash down, its wreckage punching straight through the already-ruined deck.

Tony landed slowly, scanning the smoldering wreckage—when suddenly a container was hurled toward him.

He fired a repulsor blast, shattering it instantly. The drone cannons deployed behind him, locking onto the inferno.

Killian emerged from the flames, his body glowing like molten lava, red energy coursing through him as though magma flowed in his veins.

He walked forward, seemingly fused with fire itself.

"You can't kill me, Tony Stark," Killian declared.

"With the Extremis virus, no one can kill me. I am... invincible—"

Boom!

A drone cannon fired.

A blue energy beam punched straight through Killian's chest. His body collapsed, eyes filled with disbelief and resentment.

Even at the moment of death, he couldn't understand how Tony Stark had managed to kill him.

"...I almost admire your confidence," Tony said calmly as the drone cannons retracted.

Extremis was powerful—capable of regenerating limbs—but it had limits. Fatal damage to the heart or brain was still lethal. Some things couldn't be repaired in time.

Carl stepped beside Tony. Together, they watched the cargo ship engulfed in flames. Water was already flooding in, and the vessel had begun to list.

"The ship's going down. Let's leave," Tony said, giving Killian's lifeless body one last glance.

"This ship can't be left intact," Carl added.

"There could be data on the Extremis virus here. We can't let it fall into anyone's hands—especially the military. They'll definitely try something stupid."

Carl knew the military well. They never gave up on the dream of super soldiers, always trying to build an army of them to dominate the world—only to create monsters instead.

"You're right," Tony agreed grimly.

"Those idiots never learn. Let's wipe it out."

He looked at Carl, the meaning obvious.

"...Fine. Move farther away first," Carl sighed.

Once again, he was the one cleaning up the mess.

For the first time, Carl truly understood Nick Fury's constant frustration—always being the one left to deal with the aftermath.

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Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 265 - 265 – Christmas - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 265 - 265 – Christmas

20257-9 minutes

Tony patted Carl on the shoulder, then rose into the air and flew off into the distance, hovering high above.

Carl's cloak rippled as he took flight as well. His eyes flashed red, and a vortex darker than the night itself appeared above the cargo ship. A tremendous pressure spread outward from the vortex.

"Zodiac Meteor!"

Carl shouted, pointing downward. A fiery red meteor immediately emerged from the vortex. Its diameter was even greater than the length of the cargo ship.

The meteor descended with overwhelming force. The pressure alone whipped the ocean into towering waves, and a brief tsunami formed around the ship.

Boom—!!

Under Carl and Tony's watchful eyes, the meteor collided with the cargo ship. The explosion illuminated the entire sky, and the vessel was completely vaporized—no wreckage left behind. Only after a long while did the sea surface finally return to calm.

By the time they headed back to New York from the Atlantic, dawn had begun to break. It was as though the night's battle had never existed; the cargo ship was gone without a trace, and the ocean once again shimmered peacefully.

"Didn't expect watching the sunrise over the Atlantic to feel this good," Carl remarked, flying alongside Tony.

"It's all the same," Tony shrugged. "Just a different angle from higher up."

What Tony wanted most at that moment was a comfortable bed—he was utterly exhausted.

"JARVIS, wake me when we arrive."

And just like that, Tony fell asleep inside his armor, completely uninterested in the scenery.

Carl, on the other hand, lay back in midair, letting his cloak carry him forward. He gazed at the rising sun behind them—the golden light spreading across the endless ocean, the shimmering waves, schools of fish leaping from the water, and the occasional whale spouting a column of spray. The tranquil, picturesque scene soothed his heart. After a night of intense fighting, the serenity felt all the more precious.

A few days later, Christmas arrived.

The entire United States was filled with festive cheer, though some people were in no mood to celebrate—such as the Vice President. On that very day, several federal officers escorted him into a prison transport vehicle, with Rhodey personally overseeing the transfer.

There was better news as well. On Christmas Day, Happy finally woke up—and was already exchanging flirtatious glances with the nurse assigned to care for him.

Tony and Pepper attended the Stacy family's Christmas dinner, held at Carl's office. The whole family sat together, laughing and chatting late into the night.

Carl and Tony sat on the sofa with beers in hand, the joyful sounds of their families filling the room behind them. At that moment, both felt an incomparable sense of peace. The companionship of family was the most beautiful thing in the world—nothing else came close.

"Looks like I'll be staying here for quite a while," Tony said. "My mansion will take a long time to rebuild. And I've been thinking—I don't want another luxury fortress. I want something warmer, less tech-heavy, more like a real home. How about it? Want me to build you a place next door too?"

After everything that had happened, Tony's outlook had clearly changed.

"That sounds great," Carl replied with a grin. "A free villa? Can't complain about that."

