

## MARVEL MANIFESTOR

### Chapter 461 461: The Chase

Clad in the Killmonger suit, Erik exuded an aura like a predator locking onto its prey—like a panther ready to tear its target apart with fangs and claws at any moment.

"So you're the one who attacked my uncle?"

Erik didn't give Bucky any time to respond. He lunged forward instantly, swift as a leopard, slashing his claws straight toward Bucky's chest.

Bucky barely dodged and countered with a punch. The two exchanged blows, each strike landing with solid impact.

But gradually, Bucky began to lose ground. Physically, the Winter Soldier was enhanced only by the Super Soldier Serum, while Erik had taken the Heart-Shaped Herb—far superior. On top of that, Erik's combat experience far surpassed that of a long-dormant Winter Soldier.

In just a few moves, Erik sent Bucky flying with a kick, then surged forward again like a hunting beast. Leaping into the air, he drove his knee hard into Bucky's

chest, sending him flying seven or eight meters. If not for crashing into an air-conditioning unit, Bucky would have been knocked straight off the rooftop.

Erik immediately followed up with a claw strike. Bucky dodged quickly, and the claw tore the air-conditioning unit behind him into scrap.

"Erik, stop!!"

Steve rushed in at that moment, kicking toward Erik's chest. But Erik didn't dodge at all. A golden glow flashed across his chest as the suit absorbed the kinetic energy of the blow.

The moment Steve saw the black-and-gold suit, he recognized Erik and moved to stop him from harming Bucky.

Rat-tat-tat-tat—

Suddenly, an armed helicopter swooped in from around the corner, its mounted machine gun spraying bullets at Erik and Bucky.

Steve quickly raised his shield to protect himself. Erik, however, stood his ground, tanking the barrage without flinching.

"Sam, take out that helicopter!"

Steve called out immediately. Just because Erik could withstand heavy gunfire didn't mean others could—Steve himself wasn't bulletproof.

Sam dove down at once, delivering a kick to the helicopter's tail. It spun wildly, forcing the pilot to pull away to regain control.

Seizing the opportunity, the fake Bucky leapt off the rooftop terrace, using the protruding ledges to cushion his fall before dropping toward the ground.

Erik was even faster—he clung to the wall and slid downward. Steve followed without hesitation, jumping off the roof, curling his body midair and using his shield to absorb the impact.

The three of them burst into a high-speed chase through the streets. None of them were ordinary—their running speeds quickly surpassed even the cars racing around them.

Bucky sprinted along the road, with Erik and Steve close behind. After dropping off an overpass, Bucky dashed straight into a tunnel.

Erik snorted coldly and leapt down as well. Activating the stored energy in his suit, golden light gathered around his feet, and his speed surged dramatically—he shot forward like a bullet.

Steve chased after them, pushing himself to the limit. He used nearby vehicles to gain speed, leaping from one car roof to another.

Up ahead, Bucky glanced back and saw Erik closing in like a hunting beast. He slammed a punch into a nearby car. The vehicle, driven by inertia, flipped upright, blocking Erik's path.

Erik leapt effortlessly over the vertical car. He wasn't a superhero—he didn't care about the passengers inside and didn't even spare them a glance as he continued the pursuit.

Behind them, a convoy of police vehicles arrived—fully armed special forces units joining the chase.

Seeing himself fall behind, Steve commandeered a car and sped forward.

Bucky burst out of the tunnel, grabbed a motorcycle, and continued his escape. Meanwhile, Erik was intercepted by Steve's vehicle.

Steve repeatedly rammed the car into Erik, trying to slow him down. But Erik was unfazed. He leapt onto the car roof, tore it open with his claws, and slashed down toward Steve.

Outside the tunnel, Sam hovered in the air, tracking Bucky's movements. The moment Bucky emerged, Sam dove down—but before he could reach him, a black blur flashed past, tackling both Bucky and his motorcycle to the ground.

Sam immediately halted midair and got a clear look at the newcomer. The man wore a black suit with faint purple energy flowing across it. Aside from its color and patterns, it looked almost identical to Erik's suit.

It was the Black Panther—T'Challa—though Sam didn't recognize him.

At the same time, Steve drove out of the tunnel. He slammed on the brakes, throwing Erik off the vehicle as it flipped. Steve reacted instantly, jumping out.

He then rushed toward Bucky, trying to stop T'Challa from attacking him—but Erik blocked his path, slashing toward his face. Steve raised his shield to defend, and sparks flew as five claw marks appeared on the vibranium shield.

Even so, the shield wasn't as durable as a full vibranium suit. After all, it was only partially made of vibranium, with the rest being alloy—unlike Erik's suit, which was entirely composed of vibranium.

Suddenly, sirens blared from all directions. Several helicopters hovered overhead, and countless special forces soldiers aimed their weapons at the group in the center.

At that moment, with a thunderous boom, a suit of armor descended from the sky. Heavy machine guns deployed from its back, and repulsors charged in its palms—it was Rhodey in the War Machine armor.

"Everyone, stand down—now!"

Rhodey's voice rang out, and only then did the fighting stop.

"Congratulations, Cap. You're a criminal now."

There was no hint of congratulations in his tone—only heaviness. A former comrade had become a criminal overnight. Even as a soldier, it was hard to accept.

Special forces soldiers quickly surrounded Steve and Bucky, weapons trained on them as they moved in to restrain them.

Neither Steve nor Bucky resisted. This, too, was part of the fake Bucky's plan—to make Steve believe he was the real Bucky and to drive a wedge between the Avengers. And now, it was already starting to work.

Not far away, Sam slowly approached under the aim of multiple rifles. At the same time, T'Challa and Erik removed their helmets.

"Your Majesty?!"

Sam's eyes widened in shock upon seeing them. Among the Avengers present, he was the only one who didn't know the identities of Black Panther and Killmonger. Steve and Rhodey both knew—they had once fought alongside them.

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## Chapter 462 462: Captured

T'Challa ignored everyone's shock and instead looked at Steve. He couldn't understand why Steve was trying to stop him. The long-haired man in front of them was the culprit behind the bombing—he had nearly killed his father. If that had happened, it would have become a full-blown diplomatic crisis. Even a thousand deaths wouldn't be enough to atone for it.

Soon after, the group was placed into specialized transport vehicles. Under heavy security and with a strong police escort along the way, they were taken to the current Avengers base—the new headquarters established after the Sokovia Accords officially came into effect.

There were only three primary detainees in the transport: Steve, Sam, and Bucky. Due to their sensitive identities, T'Challa and Erik were not placed in the prison transport.

Upon arrival, Bucky—considered a high-risk criminal—was placed alone in a specialized containment chamber, transported via shuttle. The others, however, were not imprisoned.

As they stepped out, they saw several people waiting. Leading them was the current head of the Avengers, the one who had replaced Nick Fury. Standing beside him was Sharon Carter.

"What are you planning to do with him?"

Steve asked, looking at Bucky inside the chamber.

"He'll undergo psychological evaluation, and then we'll decide based on the severity of his crimes. The same applies to you."

The man answered bluntly.

"This is Everett Ross, the current director of the Avengers."

Sharon introduced him.

"Ross? Your last name is Ross?"

Sam asked in surprise. He hadn't expected that Ross to be pulling strings and placing his own people in charge. Did that mean the Avengers were now under his complete control?

Given Ross's past methods, it was entirely possible. He had always been obsessed with super soldiers, wanting to seize that overwhelming power for himself—under the guise of serving the United States. But who it was really for, only he knew.

And now, the truth seemed to be coming out. The head of the new Avengers headquarters was also named Ross—could that really be a coincidence?

"Secure their weapons and bring them with me."

