

Marvel Manifestor

- Chapter 331 - 331 – Chaos - Novel Fire

Chapter 331 - 331 – Chaos

[749 words]

Bang!

A single gunshot rang out.

A blue energy round tore through a drone and punched straight into the guard behind it, blasting a hole clean through his chest.

Karl stood firm, the Judicator in his hand like a scythe of death. Each pull of the trigger claimed a life.

On Earth, the weapon had rarely shown its true worth—most enemies there were human, and Karl usually drew it only as intimidation. But here? In a prison filled with alien species—none fully human except himself—the Judicator revealed its terrifying power.

One shot often felled multiple guards in a line. Drones exploded on impact.

Karl alone suppressed the incoming reinforcements, forcing the guards to dive behind cover, afraid to expose even a fraction of their bodies.

On the other side of the hall, Gamora sprinted toward the guard with the control wristband.

Her movements were lethal and efficient. Every guard who intercepted her went down in a single strike—precise, merciless.

Within seconds she reached her target. The guard pulled out a high-voltage stun baton and engaged her.

It didn't matter.

Gamora had been trained personally by Thanos—raised to kill, molded to embody his brutal ideology.

Three swift strikes.

A crack.

The guard's neck snapped.

She removed the wristband and noticed Quill fleeing nearby.

Quill clutched the metal prosthetic leg and nearly collided with an armed guard.

"Drop the leg and return to your cell!"

The guard's voice trembled.

Quill bent as if complying—then lashed out, smashing the leg into the guard's head.

The guard collapsed.

Quill grabbed the rifle and blasted two approaching drones out of the air.

In the main hall, Rocket had already run dry on ammo and was crouched behind Groot when Gamora tossed him the wristband.

"To the control room!" Rocket shouted.

Groot charged forward through gunfire while Rocket worked the battery against his chest.

Gamora, nimble and relentless, reached the control room exterior first. Groot rapidly extended his limbs, lifting Rocket upward.

Quill began climbing Groot's massive leg with the prosthetic tucked under his arm.

A drone locked onto him.

He froze.

Just as it prepared to fire—

Drax leapt into the air, landed atop the drone, and tore it apart with his bare hands before climbing up after them.

Inside the control room, guards called frantically for backup.

"All personnel fully armed! Suppress the riot immediately!"

The door behind them exploded inward.

The newly assembled Guardians stood framed in smoke and debris, striking unintentionally dramatic poses.

The guard inside slowly raised his hands.

Groot wrapped him in vines and flung him aside.

"What's he doing here?" Gamora demanded, spotting Drax.

"We promised he could stick close to you until he kills Ronan," Quill replied casually. "Besides, if we hadn't, he might've torn me in half."

Quill dropped the prosthetic leg in front of Rocket, who was already manipulating the central console.

Rocket glanced at it.

"Oh. That? I didn't actually need it."

He tossed it aside.

Quill stared in disbelief.

"What?!"

"Think about it," Rocket cackled. "That guy's hopping around on one leg right now. Hilarious."

"I paid thirty thousand units for that!" Quill shouted.

Gunfire suddenly rattled against the reinforced glass.

A rocket launcher fired—

BOOM!

The control room window spiderwebbed with cracks.

One more hit would shatter it.

Outside, lightning crashed down.

Every remaining drone detonated midair.

Karl floated before the glass, cloak billowing dramatically behind him. Bullets and energy blasts struck the fabric harmlessly, absorbed by the enchanted mantle.

He tapped on the glass.

From inside, they could see him speaking—but not hear him.

They gestured wildly.

Karl rolled his eyes.

In a burst of flame, he vanished—reappearing instantly inside the control room.

"Move faster," he said calmly. "The main force is almost here."

They stared at him like he'd grown a second head.

"You can fly?!" Quill blurted.

Another rocket slammed into the glass.

The cracks widened.

"Rocket!" Gamora snapped. "Now!"

"Working on it!"

He yanked two exposed wires and jammed them together.

The entire prison's gravity failed.

Inmates and guards alike floated helplessly into the air—except those inside the control hub.

Rocket flipped another switch.

The control room itself began to lift.

He seized the drone control panel and commanded surviving units to tow the floating structure toward the exit using their engines.

They managed a short distance—

Then gravity reasserted itself.

The drones couldn't sustain the weight.

The control room crashed down hard—but not before clearing the main hall.

They were closer to freedom.

They emerged into the storage sector where prisoners' belongings were kept.

Quill rushed to locate his gear.

He tore open his bag and rifled through it rapidly, tossing items aside without even glancing at them—not even the Orb.

"Grab the Orb and let's go!" Gamora urged.

Quill kept digging.

"They didn't give it back!"

He clenched his fists, furious.

His Walkman was missing.

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## **- Chapter 332 - 332 – The Lawless Frontier[ 765 words ]**

"What do you mean they didn't put it back?" Gamora asked sharply.

Quill didn't answer. He tossed her the pouch containing the Orb.

"You guys head to the ship. I'll be right behind you."

Without another word, he grabbed his gear and ran off, ignoring their protests.

He suited up at full speed and stormed toward the alien who had stolen his Walkman. With his equipment restored, Quill cut through the chaos effortlessly, reaching the culprit's quarters in minutes.

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In orbit, Rocket hovered Quill's ship in a concealed corner of space.

"The Orb's with you, right?" Rocket asked, glancing at Gamora.

She nodded and opened the bag—

Inside was nothing but a small toy.

No Orb.

They had been played.

"I'm not dying here waiting for that idiot," Rocket snapped. "If we don't move now, we're scrap metal."

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Inside a dim room, the alien thief sat blissfully unaware, headphones on, swaying to music—Quill's music.

Quill stepped up silently, grabbed a metal ornament, and smashed it down on the alien's head. He ripped the Walkman from his hands.

"Only I get to listen to this."

He struck again for good measure.

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Back aboard the ship, Karl leaned casually against the wall, watching the arguments unfold. He wasn't worried.

Quill would make it.

Moments later, a streak of flame shot toward the ship from the distance.

Karl blinked.

The flight posture looked... oddly familiar. Very Iron Man-esque.

Quill boosted inside just as Rocket lifted off.

"What was so important?" Drax asked.

Quill handed him the Walkman.

"You are an idiot," Drax concluded flatly, examining the ancient device. He couldn't fathom risking death for something so obsolete.

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The ship cut through open space.

Karl pressed against the viewport like an excited tourist, taking in the vastness of the cosmos. This was his first time truly witnessing the stars firsthand—not as distant specks, but as worlds.

It was overwhelming.

Rocket tinkered nonstop, assembling explosives by hand. A crate of weapons was already stacked near his station.