Truth be told, Tony's location really was perfect—overlooking the vast ocean, elevated enough to avoid the noise of the waves and the damp sea air.

"Then it's settled," Tony said. "I'll move JARVIS into your new place too. Or maybe I'll design you a brand-new AI. What kind do you like—gentle, or... wild?"

He wore a mischievous grin that made his intentions painfully obvious.

"Just look at that smile," Carl said flatly. "Forget the AI. I'm not used to that kind of thing. A smart home system will be enough."

Carl saw right through him and shut the idea down immediately.

Tony didn't mind. Once everything was installed, did Carl really think he'd tear it all out? Tony was already imagining giving the AI the gentlest, most soothing voice imaginable—one that would make your whole body melt just hearing it—then letting Gwen and the others deal with Carl properly. Just picturing the scene made Tony want to laugh.

Of course, the most important part would be recording it.

By now, Carl and Tony each had plenty of embarrassing photos and videos of the other. They could no longer blackmail one another—what they urgently needed were fresh ones.

During the Christmas holidays, the pace of New York noticeably slowed. The usual hurried crowds thinned, smiles became more common, and—on one particular day—the city experienced an unusually heavy snowfall.

It was a blizzard. Visibility dropped to less than ten meters, and the snowfall was expected to reach up to a full meter.

Carl, Tony, and the others stayed holed up in the office, unable to go out. With nothing to do, they gathered around the television. Outside, snow fell relentlessly, the streets nearly empty. Most people stayed indoors, and many shops and companies shut down—including Stark Industries.

Aside from employees stranded inside the building, everyone else was given time off. It was still the Christmas holiday, after all, and this was a once-in-a-generation blizzard. Pepper approved the decision without hesitation.

Those trapped at the company were paid generous overtime bonuses, already transferred to their accounts, and were allowed to stay in the company's emergency dormitories. Stark Industries had two entire floors dedicated to such accommodations—two people per room,

fully stocked with daily necessities and furnished to five-star hotel standards, precisely for situations like this.

The snow lasted three full days. Accumulation on the streets rose past adults' knees, yet it showed no sign of stopping. Eventually, residents on the ground floors began clearing the snow themselves, and Carl was no exception.

The office entrance was completely blocked. Unable to open the door, Carl teleported outside and summoned a small tornado to sweep the snow away. He piled it all into a massive snowman shaped exactly like a Moguri—round, adorable, wearing a crown and holding a scepter, identical to the one inside the office.

The Moguri snowman stood proudly in front of the building. After clearing their own entrances, nearby shop owners stopped to take photos. Bored and snowbound, they posted them online. To Carl's surprise, the Moguri snowman quickly went viral.

Eventually, the snow stopped.

White clouds drifted across a clear sky as warm sunlight returned to the city. New York welcomed a long-lost stretch of clear weather.

With the snowfall over, the authorities began organizing large-scale snow removal. As the holidays ended, the Christmas atmosphere gradually faded. Carols disappeared from the streets, and the city slipped back into its familiar fast-paced rhythm.

Pepper grew busy again—so busy that she was rarely seen. Whenever Tony called her, she'd hang up after just a few words.

"When I was CEO, I wasn't even this busy," Tony muttered, staring at his disconnected call in confusion.

"What on earth is she doing all day?"

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## **Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 266 - 266 – The Return of the Missing System - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 266 - 266 – The Return of the Missing System**

20258-10 minutes

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"Yeah, you weren't busy back when you were CEO," Carl said with open disdain. "Because all the work was done by Sister Pepper anyway. What exactly were you busy with?"

His expression was full of contempt. Tony was the textbook capitalist—if he wasn't busy, then clearly no one else in the world should be busy either. If he didn't work, then obviously no one else worked. Disgusting.

"Hey—what kind of look is that?" Tony protested. "That's called knowing how to manage. I was already the CEO—why would I need to do everything myself? Otherwise, what would be the point of being CEO?"

He tossed the apple in his hand to Carl and grabbed another one for himself.

"And you've got the nerve to criticize me?" Tony continued, firing back immediately. "From what I know, this office is being fully supported by Skye right now, isn't it? You're glued to that chair all day like super glue, not moving an inch. All the expenses are paid penny by penny with her hard-earned money. And you still dare to lecture me? You're the real kept man here."

"You're one to talk," Carl shot back without hesitation. "Aren't you living off Sister Pepper too? You don't work either—just mess around with your figurines all day. A full-on shut-in."

They were both living off their partners—why should Tony act like he was somehow superior?

The two of them went back and forth, enthusiastically tearing into each other over their respective experiences as "kept men," until Skye finally couldn't take it anymore.