Everett said, then led the group inside the building. Surrounded by heavily armed personnel, Steve and the others had no choice but to follow.

The difference in treatment between the two groups was stark.

"King T'Challa, we will provide offices for you and Prince Erik. You won't be placed in cells. However, we ask that you remain in your offices."

As Everett spoke, a striking figure approached—it was Natasha. Having signed the Accords, she was now working here.

"Steve, this is exactly the worst-case scenario I was talking about."

Natasha said helplessly, then walked alongside Steve into the building.

They entered a large command room. At its center stood Tony, who was in the middle of a phone call. It wasn't clear who was on the other end.

"Accountability? You're asking me about accountability? Get lost. Anything else? I'm hanging up!"

Tony cut the call without giving the other party a chance to respond.

After hanging up, he walked straight over to Steve and Sam.

"Accountability... that's a familiar word for us, isn't it?"

Steve said with a hint of sarcasm. He'd heard that word dozens of times over the past few days.

"Yeah. Secretary Ross wants to prosecute you two. I've got to give him something to shut him up."

Tony looked exhausted. He was finally experiencing what it felt like for Nick Fury to clean up after them—it wasn't a job anyone would envy. At least Fury could skim some funding while doing it; Tony couldn't even manage that.

"I see. I'm not getting the shield back, am I?"

Steve immediately understood. It was just another exchange of interests. And the price for ensuring his safety without facing prosecution... was the identity of Captain America.

"Technically, that shield is U.S. government property."

Natasha shrugged.

"Oh, and those wings too."

Sam caught a stray hit.

"Cold."

Sam muttered. All he'd done was kick a helicopter.

"Still better than sitting in a prison cell."

Tony replied bluntly. This was the best he could do. When it came to political maneuvering, he was no match for Fury.

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Bucky was locked inside a specialized chamber. A thick cable connected to it, supplying oxygen and power. After all, Bucky wasn't an ordinary person—high-tech measures were necessary.

The chamber was already electrified. If Bucky attempted to escape, a high-voltage current would immediately "send him to heaven."

Meanwhile, an inconspicuous electrical maintenance truck arrived at a high-voltage station. The driver stepped out, holding a clipboard, and walked toward the facility.

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"So this is the newest Quinjet? Looks no different from mine."

Karl sat inside, examining the aircraft. Both its exterior and interior looked almost identical to previous models.

"This is the latest model—it can operate in space. If it weren't for this situation, I wouldn't have brought it out."

After setting the route and activating the cloaking system, Nick Fury sat down across from Karl.

The newest Quinjet no longer required manual piloting. Even fine operations could be handled automatically. Once the parameters were set, the onboard system took over.

"You've got a lead?"

Karl asked. If Fury had already set a destination, he must have found something.

"Coulson."

Fury gestured toward him.

"The bomber has been captured. Along with him, Steve, Sam, King T'Challa, and Prince Erik have also been detained."

Coulson handed Karl a tablet and gave a brief summary of their findings.

Karl took it and quickly scanned through the contents. The information was clearly professional—even bearing the Avengers' insignia, with some parts marked classified.

"You hacked into their system?"

Karl looked at Fury. This kind of data wasn't something just anyone could access.

"The current Avengers system is basically a copy of the old one. Is it really that strange that I left a few people inside?"

Fury folded his arms, looking smug.

"Tch. As underhanded as ever."

Karl said dismissively.

"I've got something to ask you. How much do you know about T'Challa and Erik?"

Fury didn't dwell on the previous topic. After seeing their suits, he had already realized Wakanda was far from the poor, backward nation it appeared to be. And given Karl's close relationship with T'Challa, he was certain Karl knew more.

"I know everything. Want to hear it?"

Karl raised an eyebrow. He had promised T'Challa that he wouldn't reveal anything about Wakanda until it officially opened to the outside world.

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## Chapter 463 463: The Massive Blackout

Nick Fury said nothing, but every inch of him radiated curiosity. Even an idiot could tell he wanted to know.

"And why should I tell you?"

Karl's words were like a sword stabbing straight into Fury's chest.

"I—motherf—!!"

Nick Fury exploded in frustration. He jumped to his feet and stormed into the cockpit to sulk.

There was nothing else he could do. He couldn't beat Karl in a fight, so what choice did he have except endure it?

Still, Fury didn't dwell on it too much. Even though Karl hadn't said anything directly, his response had indirectly confirmed Fury's suspicions—Wakanda's technology was probably far more advanced than theirs.

"Where are we going?"

Karl glanced outside. There was nothing but clouds in every direction.

"To the new Avengers base. They captured Steve and the guy who bombed the building."

Fury rested his chin on his hands.

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Inside the base, everyone sat in separate rooms watching footage of Bucky displayed on large screens.

Steve and Sam sat in a conference room together with Agent Sharon Carter.

"Hello, Mr. Barnes. I'm the evaluator assigned by the United Nations. I need you to answer a few questions."

A well-dressed man who looked like a lawyer entered the room where Bucky was being held. Sitting at a table, he glanced at the file in his hands.

"Is your name James?"

The man asked calmly.

But Bucky completely ignored him, not even sparing him a glance. The only command he had received was to drive a wedge between the Avengers and destroy them from within. Everything else was irrelevant to him.

Inside the conference room, Sharon quietly disabled the listening devices. Outside the room, Natasha remained standing guard.

"Do you know where you are, James?"

The evaluator continued.

Bucky remained silent, staring blankly upward at the ceiling of the containment chamber.

"If you don't talk to me, I can't help you."

The evaluator used the same tone and tactics typically used to coax ordinary suspects into opening up.

In the conference room, Steve looked at Sharon.

"Why release that photo to the public?"

He was referring to the screenshot from the surveillance footage—the one clearly showing Bucky's face.

"Getting the information out means more people searching for him. More people means more leads."

Sharon replied. She wasn't in command, so she didn't know the real reasoning. It was only her guess.

"Yeah. It's the perfect way to make someone unable to hide. Get millions of people in the city searching for a fanatic bomber... especially one who's also a super soldier like me."

Steve continued along Sharon's line of thought. The implication was obvious.

"You mean someone framed him on purpose so we'd find him?"

As a trained agent, Sharon immediately understood what Steve meant.

"Would someone who bombed the U.N. building really show their face afterward?"

Sharon also felt something was off. She had no evidence, but everything had gone too smoothly. They announced a manhunt, then immediately received leads

pointing directly to the suspect. The search and capture proceeded almost effortlessly—and they even arrested Captain America and Falcon in the process. The whole thing felt unbelievable.

"Tell me, Bucky. You've witnessed many things over the years, haven't you? You and Captain America came from the same era—you must have gone through a lot."

The evaluator kept talking to himself.

The camera angle only showed his back, so no one saw his face.

At that moment, the evaluator's phone buzzed. A message appeared:

Package delivered.

He tapped the screen.

This "evaluator" was actually the mastermind behind everything—Zemo.

And the fake Bucky's true handler.

The two of them were acting out a show for everyone to see. Zemo's objective was simple: create chaos, free Bucky, and continue driving a wedge between Steve and Tony, splitting the Avengers further apart.

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Several kilometers away, at a power substation, the man from the maintenance truck unloaded a wooden crate from the vehicle.

He placed it in the center of the station and pried it open with a crowbar. Inside was a metallic device—the same one previously seen in Zemo's hotel room.

As a shockwave spread outward from the device, sparks exploded throughout the station. Every electrical system hit by the pulse instantly failed.

The destruction of the substation plunged the entire city into darkness.

Homes, shopping malls, traffic lights—anything connected to electricity shut down instantly.

Even the new Avengers base lost power, switching over to emergency backup systems.