Drax and Gamora leaned apart from one another, tense but silent.

"I need the buyer's coordinates," Quill said to Gamora.

"We're already heading the right direction," she replied calmly, turning the Orb over in her hands.

"What do you think it is?" Quill asked, placing it on the table. "A weapon?"

"If it is," Drax said, lifting it, "I should use it against Ronan."

"Put it down!" Gamora snapped. "You'll kill us all."

Drax slammed it onto the table.

"You fear for yourself."

"Try me," Gamora shot back. "Let's see whose throat tears first."

"Enough!" Quill barked. "Nobody fights on my ship. Until we get paid, we're in this together."

"I care nothing for money," Drax said before moving to stand near Karl.

"Great," Rocket cut in. "More for the rest of us."

"I am Groot."

"Four shares," Rocket translated automatically.

Karl chuckled softly. Their bond was forming in the only way they knew how—through bickering.

Soon, they'd be facing Ronan head-on.

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Back at the Kyn, Kree forces had seized control.

Ronan stood on an upper walkway, staring down at the gathered inmates.

A prisoner trembled beneath Nebula's blade.

"Please, I don't know where they went!"

"You expect me to believe that?" Nebula asked coldly.

She suddenly paused, glancing upward.

"Ronan. Nova reinforcements have arrived. A fleet."

Ronan nodded.

"Deploy all Necrocraft. Search every system. Find the Orb—no matter the cost."

His soldiers obeyed.

Gunfire erupted throughout the prison.

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Meanwhile, on Xandar, Yondu stood inside the same shop where Quill had attempted his deal. The alien proprietor trembled before him.

"Tell me what the Orb is," Yondu said evenly. "And who's buying."

"I can't disclose high-level contract information," the shopkeeper stammered.

Yondu nodded once.

He gave a sharp whistle.

A sleek metal arrow shot from his belt and hovered at the shopkeeper's forehead.

"Last chance," Yondu said calmly.

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After crossing multiple systems, witnessing the endless diversity of the cosmos, the group finally reached their destination.

A colossal severed head floated in space—so massive it rivaled a planet.

"What is that?" Drax asked.

"Legend says it's the head of a Celestial," Gamora explained. "Severed in ancient war. Now it's the largest lawless outpost in the galaxy."

She watched the massive skull with unreadable eyes.

"Inside, there is no order. Only criminals and black-market dealers."

Rocket piloted the ship through the Celestial's hollow eye socket.

Within the skull, a sprawling city had been constructed—massive structures, rail systems, factories belching smoke, and countless ships weaving between platforms.

Quill stared at small drones transporting containers of yellow liquid.

"What's that?"

"Spinal fluid," Gamora replied. "For centuries, an interstellar corporation has harvested organic matter from this head—spinal fluid, brain tissue, bone fragments. Extremely rare. Highly profitable."

"And illegal," Rocket muttered.

"Dangerous too," Gamora added. "Only outlaws take these jobs."

Karl gazed at the grotesque yet magnificent sight.

A dead god's skull.

Turned into a city.

The universe truly had no limits.

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- Chapter 333 - 333 – A Barroom Brawl[770 words]

After disembarking, the group stepped onto the streets of the settlement. The entire place reeked of industrial decay—neon lights, scrap-metal architecture, and a heavy punk aesthetic.

A few ragged children ran past them, laughing. They looked more like beggars than anything else. One little girl bumped into Groot head-on.

Groot slowly raised his hand. A small blue flower bloomed in his palm.

He plucked it and offered it to her.

The girl accepted it with a shy smile before running off.

Karl, however, noticed what others didn't—two of the children had nimble fingers. In a lawless place like this, stealing was often how kids survived. It wasn't cruelty. It was reality.

They entered a gambling den of sorts.

But instead of cards or dice, the central platform featured two alien beasts tearing into one another while spectators placed bets.

Blood sport.

Upstairs on a balcony, Quill and Gamora were talking privately.

Karl wasn't about to miss this classic moment.

He casually slipped upstairs, phone already in hand.

Just as he arrived, Gamora placed headphones over her ears. Quill leaned closer... and closer...

Karl began recording.

Their faces were inches apart—

Then shing—

Gamora's blade pressed against Quill's throat.

"Peter Quill. I know exactly what kind of man you are. I'm not some naïve girl."

Quill's face drained of color.

"You've misunderstood—I'm not that kind of—"

He stood abruptly, glancing out the window—

And froze.

"Crap. That's bad."

Below, Drax and Groot were beating the life out of each other.

Quill bolted downstairs. Gamora followed.

In the main hall, Drax straddled Groot, hammering punches downward while Groot's vines tightened around Drax's neck.

The crowd roared, cheering. Some had already begun taking bets.

Drax tore the vines free with brute force—

And found Rocket aiming a gun directly at his head.

"Enough!"

BOOM—

Thunder rolled through the hall.

Lightning erupted in spiraling arcs, turning the entire casino into a storm-wracked arena.

Karl stood at the center, bathed in crackling electricity like a god of thunder. The crowd scattered instantly, clearing the space around him.

"Rocket. You've had too much."

His voice was calm but carried weight.

He turned to Drax.

"If you want revenge, you'll need them. So rein it in. Or I'll let you both sample the lightning."

Under the stormlight, Karl looked almost divine.

Rocket and Drax sobered instantly.

"Karl, you heard him!" Rocket snapped. "He called me a brainless low-life!"

Karl knew Rocket's history. Unlike most, he would never dismiss him lightly. Besides Groot, few truly understood Rocket's pain.

"It's not like I asked to be this way!" Rocket shouted.

His voice trembled as years of resentment surfaced.

"I didn't volunteer to be torn apart and stitched back together over and over! To wake up on some lab table again and again until I turned into this freak! A monster!"

His words broke at the end.

Silence fell.

"No one here thinks you're a monster," Karl said firmly.

Quill stepped in front of Rocket. Gamora held Drax back.

Karl's voice softened.

"No one chooses how they're born. Some are born into power and privilege. Others crawl out of filth."

Rocket looked up.

Karl continued, "The ones in palaces can be more rotten than pigs. The ones in the mud can be purer than angels."

"What matters isn't what others call you. It's what you believe about yourself. If you decide you're a monster... then that's what you become."

Rocket's eyes glistened.

No one had ever said that to him before.

Usually they mocked him.

Usually they died for it.

He had always believed he was nothing more than a lab experiment gone wrong.

But now—

Maybe that wasn't the whole truth.

Karl shifted his gaze to Drax.

"You owe him an apology."

Drax exhaled slowly.