"That's enough, both of you!" she snapped. "You're all rotten fish in the same pot—what's the point of complaining about the smell? Stop bothering me while I'm working!"

One shout from Skye, and both men immediately behaved.

That peace lasted less than five minutes.

Soon enough, the two of them had picked up game controllers and launched into another round of fierce competition—mentally about three years old, the both of them.

Right in the middle of their heated match, a familiar mechanical voice suddenly rang out.

[Ding—System mission issued. Please successfully prevent the invasion of the Dark Elves and restore peace to the Nine Realms.

Mission reward: Unlock Summoned Beast.]

Carl froze.

The system—long since classified by Carl as "missing in action"—had actually issued a mission.

"So you're still alive, System," Carl said, putting on a show of fake excitement.

[Ding—This system does not possess the life characteristics defined by humans. Therefore, it cannot 'die.']

"Tch. Boring. Talking to you is a waste of emotions."

Carl rolled his eyes, tossed the controller aside, and walked off to the side to examine the mission more closely.

"Stop the Dark Elf invasion and restore peace to the Nine Realms... What kind of mission is this?" Carl muttered. "The Nine Realms? I'm not a god—how am I supposed to manage all that?"

He immediately understood the core of the task. The Dark Elves, the invasion, the Nine Realms—this was tied directly to Asgard and the World Tree mythology.

More importantly, it involved the Reality Stone—known to the Dark Elves as the Aether. And to make things even more troublesome, Jane Foster had already absorbed it.

The Dark Elves planned to use the Aether during the convergence of the Nine Realms to travel between worlds, launching a full-scale invasion and ultimately ruling all Nine Realms.

Dark Elves. Nine Realms. This was clearly the plot of Thor: The Dark World.

And this battle wouldn't be confined to Earth alone. That meant reinforcements would be necessary.

Carl glanced at Tony—an excellent backup. Add Skye and the other two, plus Peter and Felicia. Captain America and Natasha could help as well. And of course, Thor himself, whose duty it was in the first place.

With this lineup, dealing with Malekith should be more than manageable.

It seemed he'd need to find an opportunity to tip Natasha off—let that one-eyed black-hearted egg at S.H.I.E.L.D. know what was coming.

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Asgard.

After the failed invasion of New York, Loki—having failed to conquer Earth—was imprisoned. Though calling it a "prison" was somewhat misleading; it was nowhere near as harsh as one might imagine.

In fact, Loki lived rather freely, so long as he didn't leave his cell. Odin would even visit from time to time to talk with him, trying to guide him back onto the right path. It was less a prison sentence and more like house arrest.

Meanwhile, Thor was waging war in Vanaheim.

A rebellious faction there had risen against Asgard, and Thor had been dispatched to suppress the uprising.

The rebel forces in Vanaheim were not particularly strong. With Thor leading the charge, the Asgardian army pushed forward with overwhelming force.

At that moment, Sif was leading her troops in brutal combat against the rebels. The battlefield was chaos—fire and destruction everywhere.

Suddenly, the Bifrost descended.

Thor arrived like a god of thunder, lightning raging around him as he fell from the sky.

He leapt high into the air and smashed Mjolnir into the ground. A thunderous shockwave exploded outward, lightning surging in all directions. The surrounding rebels were thrown off their feet, their bodies engulfed in crackling arcs of electricity. None of them would survive.

"So this is what you call having everything under control?" Thor said as he stepped forward, patting Sif on the shoulder with a half-smile. "No wonder the place is in flames."

With Thor's arrival, the battle instantly turned one-sided. The rebels were driven back again and again, completely unable to withstand the might of Asgard.

Then, the sound of a horn echoed across the battlefield.

Both sides stopped fighting.

From within the rebel ranks, a towering stone giant stepped forward. The spiked club in its hands was taller than Thor himself.

"Your turn," Sif said, looking at Thor.

Clearly, this was the rebels' final trump card. They intended to settle things with a duel—winner takes all.

Thor approached the giant, gazing up at the massive stone figure looming several times his height.

"I accept your surrender," Thor said calmly. "There's no need for us to fight to the death."

The stone giant roared in response.

The surrounding rebels burst into laughter, mocking Thor's arrogance. In their eyes, Thor looked pitifully small before the giant—how could he even speak of surrender?

Thor laughed as well.

He began to spin Mjolnir.

Faster and faster it turned, until a whirlwind formed around him, lightning flashing within it.

Boom—!

Thor released the hammer.

Mjolnir shot forward and struck the stone giant squarely on the jaw.

In an instant, the giant's upper body exploded into countless fragments. Stones blasted skyward before raining back down to the ground. The mighty stone giant was reduced to a pile of rubble.

The rebels were terrified.

The being they had believed to be invincible hadn't even survived a single blow. Faced with Thor's overwhelming power, their will to resist completely collapsed. One by one, they fell to their knees and surrendered.