But the backup power could only maintain essential functions. It wasn't enough to sustain Bucky's containment chamber.

And that gave him the perfect chance to escape.

"JARVIS, take over the entire building immediately. Investigate the cause of the blackout."

Tony stood up and tapped beside his ear. A pair of nano-glasses formed over his face, faint lights flickering across the lenses.

In the conference room, Steve and Sam were both startled. Neither had expected this building to lose power. At the old Avengers base, all electricity came from Tony's arc reactors.

Apparently, this building didn't.

"East side, underground level five."

Sharon said quickly before leading Steve and Sam out of the conference room.

Natasha had already left the moment the power cut out.

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Inside another office, T'Challa and Erik weren't sitting idle either.

The Black Panther and Killmonger suits materialized simultaneously, and the two of them shot out of the office almost like invisible shadows.

"This blackout happened too conveniently. There's definitely a conspiracy. Get to the guy named Bucky—now."

Erik immediately sensed something suspicious. He had used similar tactics himself in the past. Shutting off power was either to wipe out enemies or rescue allies.

And this situation clearly looked like the latter.

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Inside the containment chamber, Bucky himself was momentarily stunned. He hadn't expected such an advanced facility to lose power.

Across from him, Zemo took out a small red notebook marked with a star.

As he recited a string of seemingly unrelated words, the fake Bucky instantly entered a trance-like state. His eyes became vacant, pupils dilating—a clear sign of mental dissociation.

Zemo then issued a command.

No one knew what he said.

Afterward came another string of obscure trigger words.

The fake Bucky instantly entered a berserk state.

His metal arm tore apart the steel restraints binding him, and with one punch he shattered the chamber's glass.

At that moment, Steve and Sam arrived.

Bodies were already lying all over the floor—including Zemo himself.

Of course, that was just part of Zemo's act to remove suspicion from himself.

Steve immediately rushed inside—

And from behind a wall, a steel fist suddenly burst through the concrete and slammed directly into him.

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## Chapter 464 464: A Successful Escape

Steve was sent flying backward by the punch, but he quickly regained his footing. At the same time, Bucky charged out, and the two instantly clashed.

Sam moved in to help, but Bucky spun around and threw a punch. Mechanical whirring sounded from the metal arm.

Bang—!

Sam was blasted straight into the wall, embedding into it before his head lolled to the side and he lost consciousness.

Without his shield, Steve could only engage Bucky in close combat. The two exchanged rapid blows at point-blank range. Their combat experience and techniques were almost perfectly matched, leaving neither able to gain the upper hand.

But Bucky's metal arm was a devastating weapon.

Another burst of mechanical noise rang out as Steve was punched straight into the elevator shaft, the elevator doors collapsing along with him.

Bucky didn't stop. Carrying the fake-unconscious Zemo, he escaped toward the outside.

At that moment, the entire building was being evacuated, and chaos had broken out everywhere. Zemo successfully blended into the evacuating crowd and slipped away, while Bucky had to fight his way out directly—he was simply too conspicuous to hide.

He cut down who knew how many people before finally reaching the first-floor lobby.

But someone was waiting there.

Natasha, clad in a black tactical suit.

She had been waiting specifically to prevent Bucky's escape.

And she'd been right.

Bucky showed no mercy and immediately threw a punch. Natasha's movements, however, were incredibly agile. She dodged around the blow and used her signature scissor takedown.

Her entire body wrapped around Bucky as she spun like a top. Against an ordinary person, the force would have instantly brought them down.

But Bucky was the Winter Soldier—a super soldier.

The move had no effect whatsoever.

Instead, Bucky grabbed her by the throat with one hand.

The mechanical arm's strength was terrifying. Veins instantly bulged across Natasha's forehead as suffocation set in. Her eyes began to redden from lack of oxygen. In a few seconds, she would die.

Suddenly, a black-and-gold blur flashed past.

At the same moment, Bucky—still gripping Natasha—was smashed away by the incoming figure.

Natasha collapsed to the ground, gasping desperately for air. The rush of oxygen flooding back into her body left her dizzy and disoriented, unable to stand.

"Natasha, are you alright?"

T'Challa hurried over and took out a small respirator, placing it over her mouth.

Pure oxygen flowed into her system, rapidly stabilizing her condition after the sudden suffocation.

Natasha waved weakly. She didn't even feel like speaking, only greedily inhaling oxygen from the device.

Nearby, Erik and Bucky were locked in a fierce battle.

Erik completely dominated the fight. As before, while Bucky was indeed a super soldier, his enhancements simply couldn't compare to the Heart-Shaped Herb.

As they fought, Bucky steadily retreated before intentionally exposing an opening, allowing Erik to kick him straight out through the building entrance.

Knowing he couldn't win, Bucky immediately got up and ran, vanishing into the crowd.

What no one knew, however, was that he hadn't escaped through the confusion at all.

Instead, he circled around the other side of the building via an outdoor staircase and reached the helipad.

A helicopter waited there.

That was his real escape plan.

But just as the helicopter lifted off, Steve suddenly appeared from nowhere and grabbed onto the landing gear.

Exactly as Zemo and Bucky had intended.

Zemo needed Steve to fully believe this man was the real Bucky. And for that, the two needed prolonged contact.

The easiest way?

Make Steve take Bucky away himself.

As the helicopter rose into the air, Steve used his superhuman strength to forcibly hold it down. Seeing this, Bucky deliberately crashed the helicopter into the ground.

Just before the explosion, both he and Steve jumped from the wreckage, plunging toward the water below.

Then Bucky tilted his head and pretended to lose consciousness.

Steve successfully rescued him and quietly escaped the base with him.

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At the airport terminal, Zemo sat calmly reading a book.

He had already escaped the Avengers base and made his way to the airport.

On the television overhead, a news report played:

> "James Barnes, the mastermind behind the Vienna U.N. bombing, has escaped custody today. Also missing are Avengers members Captain America Steve Rogers and Falcon Sam Wilson. According to reports..."

A satisfied smile appeared on Zemo's face.

He glanced at the time, closed his book, and walked toward the boarding gate.

Displayed above it was the destination:

Russia.

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Just as Zemo boarded the plane to Russia, a cloaked Quinjet silently landed in an open area not far from the new Avengers base.

The hatch opened, and Nick Fury and Karl stepped out.

"Looks like we're late. Steve already ran off with him."

Karl had already seen the news. He now knew about the fake Bucky situation.

After all, the real Bucky had already been blown to pieces by him.

"Not too late. I think it's time we made contact with them."

Nick Fury took out an earpiece and put it on.

"Natasha, what's the situation over there?"

Fury activated the comms.

Sure enough, Natasha was a spy no matter where she went.

Within seconds, her voice came through.

"The power still hasn't been restored, but things have mostly stabilized. The people in charge are furious about Bucky escaping. They want to pin the blame on the Avengers now. Tony's currently negotiating with those damn politicians."

Inside the building, Natasha had moved somewhere private to report the situation.

"Karl and I are nearby. Pass a message to Agent Sharon—have her arrange a meeting with me. I've got something for you."

Fury said.

Apparently Natasha wasn't his only planted agent—even Sharon Carter was one of Fury's people.

The man really had backups everywhere.

"Understood. I'll have Sharon contact you. And Director... Karl isn't going to do anything reckless, is he?"

Natasha asked worriedly.

The moment Karl appeared at the base, he would instantly become the center of attention.

Steve was one thing—he was a World War II hero, a national symbol of America.

But Karl?

Calling him a terrorist threat wouldn't even be an exaggeration.

The U.S. government was still trying to figure out how to make him pay for the Capitol incident. If he voluntarily showed up now, those politicians would absolutely order the Avengers to capture him.