"My words were too harsh. They were spoken in anger and drink. I apologize, Rocket."

His frustration had never truly been about Rocket. It was about Ronan—about being so close to vengeance and still powerless.

The tension eased.

A red-skinned alien woman approached Gamora.

"Miss Gamora. My master requests your presence."

Her voice was smooth and controlled.

Gamora nodded.

The group followed her into a vast chamber filled with glass display cases. Inside were countless artifacts—and living specimens.

"This place is twisted," Rocket muttered.

Karl paused before one case.

Inside sat a brown dog in a space suit.

Cosmo.

Not just a dog.

Future Guardian.

Further down, another case caught Karl's attention.

Encased in frost was a black, sinewy mass with white eye markings.

A symbiote.

Even frozen, it looked... aware.

They were led before a man clad in an extravagant fur coat. His white hair framed his head as he stood with his back to them.

"Our master possesses the largest and most comprehensive collection in the universe," the servant announced. "Allow me to present—the greatest Collector in existence."

The man turned slowly.

Strange spectacles rested on his face. A thin vertical line marked his lower lip.

The Collector had entered the stage.

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## **- Chapter 334 - 334 – The Collector - Novel Fire**

### **Chapter 334 - 334 – The Collector**

**[ 721 words ]**

The Collector removed his glasses and studied the group before walking straight to Gamora. He gently lifted her hand.

"It is an honor to meet you, Lady Gamora."

He pressed a delicate kiss to the back of her hand.

Behind her, Quill rolled his eyes. Anyone can play the gentleman.

"We have what you're looking for," Gamora said coolly.

The Collector tilted his head. "And what might that be?"

His gaze drifted past her—to Groot.

"I am Groot," Groot offered politely.

The Collector approached him slowly, eyes gleaming with fascination.

"Allow me to purchase you. Name your price. I will not bargain."

"I am Groot."

Rocket snorted. "What, you gonna turn him into some weird decorative chair?"

The Collector didn't look away from Groot. "Is this creature your pet?"

Rocket bristled instantly, yanking his weapon forward. "Say that again—"

"Enough," Gamora cut in sharply.

"We crossed half the galaxy to show you this."

She nodded to Quill.

Quill stepped forward, pulling out the Orb. He clearly intended to perform some flashy flourish—

Instead, it slipped from his hands and clattered loudly onto the floor.

Every single person facepalmed in perfect unison.

Drax quietly slipped out of the room during the distraction—so subtly that even Karl didn't notice. All attention was fixed on the Orb now cradled in the Collector's hands.

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The Collector placed the Orb into a mechanical cradle. Twin prongs locked into its lattice framework.

"In the dawn of the universe," he began, pressing a button, "there emerged six singularities."

The prongs rotated. The Orb spun.

Around them, circular holograms ignited, displaying cosmic imagery.

"After the great cosmic expansion, fragments of those singularities crystallized into six stones."

Six gems appeared in the projections—each a different color. Towering, godlike beings loomed in the background.

The outer shell of the Orb split apart.

"These are known as the Infinity Stones."

The second layer peeled back, revealing a growing violet glow.

"Their energy is beyond measure."

Images flickered: the Tesseract. The Aether. The Eye of Agamotto.

"But immense power is rarely easily controlled."

The central projection shifted to a colossal armored being wielding a staff tipped with a purple gem. He struck a planet's surface.

A tidal wave of violet energy consumed the world.

Civilization died in seconds.

The planet turned to ash.

"An Infinity Stone in the right hands can annihilate an entire civilization as effortlessly as breathing."

Quill stared wide-eyed. "That's... horrifying. I might actually wet myself."

The Collector's lips curved faintly.

"Once, foolish beings attempted to contain such power within their bodies."

The final shell of the Orb unlocked.

A radiant purple crystal hovered within.

The Power Stone.

Its glow bathed the chamber in violet light.

"Under its energy," the Collector continued, "they were reduced to dust."

The chamber brightened as the Stone's brilliance intensified.

"Magnificent..."

Behind him, the red-skinned servant, Carina, stepped forward—resolve hardening in her eyes.

Rocket waved dismissively. "Yeah, yeah, bedtime stories later. When do we get paid?"

He didn't care about cosmic history.

He cared about the forty billion.

"How would you prefer payment?" the Collector asked.

"Cash," Rocket replied instantly. "No transfers. No trail."

Just like Earth—digital credits could be traced.

Cash vanished.

The Collector opened a drawer, revealing neatly stacked metal credit bars.

As he reached in—

He noticed Carina approaching the Stone.

"Carina. Stand down," he ordered sharply.

But she didn't stop.

"I will not be your slave anymore!" she cried.

And she grabbed the Power Stone.

Instantly, violet flames erupted from her hand, racing across her body. Bolts of purple energy blasted outward in chaotic arcs, detonating glass cases and displays.

Explosions ripped through the chamber.

Artifacts shattered. Living specimens screamed. Fire spread rapidly.

Violet veins split across Carina's skin as energy coursed through her. Her eyes burned with purple fire.

Groot scooped up Rocket and bolted for cover.

Quill dove behind a reinforced wall, dragging Gamora down with him.

The Stone's power overwhelmed Carina. Her body began to disintegrate—cracking, burning, unraveling.

Energy surged toward critical mass.

One more second—

"Ice Wall!"

Karl thrust his hand forward.

A massive barrier of dense, crystalline ice erupted before him. Frost rolled outward, forming a chilling dome that suppressed the violet energy within its radius.

The air itself seemed to freeze.

For a brief moment, the Stone's destructive surge stalled against the wall.

Then—

BOOM.

Carina exploded.

A catastrophic blast tore through the chamber. Purple firestorm waves obliterated displays and incinerated countless treasures.

Even with Karl's barrier absorbing part of the shockwave, the hall was left in ruins—burning, shattered, and drowning in violet embers.

The Collector's priceless collection lay in smoldering wreckage.

And the Power Stone, still glowing, hovered amid the devastation.

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- Chapter 335 - 335 – Ronan Arrives[730 words]

The flames gradually died down. The explosions faded.

Quill and Gamora slowly lifted their heads.

The grand exhibition hall was gone.

What remained looked like the aftermath of a full-scale war—ruined display cases, collapsed structures, scorched floors. Not a single section remained intact.

Except for one thing.

An ice-blue wall.

And Karl standing calmly behind it.

The wall was riddled with cracks, spiderweb fractures running across its surface as though it might shatter at any second—yet it had held. It had absorbed the full force of the Power Stone's detonation.

Quill and Gamora stared in disbelief.

One moment, perfection.

The next, devastation.