"Maybe next time, we should just take out the stone giant first," Sif muttered. "Would've saved us a lot of trouble."

She was filthy from head to toe, looking like she'd crawled out of the mud, while Thor had ended the battle with a single strike. The contrast was infuriating.

In the post-battle camp, Thor sat on a rock chatting with his companion, Hogun.

"Hogun," Thor said, "peace has largely been restored across the Nine Realms. This is your homeland. You can stay here, rebuild Vanaheim, and be with your people."

Hogun broke into a broad smile. "Thank you, Thor. That's the best news I've heard in a long time."

"No—I should be thanking you," Thor replied. "You followed me into battle after battle, never once returning home. Now that stability has returned, you deserve to stay."

The two clasped hands firmly. Their friendship needed no words.

With the war concluded, the Bifrost descended once more, enveloping Thor and the Asgardian warriors as it carried them back to Asgard.

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Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 267 - 267 – Idle Boredom - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 267 - 267 – Idle Boredom

20257-8 minutes

"Goodbye, Hogun. I hope the next time I come to Vanaheim, it will have regained its former glory."

Hogun gave Thor a solemn nod. The Bifrost faded away, leaving behind only intricate and mysterious patterns etched into the ground.

Asgard remained as prosperous as ever. The people lived in peace, soldiers drilled in formation, and within the golden palace, Odin—the All-Father—looked down upon the realm. At his side stood Thor, the future King of Asgard.

"Is the matter in Vanaheim resolved?" Odin asked, gazing over Asgard below.

"Yes, Father. Aside from Vanaheim, both Nornheim and Alfheim have also returned to peace," Thor replied, mirroring Odin's posture as he surveyed the realm.

"Excellent. Since the destruction of the Bifrost, this is the first time the Nine Realms have returned to peace and stability. They will remember our strength—and you have earned their respect and reverence."

Odin was clearly pleased with Thor's conduct. Through his ravens, he had witnessed the entire campaign. This time, Thor was no longer reckless—each battle was calculated, contained, and free of collateral damage. Most importantly, Thor had learned that war was not about annihilating one's enemies, but about subduing them.

"Yet I can see that your heart is not at peace," Odin continued. "Are you thinking of that girl from Earth?"

"This has nothing to do with Jane Foster," Thor said, turning his gaze toward the ever-brilliant Bifrost.

"Human lives are fleeting, Thor. They are not worth lingering attachment. Their lifespans scarcely exceed a century. You should cherish those before you."

Odin's eyes drifted toward the plaza below, where Sif was instructing soldiers in combat drills. She was the consort Odin and Frigga had chosen for Thor.

Thor followed his father's gaze. His relationship with Sif was one of comradeship and friendship—nothing more.

"I am not speaking to you as the All-Father," Odin said quietly, "but as your father. Sif is your best destiny."

Turning away, Odin added, "Go and celebrate your victory. Raise a cup, feast, and rejoice. Do not stand here wearing that grim expression."

With that, Odin departed, leaving Thor alone, staring silently toward the distant Bifrost.

That night, the celebration was held as planned. Laughter and music filled the hall as everyone immersed themselves in revelry—everyone except Thor, who stood alone in a corner, lost in thought. No one knew what weighed on his mind.

"You're going to Midgard, aren't you?"

Sif approached and stood beside him.

Thor said nothing, but the answer was obvious.

"I've noticed you look toward the Bifrost every night," Sif continued. "Even when you were in other realms. Asgard rules over the Nine Realms—the future king cannot fixate on just one."

The implication was unmistakable.

Thor understood. He smiled faintly, took a long look at Sif, then turned and left the celebration, disappearing into the night.

In New York, Jane Foster sat in a restaurant, staring blankly at the menu. From time to time, she looked up at the sky, hoping to see a streak of multicolored light descend from above—but ever since it vanished, it had never returned.

While she was lost in thought, her best friend Darcy suddenly appeared and plopped down across from her.

"Hey! I went to the lab—I thought I'd find you wandering around in a lab coat. Didn't expect you to be here... still thinking about that—"

Darcy gestured upward with her knife.

"Darcy, did you come here for something?" Jane asked helplessly. "Can't I even eat in peace?"

"Oh, right! Remember that detector you threw away? It's reacting again. You should come take a look."

Darcy pulled out a device—every reading on it was glowing red.

"Can you at least let me finish my meal?" Jane said, glancing at the detector before tossing it back to Darcy.

"Fine. I'll wait in the car."

Darcy stood up, detector in hand—and casually swiped a piece of bread on her way out.

Jane stared outside for a moment, then suddenly stood and walked out of the restaurant toward Darcy's little red car.