But who could stop him?

Even if every Avenger attacked together, they probably wouldn't survive a single hit.

Of course, the politicians wouldn't care about whether the Avengers lived or died. To them, the Avengers were merely tools.

But tools had minds of their own.

And that highlighted the Avengers' current predicament.

After signing the Sokovia Accords, they had truly become political instruments.

Disobey orders, and they'd be hunted worldwide.

And those people had no bottom line whatsoever.

Forget "leave family out of it"—if things ever reached that point, the first targets would absolutely be your family and friends.

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## **Chapter 465 465: Surrounded**

Karl heard everything clearly. After all, Nick Fury had no intention of hiding the conversation from him—Karl was wearing an earpiece too.

"As long as they don't provoke me first, I can't be bothered dealing with them. I'm just here to catch up with you guys and take a look around the newly built headquarters."

Karl shrugged. He had never cared about politicians, provided they didn't come looking for trouble.

"Hm? So you're planning to walk right into the base openly? Aren't you afraid they'll try to arrest you?"

Natasha asked in surprise. She hadn't expected Karl to actually come.

"Yep. Not just me—Black Bald Egg's coming too. He'll disguise himself. I don't need to."

Karl had already seen the facial disguise device on the Quinjet earlier. It was basically like a high-tech facial mask that could instantly alter someone's appearance. It adhered tightly to the skin through bioelectric signals and remained breathable while staying perfectly in place.

"And like I said, as long as they don't mess with me, I won't make a move."

Hearing that, Natasha immediately broke out in a cold sweat.

Seriously—who could guarantee those idiots wouldn't suddenly try to pressure Karl into submission? Or label him a terrorist like they had Steve? And if that happened, there was no way things would remain peaceful.

"Fine. I can't control those people anyway. I don't like them either, so do whatever you want."

Natasha simply gave up worrying about it.

The people who'd die wouldn't be their people anyway. Aside from Sharon, most of the agents from the original Avengers base had either been put on leave or dismissed entirely and weren't stationed here anymore.

Besides, even if Karl fought them, there was no way it would implicate her or Tony.

As a spy, Natasha had seen more than enough death. If seeing corpses made her soft-hearted, she might as well quit and become a nun.

After ending the call, Natasha took advantage of the chaos to quietly approach Sharon and hand her an earpiece.

"The Director wants to see you. He says he has something for you. Find a chance to bring him in."

Sharon frowned and quickly scanned the surroundings before lowering her voice.

"The Director wants to come here? This is the worst possible timing."

Now working directly under the base's current leadership, Sharon knew more than Natasha did. Her superior was already investigating whether there were any traitors inside the facility.

If Nick Fury came now, it'd be like walking straight into a trap.

"That's not a problem. Karl's coming too. With him drawing everyone's attention, the Director can slip in easily."

Natasha understood Fury very well. She instantly realized what kind of "timing" Fury had in mind.

Karl would attract all the attention while Fury quietly disguised himself and infiltrated the base.

"...Alright. Then we'll wait for Karl."

Sharon put on the earpiece and left. She needed to find a secluded location so Fury could enter unnoticed.

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"When are you planning to start?"

Fury asked Karl.

Whether he could successfully infiltrate the base depended entirely on Karl. Fury was planning to use him as cover.

"I don't mind being your smokescreen. But you owe me a favor."

Karl raised an eyebrow. He knew exactly how crafty Fury could be, but he didn't care. However Fury snuck in had nothing to do with him.

"No problem."

Fury agreed instantly without hesitation.

He already owed countless favors anyway. And before they were collected, favors were just blank checks.

"Then get your contact ready."

Karl casually replied before turning and walking back into the Quinjet to wait while Fury contacted Sharon.

When Fury emerged from the Quinjet again, he had completely changed appearance. Aside from his skin color and build, everything else was entirely different.

"Coulson, stay here and provide support. And keep the Quinjet cloaked at all times."

The disguised Fury instructed.

"Yes, Director."

Coulson nodded and sealed the Quinjet hatch.

Karl headed toward the new base first, while Fury split off elsewhere.

"Karl, you're good to go."

Fury's voice sounded through the earpiece.

With a thought from Karl, the cloak behind him suddenly expanded dramatically. His body rose into the air as he openly flew toward the new Avengers headquarters.

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Inside the base, just as the chaos from earlier had finally settled, blaring alarms suddenly erupted once more.

Everyone immediately scrambled into panic again.

"What's happening?!"

Everett Ross hurried into the command room.

Power had already been restored, thanks entirely to Tony's efficiency. Stark Industries personnel had personally repaired the damaged power station.

"Sir, someone is approaching the base."

On the giant screen, a blood-red cloak spread across the sky like a crimson cloud.

And beneath it floated a young man.

Karl.

Although his reputation within the Avengers was legendary—hailed as both the strongest and most dangerous—very few people had actually seen him in person.

His fame far exceeded his public appearances.

"Who is this?"

Everett asked.

The agent immediately pulled up Karl's files.

These records came from the former S.H.I.E.L.D. and Avengers databases. After the original Avengers base had been shut down, those archives were transferred over.

However, they only contained ordinary information. Anything truly classified had remained solely in Fury's hands.

"Karl Norman... that monster..."

The agent muttered while staring at the screen.

Everett's eyes lit up instantly.

He immediately ordered every available Avenger to mobilize and capture Karl.

He knew about the "monster" among the Avengers—the man capable of transforming into a colossal creature whose destructive power surpassed all existing human weaponry.

Especially after the Sokovia battle.

The image of that towering stone giant blotting out the sky had terrified the entire world.

"Yes, sir..."

The agent curled his lips slightly but still obeyed.

Their boss had clearly gone insane.

Capture that monster?

Nobody in the world could capture him.

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"What?! Karl's here?"

Tony and Natasha were both stunned.

Karl's attitude toward the Accords had already been crystal clear—he didn't care about them in the slightest.

And Tony knew Karl's personality all too well. Threats and coercion would only backfire.

Karl was no pushover.

He held absolutely no goodwill toward governments.

Natasha glanced at Sharon and gave her a subtle look.

Sharon instantly understood and quietly left.

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At that moment, Karl floated high above the base, looking down at the entire facility.

To be fair, the new headquarters did look far more imposing than the previous one. After all, the original base had basically been converted from a Stark Industries warehouse.

Before Karl even landed, countless armed agents and special forces soldiers surrounded him completely.

Only then did Everett stride out of the building with all the pomp of a superior official.

"Karl Norman? We hadn't even come looking for you yet, and you delivered yourself right to our doorstep."

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## **Chapter 466 466: Killed Casually**

"Karl Norman? We hadn't even gone looking for you yet, and you delivered yourself right to our doorstep."

Everett stood there with his hands on his hips, looking perfectly self-assured as he stared at Karl floating in midair. He didn't believe Karl would dare openly slaughter everyone here—unless he genuinely had a death wish.

Unfortunately for him, he vastly overestimated himself... or rather, the authority of the American government. Karl simply didn't care.

Completely ignoring everyone present, Karl descended from the sky and casually walked toward the building without even sparing Everett a glance.

Everett's face instantly darkened.

Karl's disregard felt like a brutal slap across the face. As the current leader of the Avengers, he absolutely could not tolerate anyone challenging his authority.

He immediately raised a hand.

Click-click-click—

A rapid chorus of weapons being cocked echoed through the area as all the surrounding agents stepped forward, surrounding Karl completely.

"Stand down!!"

At that moment, Tony, Natasha, Rhodey, and the others hurried out, Tony shouting for everyone to stop.

On the surface, it looked like he was trying to save Karl.