And Karl had blocked it—unharmmed.

Karl gave a casual wave of his hand.

The ice wall shattered instantly into countless glittering shards that drifted through the air like crystalline snow. A cool wave of frost rolled outward, clearing the haze and steadying everyone's rattled senses.

He stepped forward and firmly reassembled the Orb's casing around the exposed Power Stone.

This was not something anyone should be touching barehanded.

He tossed the Orb back to Quill and walked out of the ruined chamber. Gamora and Quill hurried after him.

"I actually thought the Collector might be capable of handling it," Gamora muttered. "Looks like even he got blown who-knows-where."

Rocket and Groot rushed over. Rocket looked on the verge of a breakdown.

"You're still carrying that thing? In that tiny little bag?!" he screeched.

Gamora frowned. "We can't just leave it lying around. What if someone else opens it?"

"Quill had it stuffed in his backpack!" Rocket shouted. "We were basically living with a nuclear bomb!"

"I think we should give it to the Nova Corps," Karl said evenly. "They might be able to contain it."

Rocket snapped back instantly. "Are you kidding? We're on their most-wanted list! That's not containment—that's surrender!"

"No matter what," Gamora said firmly, "Ronan cannot have it. I agree with Karl. We take it to Xandar."

Quill slowly placed his hand over the Orb again.

"Or," he said smoothly, "we find someone rich, morally flexible, and generous enough to pay us a massive sum—"

Karl kicked him squarely in the backside.

Quill yelped and flew forward.

"Incorrigible," Karl muttered. "This is a catastrophe in anyone's hands. It belongs with a power strong enough to defend it—and disciplined enough not to abuse it."

He knew exactly what the Power Stone could do.

Even Thanos would wipe out Xandar to claim it.

The Nova Corps might not be invincible—but among galactic powers, they were one of the few stable enough to guard it without immediately trying to conquer the universe.

Asgard already housed two Stones.

Adding a third would only paint a larger target on their realm.

Xandar was the better choice.

Suddenly, Gamora looked up.

A fleet of Kree troop carriers descended from the sky.

"How the hell did Ronan find us?"

On the ground nearby, Drax stood roaring triumphantly, blades in hand.

He had summoned him.

Quill groaned. "You called him here?!"

The troop ships landed.

Ronan emerged first.

Nebula followed closely behind.

"Where is Gamora?!" Nebula demanded sharply.

At the same time, another familiar ship appeared—Yondu's.

Quill saw him and immediately bolted.

"Run!"

They sprinted toward a cluster of docked mining vessels.

Quill, Gamora, Rocket, and Groot split across three small engineering ships and launched.

On the ground, only Karl and a visibly exhilarated Drax remained.

"Gamora has the Orb!" Nebula barked as she spotted the escaping ships. "After them!"

She returned to her fighter and took off in pursuit.

Ronan turned to board his ship as well.

Drax roared and charged.

He lunged, blade aimed for Ronan's throat.

Ronan dipped smoothly, seized Drax's arm mid-strike, and drove a crushing fist into his chest.

Drax slammed to the ground.

He staggered up immediately and attacked again.

Ronan evaded every strike effortlessly.

Then both hands struck Drax squarely in the chest with overwhelming force.

Drax was hurled through the wall of a nearby structure, disappearing in a cloud of debris.

In the sky above, Nebula locked onto one of the fleeing mining ships.

Unsure which vessel carried Gamora—

She decided to destroy them all.

Kree fighters opened fire.

Green energy blasts streaked through the air.

The three mining ships were unarmed—but small and agile. They wove through the barrage with surprising skill.

Gamora piloted hers through an impossibly narrow gap between industrial structures.

Her pursuers followed—

Too confidently.

One Kree ship clipped the opening.

It detonated in a brilliant explosion.

"Rocket! Cover me!" Quill shouted over comms as he veered sharply toward another vessel.

Below, Ronan stood amidst the wreckage.

Karl hovered calmly a short distance away, watching.

The real battle had only just begun.

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## - Chapter 336 - 336 – The Stone Is Taken[ 701 words ]

"This thing doesn't even have weapons!" Rocket roared.

With no guns to fire, he rammed his mining ship straight into a Kree fighter. The impact knocked the enemy craft sideways and sent it crashing into a nearby structure in a fiery explosion.

Rocket pulled up hard—only to find another Kree ship charging head-on.

"Fine! We'll do it the old-fashioned way!"

He howled and accelerated.

The two ships collided.

The Kree fighter shattered under the reinforced hull of the engineering vessel, erupting into flames while Rocket's ship burst through the firestorm largely intact.

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Elsewhere, Quill had landed his mining ship directly on top of a Kree fighter. Using the vessel's industrial claw, he pried open the cockpit canopy like cracking a tin can.

Then—insanely—he maneuvered the smaller ship inside the Kree craft's interior.

Moments later, the hijacked Kree fighter roared to life under Quill's control.

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On the ground, Drax was being utterly overwhelmed.

Every strike he threw against Ronan felt like tapping stone.

Every blow Ronan delivered landed like a hammer of judgment.

Ronan lifted Drax effortlessly by the throat and slammed him into the ground.

"I do not remember killing your family," Ronan said coldly. "And I will not remember killing you."

He picked up a fallen blade and raised it to drive into Drax's skull—

A sudden wind blade shattered the weapon mid-swing.

Several ice spikes shot toward Ronan's face.

Ronan abandoned the execution and dodged, turning toward the attacker.

Karl stood calmly, frost spiraling around him. Several crystalline ice spears hovered at his side, the air within five meters frozen solid.

"You seek revenge as well?" Ronan asked.

Karl shook his head. "No. I'm simply here to kill you."

The ice spears launched in unison.

Ronan evaded and charged.

A dense mist of freezing vapor erupted around him, instantly reducing visibility to less than a meter.

An ice spike shot from nowhere.

Ronan dodged.

Another followed.

Then three at once from different angles.

Unable to evade all of them, he took the hits. Two struck his knees. His armor prevented penetration—but the shattered ice instantly froze his joints.

With a heavy thud, Ronan dropped to one knee.

Frost spread across the ground, sealing his legs to the surface.

Karl dispersed the mist. A final, massive ice spear formed before him and shot toward Ronan's head.

It stopped inches away.

A shimmering sonic barrier blocked its path.

A Kree ship descended overhead.

Nebula had arrived.

"I have the Orb," she called down. "We're leaving!"

A tractor-like field pulled Ronan upward into the ship.

They turned to flee—

But Karl's aura shifted.

The biting cold vanished, replaced by searing heat.

Several blazing fireballs formed behind him and launched skyward.