"I knew you'd come," Darcy said as she started the engine and sped off.

"Where are we going?" Jane asked. She couldn't even remember where she'd thrown the detector.

"London," Darcy replied.

Back at the office, Tony had left for Malibu to oversee the reconstruction of his mansion—especially the underground laboratory. This time, he planned to expand it, and only felt at ease supervising it personally.

Carl and Skye sat together. Skye was working at her computer while Carl watched from the side—so bored that he had resorted to observing her code.

"If you're bored, go out and take a walk," Skye said, nudging him with her shoulder. "Stop interrupting my work, okay? Be good."

Carl stood up helplessly. There was clearly no place for him here anymore. Wearing a forlorn expression, he pushed open the door and stepped out onto the street.

A red-and-blue blur streaked overhead. Carl didn't even need to look—he knew it was Peter. That kid spent all day swinging around New York instead of staying in the lab to do research.

"Maybe there's something fun going on. Should I check it out?"

Muttering to himself, Carl rose into the air and chased after Peter.

"Peter, what's going on?" Carl asked as he flew alongside him.

"Carl? You're this free?" Peter exclaimed. "Doesn't the office have anything for you to do?"

"There's no place for me there anymore. I've been abandoned," Carl said, wiping away imaginary tears.

"Looks like Skye kicked you out again," Peter said knowingly. "Perfect timing—I just got a tip about a bank robbery. Want to check it out with me?"

Carl's eyes lit up. That sounded far better than sitting around doing nothing.

"What are we waiting for? Let's go!"

He flipped in midair, his cloak snapping as his speed surged.

"Hey—wait for me! Do you even know where you're going?!"

Peter shot out a web and chased after him.

By the time they arrived, the robbers had already split up, fleeing in two trucks.

"Pick one," Peter said, pointing at the vehicles heading in opposite directions.

"The one on the left."

"Got it."

Peter chased after the right-hand truck, while Carl flew straight toward the left.

A truck was no match for Carl's flying speed. Within seconds, he caught up and landed squarely on the roof.

Boom!

Carl slammed down hard. The truck immediately lost balance and began swerving wildly across the road.

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## **Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 268 - 268 – Catching a Robber for Fun - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 268 - 268 – Catching a Robber for Fun**

20257-9 minutes

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"Attention, robbers inside the vehicle—you are now surrounded by me alone. Surrender immediately. You have the right to remain silent, but everything you say will be recorded and may be used as evidence in court!"

Carl smashed the windshield with one punch and rattled off a long string of words.

"So this is what it feels like when they say this stuff in those Hong Kong cop dramas..."

The robber jerked the steering wheel violently. The truck spun into a full one-hundred-and-eighty-degree drift, and the massive inertia flung Carl straight off the roof.

"Hahaha! A little brat trying to play superhero? Go die!"

The robbers burst out laughing. Carl was only in his early twenties—nothing more than a kid in their eyes.

Suddenly, a green wind blade appeared in front of the truck. Before the robbers could even react, it sliced cleanly through the vehicle.

The truck split straight down the middle. With the driver and passenger still wearing blank expressions, the vehicle disintegrated and slammed into a roadside fire hydrant.

Banknotes filled the air like confetti, and pedestrians immediately began scrambling to grab the money. Carl ignored the cash entirely and walked straight up to the robber in the passenger seat—the one who had just mocked him.

"You may call a lawyer. If you can't afford one, you have the right to request legal aid."

As he finished speaking, Carl punched the man in the face. Blood sprayed instantly as the robber's nose shattered. His head lolled to the side and he passed out. The driver had already lost consciousness without making a sound.

Onlookers tried to rush forward to seize the intact bags of money, but Carl casually waved his hand. A violent gust of wind blew them straight back.

"Do you want to become robbers too?"

Carl's gaze was sharp, like that of a hawk, fixed on those who had tried to grab the money bags. He didn't care about the loose bills scattered everywhere—that was picking up dropped cash. But the intact bags were different. Taking those was robbery.

Unfortunately, Carl underestimated the American people's passion for "freedom." Once one person moved, others quickly followed. Plenty of people were already eyeing the money greedily.

"Everyone, get him! He's just one guy—we've got dozens of people! First come, first served!"

Someone shouted, and the crowd surged forward. Some even pulled out guns. A very American scene.

Carl was instantly annoyed. To him, they were nothing but a mob. Typical Anglos—violence etched into their bones. A people who survived through plunder and bloodshed.

Boom!

Flames erupted into the sky. Several arcs of fire instantly formed around Carl, sealing off a five-meter radius. At the same time, lightning crashed down from above, reducing the first wave of attackers to charred corpses.

"Anyone who wants to die—take one more step forward."

Carl didn't bother raising his voice. Fire and lightning coiled around him.