In reality, he was trying to save the agents surrounding him.

Their superior might have been a complete idiot, but those agents were only following orders. They didn't deserve to die.

Tony's shout caused everyone to hesitate, and they all turned toward Everett, waiting for his command.

"Tony Stark, I am the supreme leader of the Avengers now. You have no authority to command anyone. I hereby order the Avengers to immediately arrest Karl Norman!"

The moment he finished speaking, a snort of laughter sounded from behind Tony.

Natasha pressed a hand to her forehead with an awkward expression.

Everyone turned toward the source of the laugh.

Two men in black suits stood behind the crowd, watching the situation unfold with amused expressions. The one laughing was the man with braided hair—none other than Wakanda's prince, Erik.

That's right. The two who had walked over were T'Challa and Erik.

As king, T'Challa needed to maintain royal decorum at all times. Erik, however, didn't care. Though he was a prince, his behavior was entirely unconventional. He acted however he pleased.

"Tony, if the leader of your Avengers is really this brainless, then you'd better leave sooner rather than later. If you've got nowhere to go, you can come back to Wakanda with me."

Given T'Challa's status, nobody dared say anything in response.

After all, Wakanda held a seat in the United Nations, while the Avengers were nominally under UN jurisdiction.

Everett's face turned as black as the bottom of a pot.

His authority and dignity had been openly challenged, something he absolutely could not tolerate. As a member of the Ross family, he had perfectly inherited Ross's arrogance and self-importance.

At the same time, however, he realized something.

Though he technically held the highest authority over the Avengers, he couldn't command these heroes who had signed the Accords at all.

The only people who obeyed him were the agents and military personnel.

"Director Ross, do you really want to watch this entire base get flattened?"

Tony stood at the front of the crowd. With Steve gone, the Avengers had naturally begun centering around him.

"Flattened? Does he really think he can oppose the entire United States? Does he dare?!"

Everett sneered disdainfully.

In his understanding, no one dared challenge America—not even the Avengers. Weren't they all obediently controlled now?

"Let's head upstairs. No need to waste time on this idiot."

Karl completely ignored Everett and walked straight toward Tony and the others.

"Stop right there! Take one more step and it will be considered an attack on Avengers Headquarters! We are authorized to execute you on the spot!!"

Everett had completely lost his temper. He was practically ready to order everyone to open fire.

Whoosh—!

Suddenly, a green wind blade flashed through the air.

The next second, Everett was sliced cleanly in half, collapsing onto the ground like slaughtered livestock.

Splat.

Karl glanced back at the surrounding agents and soldiers, violet lightning flickering within his eyes.

"Anyone moves... dies."

His voice was calm, but it sounded like whispers rising from the depths of hell itself.

Everyone froze in place as though struck by paralysis.

No one had expected the previously arrogant Director Ross to be split in half in the blink of an eye.

They stared at Karl in terror, too frightened to move. Their hands and feet had gone cold, and some could barely even hold onto their guns anymore.

"Karl, you really caused trouble this time. He was connected to the Secretary of State."

Natasha didn't even glance at the corpse, speaking in a teasing tone instead.

"The Secretary of State? Ross? Does he dare come after me?"

Karl looked utterly unconcerned.

He hadn't even gone looking for Ross yet. Ross coming after him?

"Clean this up."

Tony sighed helplessly.

The UN had actually appointed an idiot like this to lead them. Tony was starting to regret signing the Accords in the first place.

He'd originally thought tighter regulation of superpowered individuals might reduce collateral damage and crime.

Who would've guessed the higher-ups would send over a complete pig?

Dead was probably for the best.

Now command of Avengers Headquarters had effectively fallen into his hands, and he could finally make the place function properly.

Meanwhile, Nick Fury had already slipped into the base in disguise and was currently handing Sharon a USB drive.

"These are the leads we found. There's someone behind Bucky. That person's goal is to tear the Avengers apart from within."

Sharon accepted the drive, but before she could respond, a report came through her earpiece.

Director Everett had been killed by Karl.

Cut cleanly in half.

Sharon's jaw nearly hit the floor.

She glanced at Fury, then immediately sprinted toward the command center.

This incident had definitely already reached the higher-ups. It was going to be difficult to contain.

Sure enough, by the time she arrived at the command room, everyone was already there—except for T'Challa, Erik, and Karl.

On the large screen, Ross was angrily questioning Tony and Sharon about why Karl had murdered the base director inside Avengers Headquarters and was still walking free.

"Mr. Secretary, do you honestly think we're capable of stopping Karl?"

Tony didn't hold back at all.

At this point, he had already become deeply disappointed with the new Avengers structure.

After hearing what happened, Ross's first reaction hadn't been damage control or handling the aftermath.

Instead, he immediately started interrogating and assigning blame without offering a single solution.

Hidden among the crowd, the disguised Nick Fury silently shook his head.

This situation absolutely could not be handled like this.

Karl hated people throwing authority around—especially government officials.

If Ross kept this up, things would only escalate further.

Karl might very well blow up another government building next.

Hell, he might even bomb the White House.

"Tony Stark, mind your position. You are no longer the reckless so-called superhero you once were. You belong to the state now. You will obey orders."

Nick Fury suddenly chuckled softly.

As expected of General Ross.

Always quick to hide behind the banner of "the nation" to pressure others.

That tactic might work on ordinary people.

It meant absolutely nothing to Tony Stark.

If Tony wanted to, he could personally drag the Secretary of State down from power and install another one in his place.

That was simply how politics worked in a capitalist country.

Capital controlled everything.

Even the nation itself.

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Chapter 467 467: Setting the Trap

"Mr. Ross, if you want to arrest Karl, then come do it yourself. We're powerless here."

With that, Tony cut off the communication without giving Ross another chance to speak.

Then he slumped back into his chair with a lifeless expression.

Karl had barely arrived before tossing him a massive bombshell.

If this incident wasn't handled properly, the consequences would be severe.

Casually killing a high-ranking official—and the newly appointed leader of the Avengers, no less—wasn't something that could simply be brushed aside.

And just as Tony expected, Ross couldn't swallow this humiliation.

He immediately escalated the matter to the United Nations.

The UN quickly issued a decision: deploy the Avengers to apprehend Karl.

The order came down incredibly fast.

Karl and the others were still chatting inside the base when JARVIS notified Tony that the UN had officially authorized Karl's arrest.

"See? What did I tell you? Orders from above. They want you arrested."

Tony tapped the table, and a holographic projection appeared, displaying the arrest directive for Karl.

"Hah~ They move pretty fast. Looks like I'll need to stay here for a few days."

Karl shrugged, utterly unconcerned.

If he wanted to leave, nowhere on Earth could hold him.

The reason he chose to stay was partly to reassure Tony and the others—at least this way, they could claim they'd complied with orders.

The other reason was to provide cover for Nick Fury.

Fury needed access to the base's systems to track the mastermind behind everything: Zemo.

Hearing this, Tony and the others relaxed considerably.

At least Karl wasn't planning anything extreme.

As long as he stayed calm, there was still room for negotiation.

In Tony's view, as long as the people at the UN weren't complete idiots, they should understand Karl's importance.

Even all the Avengers combined might not be enough to stop him.

If the UN didn't want worldwide chaos, then knowing when to stop was the smartest choice.

Afterward, Karl called Gwen and told the three of them to stay inside the agency as much as possible and avoid going out.

The one he worried about most was Gwen.

After all, she still worked at a laboratory.

Skye and Wanda mostly stayed at the office, but Gwen's work required her to be outside regularly.

After briefly explaining the situation, Gwen didn't say much.

She disliked the current Avengers situation as well.