Explosions rocked the Kree ship. Nebula maneuvered sharply, avoiding most of the blasts—but one struck true.

The ship belched smoke, engines faltering.

Still, Nebula pushed forward at full speed. If she could reach Ronan's main warship, they would be safe.

---

Meanwhile, in open space—

Gamora floated unconscious, drifting among debris.

Frost crept slowly across her skin.

Rocket's voice crackled over comms.

"Quill... her physiology gives her a few minutes at best. We can't survive out there without suits."

Quill stared at her.

Then made his choice.

He activated his communicator.

"Yondu! Yondu, this is Quill! Coordinates 227-K! Come in!"

Rocket realized instantly what he intended.

"Quill, don't you dare—!"

Too late.

Quill opened the hatch and launched himself into space.

He reached Gamora and pulled off his helmet-mask, securing it over her face.

The mask contained oxygen and temperature regulation.

Without it—

Frost overtook Quill's skin instantly. His eyes reddened as blood vessels burst under the vacuum strain.

He began to lose consciousness.

Then—

A beam of light enveloped them.

Quill turned weakly.

Several Ravager ships hovered nearby.

A powerful tractor beam pulled both him and Gamora inside.

Seeing this, Rocket made a hard turn and fled. If he were captured too, everything would be lost.

---

Quill and Gamora tumbled unceremoniously onto the Ravager ship's floor.

Quill landed on top of her in a position that was... unavoidably intimate.

Oxygen restored, Gamora gasped back to awareness.

"What happened?" she asked, dazed.

"Found you floating out there," Quill said softly, brushing frost from her cheek.

"Couldn't let you die. Heroic impulse. Very noble. Inspiring, really—"

"The Orb?" she interrupted.

Quill froze.

"...I think it got taken."

Her expression hardened instantly.

"What?!"

At that moment, several figures entered the chamber.

Leading them was Yondu's lean, mohawked first mate.

The Ravagers had arrived.

And the Power Stone was now in Ronan's hands.

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- Chapter 337: Ronan's Betrayal[941 words]

"Welcome home, Peter~~~"

Several dark gun barrels were pointed directly at Quill and Gamora.

On the ground, Karl pulled Drax to his feet. Drax looked utterly defeated. He hadn't avenged his family—he had completely underestimated the difference in strength between himself and Ronan.

Bang—!

Rocket's engineering ship slammed into the ground, carving a long trench before finally grinding to a stop.

"You idiots! All of you are brain-dead morons! A bunch of complete fools!!"

Rocket jumped down from the ship, muttering furiously as he stomped over to Drax.

"Quill got himself captured on purpose—and it's all because of you!"

Rocket pointed straight at Drax's nose and shouted.

"This whole thing didn't have to turn out like this! But no—you had to play hero! What made you think you could beat Ronan? Beat his entire army?!"

Drax lowered his head, filled with regret.

"You're right. I was a fool... I believed I could face Ronan and his army alone. All my anger and hatred... were just ways to hide the pain of losing my family."

His voice was low and hoarse.

"Oh, spare me," Rocket snapped. "Who hasn't lost someone? Does that mean the rest of us have to die with you just because you want revenge?!"

Rocket's words hit like a hammer.

Drax opened his mouth to argue—but found no words.

"Ronan has the Stone now. Groot, we're leaving. Right now. We go somewhere far away—preferably the other side of the galaxy."

Rocket waved for Groot to follow. He had no intention of turning into cosmic dust.

"I am Groot~~!"

Groot suddenly replied.

Though Rocket couldn't understand the words, the tone made it obvious—Groot disagreed.

"Ahhhh!"

Rocket grabbed his head in frustration.

He never wanted to be part of this mess. At first he only wanted to collect Yondu's bounty on Quill. Somehow he got dragged into the Orb, and now into Ronan's war.

Rocket just wanted to disappear somewhere nobody could find him.

"You're forcing me into this! I told you from the start we should've just captured Quill and turned him in for the reward! Did anyone listen to me?!"

Rocket kicked a chunk of dead turf over and over while ranting.

Karl looked up at the sky where Ronan and Nebula had already departed. By now they were probably back aboard Ronan's strange block-shaped warship.

Next stop—

Xandar.

Inside Ronan's Warship

Ronan stood in the command hall, communicating with Thanos.

"I have found the Orb."

He paced slowly, clearly thinking about something.

"Bring the Orb to me."

Thanos' tone allowed no refusal.

"Of course. That was our agreement."

Ronan spoke casually as he took the Orb from one of his soldiers.

"I give you the Orb. You destroy Xandar for me. But..."

Ronan stopped walking and raised his head toward Thanos' projection.

"Now that I know the Orb contains an Infinity Stone, what do I need you for?"

He spread his hands with a mocking smile.

The moment Ronan learned the Stone could destroy entire planets, he had already decided to ignore his deal with Thanos.

With a sudden motion—

Crack!

He tore the Orb open.

A surge of purple light burst outward, flooding the hall with glowing energy.

"That's the end of our arrangement."

Right in front of Thanos, Ronan reached in and pulled out the Power Stone.

Instantly, violent flames exploded from his hand.

Purple energy surged through his entire body, spreading like lightning.

BOOM!

The floor beneath him cracked apart. Purple energy burst through the ground like magma.

Ronan's body glowed violently, just like the Collector's servant had earlier.

But Ronan's body was far stronger.

Though the power strained him, he slowly managed to contain the Stone's destructive energy.

He raised his hand.

His massive war hammer flew into his grip.

Then he pressed the Power Stone directly into the hammer.

The entire weapon ignited with purple light.

Energy poured from his body into the hammer until the weapon became a vessel for the Stone's power.

When the surge ended, Ronan's eyes glowed with cold violet light.

"Thanos... I will let you watch as I judge Xandar."

"And then—"

"I'll come for you."

His purple gaze stared directly at Thanos' projection.

Then the transmission was cut.

With the Power Stone, Ronan no longer feared anyone.

Not even Thanos.

Nebula's Question

Ronan turned and noticed Nebula watching him.

"What do you want to say?"

His expression was indifferent.

"You'll kill my father after destroying Xandar?" Nebula asked.

Her eyes locked onto his.

She wanted the truth.

"Are you trying to stop me?" Ronan asked coldly.

"No."

Nebula shook her head.

"Look at what he's done to me."

Her entire body—except her brain—had been replaced with cybernetic parts by Thanos.

She barely resembled a living being anymore.

Hatred burned inside her.

"If you kill him," she said quietly, "I'll help you destroy a thousand planets."

Ronan smiled faintly.

He said nothing.

But the answer was obvious.