"Don't be afraid! He's only one person—we can—"

Slash.

A wind blade tore through the speaker, shredding him into more than a dozen pieces.

"Don't make me say it a second time."

Carl's voice was calm, but icy to the bone. There was a reason the Romans once called them barbarians—these people acted without thinking. No wonder all they ever did was pillage.

His display completely cowed the crowd. Their first instinct was to run—now realizing they might be arrested as accomplices.

But Carl had no intention of letting them escape. Flames surged up instantly, encircling those who had tried to loot the money bags and trapping them in the center.

"Now you want to run? Too late."

At that moment, more than a dozen police cars finally arrived. The officers were stunned by the scene before them—especially the people trapped inside the ring of fire.

"What happened here?!" the police chief demanded, gun trained on Carl.

Carl pointed up at the surveillance camera above them.

"Check that, and you'll understand everything. The rest is up to you. Everyone inside the fire circle is a robber."

With that, he rose into the air and left without waiting for a response.

The chief immediately ordered an officer to retrieve the footage. Meanwhile, the people trapped by the flames began shouting accusations, claiming Carl was the real robber and that they were only trying to help.

As a veteran officer, the chief didn't trust one-sided claims. He had already recognized Carl. He had participated in the Battle of New York and, while evacuating civilians, had seen all the Avengers from afar—Carl included.

Between Carl and the people trapped in the flames, the chief trusted Carl far more.

Sure enough, after reviewing the surveillance footage on a tablet, the chief ordered all those inside the fire circle to be arrested.

The officers hesitated, unsure how to cross the flames—only for the fire to automatically part, opening a gap as they approached, allowing them to escort the suspects away without issue.

After the Battle of New York, the state government had expanded police recruitment. The existing force simply couldn't handle a city as disaster-prone as New York. With federal authorization, they had increased numbers across the board—local police, state troopers, and even the New York National Guard.

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After regrouping with Peter, the two sat on a rooftop eating pizza. Carl preferred pizzas without fruit—just meat and sausage, as indulgent as possible.

"Aren't you worried about skipping the lab?" Carl said, chewing his pizza and washing it down with a big gulp of cola. "What if Pepper writes something like 'unsatisfactory' on your internship evaluation?"

"No chance," Peter replied casually. "Pepper would never do that. Besides, the lab's already full of people—one less won't matter. The AI simulations handle most of it anyway."

Carl nodded, then added, "I'm more worried that Felicia won't see you for too long and gets swept away by some handsome guy."

He was genuinely concerned. Felicia was stunning—way out of Peter's league. Yet Peter no longer clung to her like before. Where did all that puppy-love energy go?

"Relax," Peter said confidently. "That'll never happen. I know her. Anyone who tries to get close gets knocked flat."

"If you say so," Carl replied, shrugging.

They drank cola and looked out over the city. Sitting atop the second-tallest building in New York, most of Manhattan lay spread out beneath them. The tallest tower—the Stark Tower—stood nearby, its glowing logo shining day and night.

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Meanwhile, in London, Darcy was flooring the accelerator of a rented car, weaving through the streets as she followed the detector's signal.

"So?" she said proudly. "London roads are completely under my control. I don't even need GPS."

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Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 269 - 269 – A Strange Phenomenon - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 269 - 269 – A Strange Phenomenon

20257-8 minutes

Darcy drove while keeping her eyes fixed on the detector.

London's roads were narrow to begin with—some streets barely wide enough for a single car—yet Darcy sped through them at full throttle. Jane gripped the handhold tightly, terrified she might be flung out at any moment.

After weaving through countless turns, they arrived at what looked like a warehouse district. Darcy slammed the brakes and drifted to a stop, and Jane was nearly thrown from her seat by the sudden deceleration.

"Looks like this is the place. Do you remember what that device looked like?" Darcy asked as she stepped out of the car, holding the detector and scanning the area.

"Of course I remember what it looked like," Jane replied.

She got out of the car and walked toward an open area where an overturned truck sat, clearly abandoned for years.

Following the detector's signal, the two entered the warehouse. Several children suddenly appeared, aiming slingshots at Jane and Darcy.

"Hey! I'm the one who contacted you. My name's Darcy," Darcy said quickly. Even though they were just kids, the reputation of London's street children was well known—they could be vicious.

"Are you police?" a young girl asked. She seemed to be the leader of the group.

"No, we're scientists. My name is Jane—Jane Foster," Jane said gently, doing her best to appear nonthreatening.

"That place—we found it by accident," the girl said after hearing Jane's explanation.

"Could you take us to see it?" Jane asked. The detector's signal was clearly coming from nearby.

The girl nodded and led them to an open space inside the warehouse. There was a truck parked there—identical to the overturned one outside.