Former comrades who once fought side by side had now become estranged—or outright divided into opposing camps.

Most importantly, Wanda had been dragged into all this too.

Gwen could honestly say she had no good feelings toward the current Avengers organization.

Of course, that resentment was directed at the Avengers leadership and the new system—not the Avengers themselves.

After everything was settled, Tony directly arranged for Karl to stay in the Avengers dormitories.

His room was right next to Tony's and Erik's.

There was absolutely no attempt to imprison Karl like they had with Bucky.

After all... there was no point trying.

---

Meanwhile, inside a hidden factory warehouse, Bucky sat on a machine with his head lowered while Steve and Sam stood in front of him, silently watching.

"Do you still recognize me, Bucky?"

Steve finally asked.

Natasha had already told him about the Winter Soldiers.

He now knew they'd all been brainwashed and implanted with commands against their will.

He had fought a Winter Soldier before—he just hadn't realized at the time that it was actually Bucky.

The fake Bucky immediately began talking about old memories involving Steve, including embarrassing stories from the past.

Naturally, all those memories had merely been implanted.

"Heh, they definitely don't put that stuff in museums."

Sam listened with obvious interest.

He never knew Captain America had a side like this.

"What... did I do?"

Bucky looked up at Steve and asked knowingly.

"You're pretty famous these days~"

Sam teased.

The news had been flooded with stories about Bucky recently. The whole world was in chaos because of him.

"I knew this would happen..."

Bucky looked dejected.

At this point, he deserved an Oscar.

"HYDRA implanted things into my head that I can't erase. They only need a few trigger words to activate me."

"Who did it?"

Steve immediately asked.

The person issuing those commands was the real culprit behind everything.

All of this had clearly been orchestrated from the shadows.

"I don't know. When the command activates, I lose consciousness."

Bucky answered.

This part wasn't a lie.

Whenever Winter Soldiers were activated, their minds essentially shut down.

Only after receiving a new command would their consciousness return.

However, this fake Bucky actually did know who the mastermind was.

After all, Zemo was the one who awakened him.

As long as commands weren't actively being issued, he retained his memories.

"Bucky, that person orchestrated the bombing of the UN building and got you hunted worldwide. You need to tell us something."

Steve was genuinely anxious for him.

If they couldn't catch the mastermind, Bucky would be forced to shoulder all the blame.

Bucky pretended to clutch his head as though struggling to remember.

In reality, he was preparing the trap.

He was about to reveal a shocking secret.

"I think... he wanted information about a mission from December 16th, 1991."

This was the ticking time bomb the fake Bucky intended to drop.

And it would become the direct spark that shattered Tony and Steve's relationship.  
Because Tony's parents had died that day.

Murdered.

And the killer had been Bucky Barnes while under HYDRA's brainwashing.

"What happened that day? What mission were you sent on?"

Steve immediately pressed him.

The mastermind wouldn't ask about that date without reason.

There had to be a secret hidden there.

"That day... I was ordered to carry out a mission. Kill a couple and take the item they were transporting."

The fake Bucky deliberately revealed the information little by little.

That was part of the plan.

If he dumped everything at once, Steve would never bring him to Tony Stark.

And without that confrontation, the plan to split the Avengers apart would fail.

Steve still didn't realize the victims had been Howard Stark and his wife.

He assumed it had been some other couple.

So his focus shifted to the item itself.

"What did you steal?"

Steve felt the item had to be extremely important.

Otherwise HYDRA wouldn't have deployed the Winter Soldier for the mission.

"Super Soldier Serum."

Bucky spoke softly.

But to Steve and Sam, the words hit like a bombshell.

"You said Super Soldier Serum?!"

Steve stared at him in shock.

He had always believed he was the only successful Super Soldier.

Even Ross's research had merely been attempts to recreate the original formula from incomplete data.

He never imagined fully functional serum samples still existed.

"That's right. There were four preserved serum samples in the trunk of the car. HYDRA reverse-engineered them, and that's how the Winter Soldiers were created."

The fake Bucky didn't hide anything here.

There was no need.

A mixture of truth and lies was always the most convincing.

"Do you remember where they awakened you?"

Steve asked.

Combined with his previous encounters against Winter Soldiers, he already suspected there were more than just one or two.

Possibly an entire army.

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Chapter 468 468: Ross Comes Looking for Trouble

"Siberia. There's a HYDRA fortress base there. The Winter Soldiers were all gathered in that place."

At this point, every Winter Soldier besides himself had already been killed, so there was no reason to hide the location anymore.

Better to lure Steve there.

Sam walked over beside Steve and spoke quietly.

"If this had happened a week ago, things would've been simple. But now? Tony and the others won't believe us. And even if they do, who knows whether that damned Accords agreement will even allow them to help?"

Steve remained silent.

Because he knew Sam was right.

He knew Tony still trusted him—otherwise he wouldn't have let him leave in the first place.

But the Accords were a set of shackles.

Even if Tony wanted to help, the agreement would force him to compromise.

"We can only rely on ourselves now."

Steve raised his head, determination returning to his eyes.

"Maybe not. I might be able to find us some help."

Sam raised a brow.

He remembered the guy they'd run into on the rooftop at Avengers Headquarters—the thief.

Scott Lang. Ant-Man.

Steve clearly knew who he meant, and the two immediately decided to go find Scott.

---

Meanwhile, the New Avengers Headquarters received an unwelcome guest.

Secretary of State Ross.

He arrived alongside several hundred special forces soldiers and a heavily armed modern weapons unit.

Clearly, he hadn't come with peaceful intentions.

The moment the helicopter landed, Ross impatiently stepped out.

"Special forces, follow me upstairs. Everyone else standby."

With that, Ross strode toward the building.

Tony had already informed him that Karl was currently inside the base.

Ross had come specifically to hold people accountable.

Before Ross's aircraft had even landed, Tony already knew he was coming, so he had gathered everyone in the command room ahead of time.

Ross made his way through the base without obstruction and immediately spotted Karl lounging casually in a chair.

T'Challa and Erik sat nearby as well.

Clearly, they'd also been summoned.

"Tony Stark, tell me where Steve Rogers and the others are right now! And why is this man sitting here? You should have thrown him into the highest-security prison available!!"

Ross pointed directly at Karl, his tone unbearably arrogant.

Suddenly—

The temperature inside the entire room surged.

Several fist-sized fireballs appeared behind Karl's head.

Despite their small size, they instantly turned the entire command room scorching hot.

Sweat immediately poured down Ross's face.

Whether from heat or fear was hard to tell.

"How dare you!! I am the United States Secretary of State! You are threatening national security!"

Ross's imposing aura instantly weakened, though he still stubbornly barked back.

His confidence came from the modern weapons unit stationed outside.

At the same time, the special forces soldiers who had entered alongside him all raised their guns and aimed at Karl.

Karl didn't even glance at them.

At his current level of strength, bullets couldn't even get within a foot of him.

"Enough nonsense. Keep pushing me and I'll scatter your ashes to the wind. I only agreed to Betty's request to spare you once."

Karl waved a hand, and the floating fireballs vanished instantly.

Though the terrifying heat lingered.

Ross immediately fell silent.

Because he knew Karl wasn't joking.

So he shifted the target of his anger toward Tony instead.

"Tony Stark, I am ordering you to arrest Karl Norman immediately!"

Tony snorted in amusement after hearing that.

He didn't even bother moving.

At this point, Ross looked like nothing more than a clown.

Besides, Tony respected the Sokovia Accords—not Ross himself.

"Mr. Secretary, if you came here just to spew nonsense, then you can leave."

Erik showed Ross absolutely no respect.

As Wakanda's prince, Erik's status completely surpassed that of a mere Secretary of State—even an American one.