The Ravagers' Ship

Yondu was punching Quill repeatedly in the stomach.

"You dared betray me?! You even stole my money!"

He grabbed Quill by the jaw and glared at him.

"When I brought you aboard, you were just a little runt! Those guys wanted to eat you! I saved your life!!"

Quill shouted back.

"Can you use a different story for once?! You've been saying that for twenty years!"

"As if not eating me makes you saints! I've never met normal people who spend all day talking about eating someone!"

"I never saw normal people who spend every day talking about eating someone!"

Quill shouted back.

"You kidnapped me! You took me away from my family!"

Yondu grabbed Quill by the throat.

"Shut up!"

"You don't care about your planet. You're afraid."

"Your heart is weak."

"You were born weak!"

He raised his fist to punch Quill in the face.

"Yondu! Stop! Listen to me!"

Gamora shouted from the side where several Ravagers held her down.

"Ronan took the Infinity Stone! We have to take it back!"

"He's going to destroy Xandar!"

"If we don't warn them, billions of people will die!"

But Yondu didn't even look at her.

His eyes stayed locked on Quill.

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## - Chapter 338: Quill's Ineffective Plan[ 959 words ]

"So this is the kind of person who bewitched you? Have you got pig brains? Playing the emotional card, for crying out loud?!"

Yondu slapped Quill on the head, looking like a father furious at a disappointing son.

With a sharp whistle, a metal arrow shot out from Yondu's waist and stopped right in front of Quill's throat.

"Kid, you've betrayed me again and again. Before, I let it slide because you were young. But now I'm the boss—I have to keep my authority. Do you know what happens to people who betray us?"

The Ravagers around them immediately nodded in agreement.

"If you kill me now," Quill quickly said, scrambling for leverage, "you'll lose the biggest deal of your life."

He had no desire to actually die here.

"You mean the Infinity Stone?" Yondu turned to look at him. "You'd better think of something more convincing. As far as I know, nobody steals from Ronan."

"We have a secret weapon!"

Quill spoke with forced confidence, though inside he was panicking. There was no secret weapon at all—he was just betting on the fact that Gamora knew some of Ronan's secrets.

"Secret weapon?" Yondu clearly didn't buy it.

Quill immediately shot Gamora a look.

"She—she knows everything about Ronan. His ship, his army, even his weaknesses."

Gamora picked up the cue instantly.

"That's right. I used to work for him. I know everything about him."

"So what do you say?" Quill pressed on. "You and I fight side by side again, just like the old days. We rob Ronan blind—and we'll make a fortune!"

Quill stared at Yondu, unsure of his reaction. This was a gamble.

After a long pause, Yondu suddenly burst into laughter and pulled Quill into a hug.

"Haha! You've still got guts, kid. All that effort raising you wasn't wasted!"

Suddenly—

BOOM!

The ship shook violently.

They were under attack.

---

Outside the Ship

Rocket was flying Quill's ship, firing continuously at the Ravagers' cruiser.

But compared to the massive Ravager vessel, Rocket's ship was tiny. The attacks barely scratched the hull.

Yondu and his crew rushed to the bridge.

Through the window, they saw Quill's ship hovering outside—with Rocket piloting it.

"Listen up, idiots over there!" Rocket's voice crackled through the comms. "The lunatic standing on top of my ship is holding a quantum cannon. It can punch straight through your oversized junk heap!"

On top of the ship stood Drax, wearing combat gear and holding a massive cannon mounted on his chest.

Inside the cockpit, Karl sat beside Rocket, looking toward the blue-skinned Yondu on the opposite side.

Karl's cloak allowed him to fly in space, but as a human he still couldn't survive there for long. Unless he turned into a summoned creature—which wasn't practical to maintain—he had to stay inside the ship. That limited his movements somewhat.

"What the hell is that thing?" Yondu squinted.

The sight of a small animal piloting a spaceship left his face twisted in confusion.

"Release my companions right now," Rocket shouted, "or I'll blow your junk ship into space trash!"

Receiving no response, Rocket continued yelling.

Quill and Gamora quickly squeezed forward and activated the communicator.

"Wait, Rocket! It's me—Quill! Everything's under control! No danger!"

"What?! You call this under control? You're challenging that guy—what was his name—Ronan? Have you lost your mind?!"

Rocket stared at Quill in disbelief while sitting on a crate.

"I already have a plan," Quill insisted.

"A plan?" Rocket scoffed. "Your plan is to steal the Stone from Ronan and sell it to someone even worse?"

"We need the Ravagers' fleet if we want to stand a chance against Ronan's army," Gamora said.

"So you're giving the Stone to Yondu? What if he turns into another Ronan?" Rocket snapped.

He didn't believe there were any good people among the Ravagers.

"We can argue about that later," Gamora replied. "Stopping Ronan comes first."

"Stopping him? How? With the five of us?"

Rocket knew exactly how outmatched they were.

"I told you—I've got a plan," Quill repeated.

"You? A plan? With that pig brain of yours? Give me a break," Rocket shot back.

"I really do! A big plan!"

"What's the success rate?" Rocket asked immediately.

Quill hesitated.

"Uh... about twenty percent?"

The moment he said it, his confidence visibly deflated.

Rocket exploded into laughter.

"HAHAHAHA! Twenty percent? You've got to be kidding me!"

He laughed so hard he nearly fell off the crate.

"Honestly," Gamora added dryly, "that's more like a suggestion than a plan."

"Whose side are you on?" Quill protested.

"Yondu will be here soon," Quill whispered. "We need something that sounds like a plan."

In truth, he had nothing. He was hoping they could improvise something convincing enough to fool Yondu.

At that moment, Karl spoke up.

"Actually, we don't need a plan."

Everyone turned to look at him. Until now, he had been almost invisible.

"I'll handle Ronan's ship," Karl said calmly. "You guys deal with the rest."

"What?!"

Everyone shouted at once.

"You can take down Ronan's ship by yourself?" Gamora stared at him in shock.

She knew exactly what Ronan's ship was like.

"Carl, I know you're strong," Quill said cautiously, "but destroying Ronan's ship alone might be a little... unrealistic."

Karl rolled his eyes.

"Trust me. I'll deal with Ronan's ship. You just hold off the rest."

The group exchanged uncertain looks.

Still, they needed some kind of plan to present to Yondu.

"The plan is simple," Karl continued. "Warn Xandar and have them help you hold off Ronan's fleet. I'll take care of his main ship."

Karl wasn't any better at planning than Quill. In fact, he was even worse.

Once he realized he was terrible at strategy, he completely embraced the brute-force approach.

If it was a fight, why bother with complicated tactics? Just crush the enemy head-on.