The girl walked forward first. To Jane and Darcy's astonishment, she lifted the truck with just two fingers, and it floated suspended in midair.

"Amazing, right?" the girl said, turning back to them.

She then led them upstairs to the top floor. One of her companions picked up a bottle from somewhere and tossed it downward. Halfway through its fall, the bottle suddenly vanished.

"Where did it go?" Jane frowned, a realization beginning to form.

The girl pointed upward. Jane and Darcy looked up immediately.

Sure enough, the bottle reappeared directly above them, fell to the same spot, vanished again, then reappeared overhead—repeating the cycle endlessly.

"This is incredible..." Darcy murmured.

She bent down, picked up an old soda can, and tossed it down the same way. As expected, it vanished. Everyone looked up, waiting.

Ten seconds passed.

Nothing.

"What happened? Where's the can?" Darcy asked, scanning the area in confusion.

"Sometimes it comes back. Sometimes it doesn't," the girl said with a shrug. Clearly, she had experimented with this many times.

Jane immediately pulled out the detector Darcy had stuffed into her bag and began carefully examining the readings.

"Strange... The last time I saw data like this was—"

She stopped mid-sentence.

"New Mexico, right? That small town?" Darcy finished for her.

She was right—the readings were identical to those from their experiments in New Mexico.

"Tell the kids not to touch anything!" Jane said abruptly before rushing off.

She began wandering through the warehouse area, seemingly at random, her eyes locked on the detector in her hand.

Suddenly, an invisible force shoved her violently toward a wall.

"No! Help!" Jane screamed, crossing her arms instinctively in defense.

But the moment her body touched the wall, she vanished.

When she opened her eyes again, she found herself inside an unknown cavern. She stood on a narrow platform, beneath which lay a bottomless abyss.

Jane collapsed to the ground, struggling to steady her breathing. Once she calmed down, she began looking around.

Turning her head, she noticed a massive square stone pillar. A red light pulsed steadily from its center.

She stood up and cautiously approached it, moving carefully, unsure whether it was dangerous.

The pillar was enormous—ten people linking arms might not be enough to encircle it. Jane slowly walked around it, observing the red glow at its center.

She realized the pillar was divided into an upper and lower section, separated by a gap about the width of a fist. The red light emanated from that gap, as though it were holding the two halves apart.

Leaning closer, Jane peered into the gap. Inside the red light, dust-like particles drifted erratically, floating up and down without pattern. These unknown particles were clearly the source of the glow.

Suddenly, the particles reacted—as if they had found a target—and latched onto Jane's hand.

She stumbled as her body was yanked forward.

The next instant, with a thunderous crash, the upper half of the pillar slammed down onto the lower one. Jane narrowly managed to pull her arm back in time—otherwise, she would have lost it.

The red light and the particles vanished simultaneously.

Jane hurriedly checked her hand. She was certain the particles had grabbed her, yet her hand was completely intact—no injuries, not even a mark.

Then a wave of dizziness struck her. Her vision spun, her body tilted, and she collapsed unconscious.

In the endless darkness of space, asteroid fields drifted like shattered castles, aimless and silent. Among them, a black, sword-shaped spacecraft suddenly began to glow with red light.

Inside the vessel, red illumination pulsed as well. A cocoon-like structure opened, revealing a figure with sharply pointed ears.

The figure stepped out and entered the ship's central chamber. One by one, others of his kind began to awaken.

"The Aether has been awakened," he declared. "And with it, we have been awakened as well. The Convergence approaches once more. This time, we will succeed."

He looked down at the gathering figures. This was Malekith, the king of the Dark Elves—the being mockingly referred to as "Malachicken."

In Asgard, Thor walked along the Bifrost toward Heimdall's observatory. He was no longer wearing his armor, but a long black robe—it was clear he had slipped away from the victory celebration.

Heimdall stood atop the platform, both hands resting on his great sword, the key to the Bifrost. His eyes were closed, as still as a statue.

"You came early, Thor," Heimdall said, opening his eyes as Thor stepped onto the platform.

"Yes," Thor replied. "At times, celebration is more exhausting than battle."

He walked up beside Heimdall and followed his gaze into the shimmering, infinite cosmos beyond the observatory.

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# Marvel Manifestor #Chapter 270 - 270 – The Aether - Read Marvel Manifestor Chapter 270 - 270 – The Aether

20256-7 minutes

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"Is everything all right among the stars?" Thor asked as he stood on the steps beside Heimdall, gazing into the endless cosmos.

"All is as it has always been—each shining with its own light," Heimdall replied. "From here, I can see countless beings across the Nine Realms. Do you remember what I told you about the Convergence?"