Ross naturally knew Erik's background.

Former black-ops operative.

A man who specialized in dirty work.

Who would've guessed he'd turn out to be royalty?

"Ahem..."

Ross pretended to cough to hide his embarrassment before continuing.

"Have you located Steve Rogers yet?"

Tony shook his head.

"No. But we will. Border forces are monitoring every exit point. They can't leave the United States."

"You still don't understand, Stark. This matter is no longer yours to handle. You're incapable of viewing it objectively. I'll have special forces take over."

Nobody in the room looked surprised.

This was the expected outcome.

Tony's relationship with Steve was obvious.

And Ross would never hand such an opportunity over to someone else.

"What happens if there's a firefight? Are you planning to kill Steve Rogers?"

Natasha looked directly at Ross as she spoke.

"If he refuses to surrender peacefully, then even Captain America becomes an enemy of the United States."

Ross answered word by word.

"If he hadn't interfered, our special forces could've eliminated Barnes the moment we located him."

"This situation can't be solved through force alone. We need to handle it ourselves."

Tony immediately cut in.

If special forces got involved, there would absolutely be open conflict.

And innocent people would inevitably get hurt again.

That was the exact reason they'd been pressured into signing the Accords in the first place.

"Give me seventy-two hours."

Tony spoke decisively.

As long as Steve hadn't left the country, Tony believed he could find him within three days.

"This is your final deadline. By then, I expect to see Rogers, Barnes, and Wilson all in custody."

Ross swept his gaze across the room.

He deliberately avoided looking at Karl before pretending to remain calm and walking out of the command center.

He didn't mention Karl again.

Only after leaving Avengers Headquarters did Ross issue another order.

"The mobile response unit will remain on standby. Monitor Karl Norman at all times. If necessary, lethal force is authorized."

The mobile response unit was the heavily armed anti-superhuman force brought specifically to deal with enhanced individuals.

---

Inside the meeting room, after Ross left, Karl stretched lazily.

"Well, that's settled. I'm heading out."

Natasha immediately stood up.

"We're seriously short on manpower. You're not planning to stay and help us?"

At the moment, Tony's side only consisted of herself and Tony.

T'Challa and Erik's stance remained unclear.

Right now was exactly when they needed someone like Karl.

"Help with what? I'm on the anti-Accords side. You should already feel lucky I'm not helping Steve deal with you guys instead."

Karl answered casually.

Then, right in front of everyone, he pulled out a Chocobo Whistle.

The moment he blew it—

His entire body vanished from sight.

Natasha sighed.

She already knew Karl wasn't going to help them.

So she turned toward Tony instead.

"Looks like we need more people."

"Yeah. If Bruce were here, things would be easier. Any idea where he went?"

Tony asked.

A while ago Bruce had said he was going to "deal with Hulk."

Then he completely vanished without a trace.

At this point, Tony honestly didn't know whether Bruce had solved the Hulk problem...

Or if Hulk had solved Bruce instead.

Still, Tony wasn't worried about Karl in the slightest.

Karl had always hated government authority.