Against Thanos with six Stones, Karl might struggle.

But Ronan with only one Stone?

That was easy.

After the discussion, everyone began preparing.

And for the first time, the five members—except Karl—put on the red uniforms of the Guardians of the Galaxy.

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- Chapter 339 - 339 – Before the Battle[1,013 words]

Soon afterward, everyone gathered together.

Yondu sat in a chair like a warlord, legs spread wide, surrounded by his Ravager crew.

"The larger the target," Gamora said as she stepped up onto the platform, looking at everyone, "the greater the destructive power the Stone can unleash."

She paused before continuing.

"Ronan must bring the Stone into contact with the surface of Xandar. Once that happens, every animal, every plant, and every person living on the planet—everything—will be wiped out."

Quill stepped forward beside her and looked at Yondu.

"So we absolutely cannot let Ronan reach the ground. Our job is to stop Ronan and his forces from landing at all costs. We don't need to worry about Ronan's warship itself—just keep his troops from reaching the surface."

"What?!" Yondu immediately barked. "What do you mean we don't worry about Ronan's ship? Didn't you just say he can't land?"

"I'll handle Ronan's ship," Karl said calmly from where he sat on the steps. "All you need to do is deal with his army. And one more thing—Ronan might hide among those smaller ships, so you must guard Xandar's airspace carefully."

"Yeah, right," one Ravager scoffed from behind Yondu. "You're a Terran. What makes you think you can stop Ronan's warship? How many ships have you even seen?"

The man looked at Karl with open disdain.

Karl's thin Earthling frame didn't look impressive at all—he even seemed less physically imposing than Quill. Many of them had initially assumed he was just someone's lackey.

Karl sighed.

Instantly, the temperature inside the ship plummeted.

Frost spread across the walls, coating everything in ice.

The Ravager who had spoken turned into a frozen statue in the blink of an eye.

Everyone looked down in horror.

Their legs had already been encased in solid ice, which was rapidly creeping upward.

"Enough!" Yondu shouted immediately.

He had no intention of letting his entire crew get wiped out.

Karl had clearly proven his strength. That was enough.

Karl shrugged casually.

The temperature slowly rose again, and the frost receded.

Only the Ravager who had mocked him remained frozen in place like an ice sculpture.

"Whew..."

Everyone exhaled in relief. The bone-chilling cold had felt like being exposed to outer space—breathing had become painfully difficult.

"Go on," Karl said lazily, waving a hand at Quill.

Quill swallowed before continuing.

"Rocket, Groot, and Drax will lead a team. They'll form the first line of defense against Ronan's army."

He glanced at Rocket.

Rocket nodded.

"Gamora and I will blast a hole in Ronan's warship. That'll give Karl a way to get inside."

Quill looked toward Karl again.

Karl nodded slightly.

"Once Karl gets inside, all of us will join the fight against Ronan's forces. At that point, I'll contact the Nova Corps and get them to send reinforcements."

The plan was clearly something they had all worked out together.

At that moment, Gamora approached Karl.

"Once Ronan knows you're on the ship, he'll retreat to a secure chamber," she explained. "There's a reinforced safety door there. It's impossible to break through by force, so the only way inside is by shutting down the power system."

She handed Karl a transparent tablet displaying the energy system's structure and a power cell.

"If you destroy this battery, the door will open automatically."

Karl glanced at the tablet briefly.

His plan was simple—tear the ship apart from the inside and force Ronan out of hiding.

"Karl, once you get the Stone back, put it inside this."

Quill tossed him a small metal sphere.

It was a replica modeled after the Orb, designed to isolate the Stone's energy the same way the Orb did.

Karl nodded.

He actually intended to try grabbing the Power Stone with his bare hands just to see what it felt like—but he accepted the sphere anyway.

"Before we start," Rocket suddenly said, looking at one of the Ravagers, "we still need something very important."

He pointed directly at the man.

"That guy's eye."

The Ravager had a mechanical eye.

The man panicked immediately, waving his hands frantically.

"No! No! Absolutely not!"

"We don't need your eye," Quill quickly said, stopping everyone from actually attempting to remove it.

Rocket covered his mouth and snickered silently.

Once the plan was finalized, everyone moved to their tasks.

Rocket and Drax began checking the ships.

Groot sat off to the side doing absolutely nothing, staring blankly into space.

Gamora quietly examined her short sword, lost in thought.

Quill contacted the Nova officer who had previously arrested them.

After several warp jumps, Yondu's ship entered Xandar's orbital range.

All forces had assembled.

"Kid," Yondu said, grabbing Quill by the collar, his expression serious. "When this is over, the Stone is mine. Don't try anything clever."

Quill said nothing.

He simply pulled free from Yondu's grip and walked away.

Yondu returned to the captain's chair and activated the ship's intercom.

"Alright, boys," he grinned.

"Let's tear them apart!"

He slammed the hatch control.

The massive bay doors beneath the ship opened.

Countless Ravager ships poured out like a swarm of hornets, racing toward Xandar's atmosphere.

On Xandar, the entire leadership council had already gathered in the war room.

Quill's message had caused the Nova Corps officer who arrested them to summon every high-ranking official.

The central holographic display showed countless Ravager ships circling the planet's atmosphere.

"Supreme Leader," a general reported, "I've received a message from a Ravager. He claims Ronan has taken something called an Infinity Stone and is heading toward Xandar."

Before the Supreme Leader could speak, another general scoffed.

"This is clearly a trap. That man is a criminal. Why should we believe a criminal?"

"They just escaped from the Kyn," the first general replied. "If it weren't true, they wouldn't come back to Xandar—unless they were complete idiots."

He believed Quill.

"You're saying you trust them?" the Supreme Leader asked slowly. "You believe they've come to help us?"

The general hesitated for several seconds.

Then he nodded.

"I do."

At that moment, Ronan's warship arrived at Xandar and rapidly approached the atmosphere.

"Nebula," Ronan said as she entered the chamber.

"A fleet is approaching," she reported. "Looks like a Ravager fleet."

Outside, countless Ravager ships had formed a blockade in front of Ronan's vessel.

The massive warship pierced through the atmosphere and entered Xandar's skies.

Then—

Two Ravager ships equipped with massive plasma cannons moved into position.

At Yondu's command—

They fired.

Two enormous plasma blasts streaked toward Ronan's warship.

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**- Chapter 340 - 340 – Blocking the Invasion[ 1,078 words ]**

Like falling meteors, the two plasma shells struck Ronan's warship directly—but the ship's energy shield absorbed the impact.

However, although the shield blocked the blasts, it was completely destroyed in the process.