He drove his sword firmly into the ground and descended from the platform. The observatory began to shift; the massive window once used for stargazing slowly lowered, while the transparent, lens-like roof rotated into its place.

"Of course. When the Nine Realms align as one—the Convergence. It's coming again, isn't it?" Thor asked, stepping closer to the transparent roof.

"The last time the Convergence occurred was before I became guardian," Heimdall said. "Few can sense it, and fewer still can truly see it. Yet every Convergence brings danger."

Thor stared into the heavens, but saw nothing beyond the infinite starfield. "Why can't I see anything?"

"Perhaps because your heart does not wish to," Heimdall answered quietly.

Within Heimdall's golden eyes, nine worlds of different colors were reflected.

Thor smiled faintly and changed the subject, asking the question that mattered most to him.

"How is she?"

His gaze remained fixed on the stars, as though he could pierce the void itself to find Jane.

"Your mortal friend is quite clever," Heimdall said. "She's studying the Convergence—and even researching certain things—"

He suddenly stopped, his golden pupils flaring as he stared into the distance.

"What is it, Heimdall?" Thor asked, a sense of unease rising.

"I... I can no longer see her," Heimdall said in disbelief. "She has obscured my sight."

Within the Nine Realms, only a handful of beings or objects were capable of doing that.

---

Jane dreamed she was a fish gliding freely through the ocean, weightless and at peace. The sensation was wonderfully soothing—until red flooded the sea, swallowing everything. Surrounded by crimson waters, she sank deeper and deeper, suffocated by despair.

She jolted awake, gasping for air.

Her eyes slowly adjusted to the light, and she realized she was still lying inside the abandoned factory. The place was empty.

The wail of police sirens snapped her back to reality. Jane hurried outside and saw Darcy speaking to the police. The moment Darcy spotted her, she rushed over.

"Jane! Where did you go?" Darcy demanded.

"You called the police?" Jane asked, deliberately turning away from the flashing lights as dizziness lingered.

"I couldn't find you anywhere! You vanished for hours—what else was I supposed to do?" Darcy replied.

Just then, thunder rumbled overhead, and rain poured down without warning. The sky, clear moments ago, had turned violent.

"You shouldn't have called them," Jane said anxiously. "Once the police get involved, S.H.I.E.L.D. won't be far behind. They'll discover this place."

"You disappeared without a trace!" Darcy shot back. "Was I supposed to just accept that?"

Suddenly, both of them fell silent.

They realized something strange—rain was pouring down everywhere, yet not a single drop touched them. Within a five-meter radius around them, the rain simply stopped, forming a perfectly dry circle.

"This... this is impossible," Darcy whispered.

Jane raised her hand, testing the boundary—and then froze.

In the distance stood a tall, blond man in a red cloak, holding a hammer.

Thor.

Darcy followed Jane's gaze, her eyes widening in disbelief.

Jane walked straight toward him. As she moved, the rainless circle followed her, leaving Darcy behind. The instant Jane stepped away, Darcy was drenched from head to toe.

"Long time no see, Jane," Thor said with a foolish grin.

Smack.

Jane slapped him hard across the face, leaving Thor stunned.

Smack.

Another slap.

"I needed to make sure you were real," Jane said calmly.

"Of course I'm real. No one could impersonate—"

Smack.

A third slap. Thor was completely dazed.

"Where the hell have you been?!" Jane snapped. "I tried to find you for so long, and there was nothing—nothing at all!"

She was furious. He had promised to return soon, yet vanished without a trace.

"I know," Thor said earnestly. "But I destroyed the Bifrost. Then rebellion erupted across the Nine Realms. I had to stop the slaughter—and without the Bifrost, I couldn't return to Earth."

"Fine," Jane said after a moment. "That explains some of it. But I saw you on television—in New York. I saw you clearly during the battle."

"Jane, I was trying to protect you and those around you from threats beyond this world," Thor replied. "That battle was my responsibility. I had to stop it."

Mentioning the Battle of New York reminded him of Loki, now imprisoned in Asgard—remarkably comfortable, all things considered.

"Jane," Thor continued, stepping closer. "You know how I feel. And now, I understand something clearly—"

Their faces drew closer, eyes locked.

"Hey! Did you cause this rain? Could you maybe—"

Darcy burst in again, interrupting them. She had an article of clothing over her head and looked like a drowned cat.

Jane shot her an annoyed look. Thor turned instead to Darcy.

With a snap of his fingers, the rain stopped instantly. The dark clouds began to disperse.

"I just wanted to say," Darcy muttered, "we're about to get arrested. The cops think we made a false report and want to take us in."

"Ms. Jane Foster?" a police officer asked as he approached.

"Yes, officer," Jane replied.

"After investigation, we've determined this is private property. You and your companion are suspected of trespassing. You'll need to come with us."

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