And like he said—

The fact he wasn't actively helping Steve fight against them was already a blessing.

~~~~~

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## Chapter 469 469: Looking for Help

"That's right. If Bruce were here, things would be a lot easier. Any idea where he went?"

Tony looked at Natasha as he spoke.

"No clue. He never said where he was going before he left. Besides, with Bruce's personality and everything he's been through, do you really think he'd stand on our side?"

Natasha raised the key issue directly. Even if Bruce were here, would he willingly accept government oversight? Half his life had been spent fleeing from authorities. Would someone like him really agree to sign an agreement that put him under official control?

"Fair point. Forget it. Actually, I already have someone in mind."

"So do I."

"Who's your pick?"

Tony looked at Natasha.

"On the rooftop. What about yours?"

Natasha glanced back at him.

"If all goes well, probably in a lab or swinging between skyscrapers."

Everyone present immediately understood who they meant.

Strictly speaking, Peter was basically one of Karl's people. After all, his photo was hanging on the wall inside Devil May Cry, and he also possessed a crystal that granted access to the Chocobo Space.

Still, Peter understood boundaries. Unless it was an absolute emergency, he would never casually enter the space.

Now that Karl had simply patted his butt and left, and hadn't said anything about forbidding them from recruiting Peter as outside help, Tony naturally thought of the young powerhouse.

And it was practically a buy-one-get-one deal.

If Peter showed up, would Felicia really just stand by and do nothing as his girlfriend?

Besides, Felicia herself was no weakling. Recently, her combat skills had rapidly improved, nearly catching up to Natasha's. Tony had also upgraded her suit, allowing it to cling to walls using bioelectricity just like Peter's. Her jumping capability had also been enhanced, letting her leap effortlessly across city buildings.

With two powerful reinforcements like that, there was no way Tony would pass them up.

---

Queens, New York.

The moment Peter opened the door, he saw Aunt May chatting with someone on the couch. Without paying much attention, he instinctively headed toward his room.

"Why didn't your little girlfriend come back with you?"

May turned around and asked. Usually, Peter and Felicia came home together.

"She went to see Gwen and the others. By the way, there's a luxury car parked outside..."

Peter turned his head and immediately spotted Tony sitting on the couch eating cookies.

"Hey, Peter~~"

Tony waved a cookie at him in greeting.

May already knew Peter was Spider-Man. The Sokovia Accords fiasco had become such a massive issue that Peter got dragged into it as well. In the end, Peter had chosen to tell her himself.

"Well, now that you're back, you two can talk. I'll go make dinner."

May got up and headed into the kitchen while Peter sat down on the couch.

"Want one? They're actually pretty good~~"

Tony offered him a cookie. To be fair, they really did taste good.

"Uh... I'll pass. I've been watching the news lately. The Avengers situation's become a complete mess."

Peter looked at Tony worriedly. He was terrified his identity would be exposed and drag Aunt May into danger. She was the only family he had left. He didn't want to lose her too.

"It's manageable. Anyway, down to business—I need your help. The Avengers are seriously understaffed right now, so..."

"I'm in!!"

Peter practically jumped out of his seat.

"Who's on our side?"

Tony blinked. He hadn't even started explaining before Peter had already agreed. Honestly, he might as well have just called him directly.

"You agreed that fast? Aren't you going to think about the consequences?"

Tony asked suspiciously.

"Uh... of course I'll think about consequences. As long as Aunt May and Felicia don't get dragged into this."

Peter's thinking was pretty simple. As long as his family and girlfriend stayed safe, he was willing to help.

Lately, he hadn't been operating as Spider-Man much at all, and the Sokovia Accords were the reason. Every time Spider-Man appeared these days, people

swarmed him with questions, and reporters chased him nonstop. It seriously interfered with his crime-fighting.

"Don't worry. I just need your help with something. Your family won't be involved."

Tony reassured him.

"Then I'm in. I saw the news. You guys have been having a rough time because of Captain Rogers and Barnes. So you need me to help capture Captain Rogers?"

Peter asked curiously. As an endlessly curious teenager, he followed this kind of news obsessively.

Even though he personally leaned toward the anti-Accords side, getting to help his idol still sounded pretty awesome.

"That's right. I need your help bringing Steve and the others back. And honestly... there's something off about this whole thing."

Tony's expression gradually turned serious.

As one of the smartest people in the world, he could already sense the scent of conspiracy behind everything—from Steve's actions, to Wanda accidentally blowing up the hospital, all the way to Steve becoming a fugitive. None of it felt right.

He just hadn't connected all the dots yet.

He wanted to bring Steve back not because of Ross's orders, but because he wanted to sit down and actually talk things through. Tony knew Steve's character. Steve Rogers would never betray people without a reason.

"When do we leave? I need to tell Aunt May, and I should probably call Felicia too."

If they were really going into action, Peter needed to let May know so she could avoid going out for the next few days. And of course, he had to report in to his girlfriend.

That's right—the current Spider-Man was officially henpecked.

"As soon as possible. We've only got seventy-two hours."

Tony shrugged. After all, he'd already promised Ross.

"No problem."

Peter immediately got up and headed toward the kitchen.

---

Devil May Cry Office.

Felicia sat at the bar eating cake while Gwen and the others sat nearby.

"The news has been nonstop about the Avengers lately. Things are getting more and more out of hand. Peter and I haven't really gone out much these past few weeks~~"

Felicia complained to the girls. Anytime Spider-Man or Black Cat appeared, hordes of reporters would instantly swarm them like flies.

"Karl said this whole thing isn't simple. There's apparently a mastermind behind everything—a guy named Zemo. And get this: the Barnes guy is actually fake."

Skye spoke while scrolling through information.

Although nothing useful about Bucky could be found online, they trusted Karl completely.

"A fake? How do you know that? And who's Zemo?"

Like most women, Felicia's mood immediately shifted the moment juicy gossip appeared. Her curiosity instantly replaced her frustration.

"Karl said the real Barnes died a long time ago. The current one's an impostor, probably planted beside Captain America to gain his trust. As for Zemo, no idea. Karl only knows the name."

Skye had been trying to track down information and movements related to Zemo lately, but "Zemo" was far too ordinary a name.

Finding him was like searching for a needle in the ocean.

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## Chapter 470 470: Looking for Help II

"My god~~ So the person Captain America rescued earlier was actually an undercover agent? Why didn't you tell Captain Rogers immediately?"

Felicia looked utterly shocked. Steve thought he had rescued his best friend, but it turned out to be a planted spy who had fooled everyone. It was just... way too explosive.

"We can't contact him right now~~ Even if we wanted to tell him, we'd need the chance first~~"

Skye spread her hands helplessly. She had already checked every surveillance camera feed she could access, but there wasn't a single trace of Steve. He had clearly been deliberately avoiding monitored areas.

"Then hurry and tell Stark~~ Surely they can track Captain America down somehow!"

Right then, Felicia's phone rang. It was Peter.

"Feli, I might be heading out for a few days, just letting you know~~"

The moment the call connected, Peter's voice came through impatiently.

"Did something happen?"

Felicia immediately grew serious. Her first thought was that something had happened to Aunt May. After all, Peter's body healed absurdly fast—even injuries usually disappeared within a day.

"Nothing major. Mr. Stark just asked me to help with something~~"

Peter deliberately avoided mentioning that he'd be helping capture Steve, because he knew Felicia would insist on tagging along.

"Is it about Captain America?"

Felicia immediately guessed.

"How did you know?"

Peter blinked in confusion. He hadn't even explained yet.

"Is Mr. Stark beside you right now?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"Then hurry and tell him this—the Barnes guy from the news is fake. He's an undercover spy specifically targeting Captain America."

Felicia fired the words out like a machine gun.

"What are you talking about, Feli~~"

Peter looked completely lost.

"Just tell him exactly that!"

Felicia urged anxiously without explaining further.

"Uh... alright. Are you still at Karl's office?"

Peter still didn't understand, but agreed anyway.

"Yeah. Skye just told me. She said the real Barnes died ages ago."

"I got it. Be careful, alright? I'm heading out now. I'll tell Mr. Stark."

Peter reminded her before hanging up.

"Mr. Stark, there's something you need to hear..."

After putting away his phone, Peter relayed Felicia's words to Tony.

"She really said that?"

Tony's expression changed instantly.

So his suspicions had been right all along.

This entire thing really was a conspiracy.

"We're heading back to the base immediately."

---

At the rooftop of the New Avengers Facility, Natasha stood there alone.

The rooftop was empty except for a few air-conditioning units and ventilation ducts.

"You can come out now. I'm alone."

Natasha spoke calmly into the air.

"I disappear for a few days and the whole world falls apart? I skipped out on my kids for this. I was supposed to take them swimming today."

Clint Barton slowly emerged from the shadows, bow in hand and a quiver strapped to his back.

Even Natasha hadn't noticed where he'd been hiding.

"Looks like the world really can't function without you~~"

Natasha teased lightly. Barton was the helper she had called in.

"How bad is it?"

Clint asked.

"Pretty bad. The Avengers have already split because of the Accords."

As she spoke, Natasha took out an earpiece and attached it behind Clint's ear.

"Barton, this is Nick Fury. Listen carefully..."

Fury's voice came through the communicator.

No one knew exactly what the two discussed, but Clint's expression abruptly changed.

"That's real?"

After the transmission ended, Barton looked at Natasha in disbelief.

"Yeah. The Director is currently hidden inside the base and using their network to investigate the whole thing."

"Alright. Then I know what I need to do."

Clint nodded.

---

In the underground parking garage of the base, a convoy of black sedans slowly pulled in.

A bald woman stepped out from one of the cars—it was Okoye, captain of Wakanda's Royal Guard.

A group of agents immediately approached.

"Where is His Majesty?"

Okoye asked directly, with zero intention of exchanging pleasantries.

"He'll be here shortly."

As the agent spoke, the garage doors slowly opened.

T'Challa and Erik walked out surrounded by several agents.

"Okoye."

T'Challa nodded, and Okoye immediately opened the car door.

"Your Majesty, please get in first."

She already understood from his look that he had something important to discuss privately.

"Thank you for your protection. You may return now."

T'Challa turned and dismissed the agents before lowering his head and entering the vehicle. Erik followed behind him.

Once Okoye sat in the passenger seat, T'Challa immediately spoke.

"What did you find?"

Okoye tapped several times on a device in front of her, and a holographic projection instantly appeared.

"Your Majesty, we only have a rough location. Unfortunately, the search range is still very large."

A map appeared in the projection.

"Natasha, what about your side?"

T'Challa touched the earpiece and asked.

"Not yet. But I know someone who does."

Natasha's voice came through from the elevator as she descended from the rooftop.

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Beneath an unnamed overpass, Sharon parked her car beside another vehicle already waiting there.

"Captain, I think you've misunderstood the meaning of 'laying low.'"

Sharon looked toward the other car.

For people supposedly hiding, it was a bit too eye-catching—a classic old Volkswagen Beetle.

Three grown men squeezed into a tiny Beetle definitely attracted attention.

"It's more discreet this way."

Even Steve turned to glance at the little Beetle.

"Hopefully your 'discreet' car can fit these."

As she spoke, Sharon opened the trunk.

Inside lay Steve's vibranium shield and Sam's Falcon gear.

"Thanks, Sharon. I owe you one."

Steve said sincerely.

Sharon leaned in and kissed him softly.

"I should go."

"Be careful."

Sharon drove away shortly afterward, and Steve's group also departed.

Later, Steve drove to another parking lot.

The place looked abandoned. Aside from their "discreet" Beetle, only a white van sat nearby.

No other vehicles were present.

The three men got out, and at the same time, someone stepped out of the van as well.

It was Hawkeye.

"Cap."

Clint walked forward.

"You know... I only asked Natasha to contact you because I was out of options."

Steve looked apologetic.

That's right—it was Steve who had asked Natasha to reach out to Clint.

"I already know. Don't worry about it."

Clint nodded, then looked past Steve toward Bucky standing behind him.

"So this is Barnes?"

Clint's tone sounded casual, but suspicion flashed briefly through his eyes.

He hadn't come here solely to help Steve.

He had another mission too.

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