"All units—launch and engage immediately!"

Standing in the observation tower of the warship, Nebula saw the shield collapse with her own eyes and instantly ordered the full assault.

At once, countless ships surged out and began firing on the Ravagers.

"Everyone—attack!"

Rocket, piloting his ship and facing an overwhelming swarm of enemies, fired the first shot.

In an instant, the Ravager fleet opened fire. Ships surged forward, launching attacks on the Kree fighters.

Beneath Ronan's warship, Karl hovered beside Quill and Gamora's craft.

Ratatatatat—

Bullets poured out in a relentless stream.

The durability of Ronan's warship far exceeded Gamora's expectations. Even with sustained fire, a single ship couldn't penetrate the vessel's outer armor.

Seeing this, Karl waved at Quill.

Quill immediately understood and steered his ship aside.

Boom—rumble—

Dark thunderclouds suddenly gathered in the sky.

Then purple lightning crashed down violently, striking Ronan's warship.

Under the furious roar of thunder, a massive breach was blasted open in the hull. The surrounding metal was scorched black—the concentrated lightning proving far more effective than ordinary gunfire.

---

On the ground, everyone had now seen Ronan's warship with their own eyes.

No one doubted the truth of Quill's warning anymore.

"Evacuate all civilians immediately!" the Supreme Leader ordered. "Move them away from the battlefield. And place all forces on combat readiness!"

At once, the entire planet mobilized.

Civilians across Xandar began evacuating under military escort, moving toward areas far from the coming battle.

---

In the skies above, countless ships swarmed like hornets, firing at one another.

Green and yellow energy beams rained down in dense torrents as everyone fought desperately to stop Ronan's army.

But Ronan's forces were simply too numerous.

The Ravager fleet alone couldn't hold back the overwhelming number of Kree fighters.

"Quill! When are Xandar's reinforcements getting here?!" Rocket shouted, weaving through enemy fire while piloting his ship. Behind him, Groot continued firing at pursuing Kree vessels.

Suddenly, countless star-like ships appeared from behind them.

"Peter Quill, this is Nova Corps Commander Saal," a voice came over the comms. "Just so we're clear—I'm not here because I trust you."

Saal was the same officer who had previously doubted Quill's message.

But now that he had seen Ronan's warship with his own eyes, disbelief was no longer an option.

With the arrival of the Nova Corps fleet, the battle immediately shifted.

The Kree fighters began to lose ground under the combined pressure.

Karl signaled Quill to leave.

Then he slowly flew into the breach of Ronan's warship.

The moment he entered, large numbers of Kree soldiers rushed toward him.

A flash of icy blue light passed through Karl's eyes.

Instantly, dense frost mist filled the area.

Within the mist, a beautiful ice-blue flower slowly bloomed.

The Kree soldiers froze instantly.

As they breathed, the frost spread from inside their bodies outward, sealing them in ice.

When the mist dispersed, Karl continued walking deeper into the ship without even glancing at the frozen statues behind him.

---

"Ronan, the ship has been breached. An intruder has entered," Nebula reported as she stepped before him.

"Maintain forward advance," Ronan replied calmly.

As long as he could reach the surface of Xandar, the planet's destruction would be inevitable.

"Our objective is to reach the ground. Nothing else matters."

After speaking, Ronan slowly sat down upon his throne, gripping his warhammer.

Nebula ordered the soldiers to seal the doors before leaving.

---

Karl advanced through the corridors until he arrived at a dark chamber where nothing could be seen.

Whoosh.

A small flame appeared beside him, illuminating the surroundings like a lantern.

Only then did Karl realize it was some kind of ship compartment, though its purpose was unclear.

Before he could take more than a few steps—

Nebula suddenly dropped down in front of him.

"I remember you," she said coldly. "You're the Terran who fought Ronan earlier."

She had expected Gamora to be the one infiltrating the ship—not Karl.

"I remember you too," Karl replied. "One of Thanos's daughters. The one whose body was rebuilt with machinery... Nebula, right?"

To be honest, Karl found Nebula somewhat pitiful.

Her entire body had been modified beyond recognition. She hated Thanos yet feared him deeply, envied the affection he showed Gamora, and still cared for her sister in her own conflicted way.

"I won't let you go any further," Nebula said, gripping her twin daggers.

"Then try and stop me."

Karl spread his hand.

The Ultimate Divine Weapon appeared instantly.

Three icy-blue sword arcs slashed forward in succession. Wherever the blades passed, everything froze solid.

Nebula dodged quickly and lunged forward, stabbing at Karl with her electrified dagger.

Karl tilted his head and avoided the strike.

Then he kicked toward her.

Nebula tried to dodge—but suddenly realized her feet had been frozen to the floor.

Bang!

Karl's kick sent her flying.

When she hit the ground, frost rapidly spread across her body—but unlike the Kree soldiers, she did not become a complete ice statue.

A thin frost mist had gradually filled the chamber earlier.

Nebula hadn't paid attention to it—and that was precisely what immobilized her.

"I don't want to kill you," Karl said calmly. "You should leave."

He stepped forward, lifted Nebula with one hand, and tossed her upward.

Boom!

Her body smashed through the upper hull of the ship.

She was thrown straight out into open space.

Nebula fell from the sky and crashed onto a Ravager ship flying nearby.

She smashed through the cockpit glass, killed the pilot, and seized control of the vessel.

Then she immediately fled Xandar.

She had already foreseen Ronan's fate.

There was no way he would succeed.

Waiting to die alongside him was pointless—escaping was the smarter choice.

---

Inside the control chamber, Ronan stood before a massive viewing window, calmly watching the battle outside.

Countless ships clashed in the sky, beams flashing everywhere.

But none of that mattered to him.

All that mattered was reaching the ground.

Suddenly—

BOOM!

The supposedly indestructible door behind him collapsed.

Karl stepped inside slowly, the Ultimate Divine Weapon in his hand.

Ronan turned and saw him.

"Terran," Ronan said calmly. "I remember you."

Before, he might have been wary of Karl.

But now he possessed the Power Stone.

He feared no one.

"Enough talk," Karl replied. "I'm here to take the Power Stone."

Two blue ribbon-like streams of energy slowly unfurled behind him like a cloak.

The temperature in the chamber dropped sharply.

A thick layer of ice spread across the floor and walls.

"You may have it," Ronan said.

"—If you can defeat me."

The moment he finished speaking, a beam of purple energy blasted toward Karl.

Karl flashed aside instantly, dodging the attack.

In the next instant—

He appeared behind Ronan.

The Ultimate Divine Weapon, radiating freezing cold, slashed toward him.

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