

Marvel Manifestor

Chapter 51: Stock Crash – Moving In for the Kill

Skye sighed helplessly and glanced at Lucas. "Aren't we already lying around counting money? You're basically a landlord – the rent you collect every month is no small sum."

"That's just pocket change," Lucas said, stretching lazily across the sofa. "This time, we're talking real money – the kind that piles up while you sleep. Who ever complained about having too much cash? It's not like money bites."

Skye rolled her eyes. Lately, Stark Industries' stock had been in a nosedive. But now that Tony Stark was rescued, it had to rebound – right?

Sure enough, as soon as the news of Tony Stark's safe return spread, Stark Industries' stock skyrocketed like a rocket launch. Tony hadn't even gotten off the plane yet, and the charts had already flipped from red to green.

Lucas knew what was coming next. Once Tony landed, he'd hold a press conference – and that would be the trigger for another crash. That meant he and Skye had only a few hours to act.

Skye kept glancing between the TV news and the stock ticker. Finally, she called out to the "corpse" on the couch.

"Boss! The stock's climbing again – should we sell now?"

Lucas sat bolt upright like a zombie rising from the grave.

"Not yet. Keep your eyes glued to the news. The moment they announce Tony's press conference, dump everything."

So the two of them sat side by side, refreshing news sites, waiting for that fateful headline.

Three or four hours later, the announcement hit every major outlet simultaneously – Tony Stark, CEO of Stark Industries, had landed safely in New York.

"Now, Skye!" Lucas barked. "Sell it all!"

Without a hint of hesitation, Skye's fingers flew across the keyboard, offloading every last share of Stark Industries stock they owned.

"Now we wait," Lucas said, leaning back with a grin. "Once Tony opens his mouth at that press conference, the market's going to tank."

"You're that sure?" Skye asked.

"Of course. Tony's not the same playboy he used to be."

They watched live as Tony appeared on screen, sitting on the stairs with a hamburger in hand. Despite his casual pose, his expression was deadly serious.

"So I've decided," Tony said, his voice steady. "To permanently shut down Stark Industries' weapons division."

Boom!

The press room erupted. Cameras surged forward like a tidal wave. The world's most famous weapons manufacturer announcing a permanent end to weapons production — that wasn't just news; that was history.

Within minutes, Stark Industries' stock price went into freefall. In just ten minutes, it hit the daily limit-down.

"Boss, it's... it's in freefall!" Skye gawked at the red-filled charts. Even with no experience in trading, the sight made her heart race.

Lucas nodded calmly. "It's not done yet. It'll probably keep dropping. We'll wait — watch it for a few days. If it stabilizes, that's when we buy. All in."

Even Lucas hadn't expected the crash to be that severe. He'd seen the movie in his past life, and the film had glossed over the aftermath — but in reality, this was financial devastation.

Sure enough, over the next several days, Stark Industries' stock kept plunging. Even old man Obadiah tried to stabilize things, but it was useless. Investors weren't fools — Stark Industries was Tony Stark. Obadiah was just a salesman; the core technology and the name value were all Tony.

A few days later, with the stock price finally holding steady for three days straight, Skye moved in. She started buying like a madwoman, just as Lucas had instructed — pouring every cent they had into Stark Industries stock.

Then, one quiet afternoon, an unexpected visitor appeared at the door of the Devil May Cry Agency.

"Devil May Cry... what a ridiculous name," a cocky voice said. "Guess that brat's not much for culture."

A silver Audi R8 purred to a stop outside. From it stepped a man in a tailored suit and blue-tinted sunglasses — none other than Tony Stark himself.

"So this is the kid's place?" Tony asked, glancing at Pepper Potts beside him.

"Yes, Tony," Pepper said, exasperated. "And it's called Devil May Cry, not 'Evil May Five' or whatever nonsense you said before."

"Whatever. I'm just here to see if that kid's still alive," Tony said with his trademark smirk, striding up to the door first.

Ding-ling!

The bell above the door chimed as he entered. Skye immediately looked up from her monitor.

"Welcome to Devil May Cry," she began professionally. "How can I—"

Her words froze when she recognized the arrogant face staring back at her.

"So, not only is that kid uncultured," Tony said, glancing around the room, "but his taste in interior design is tragic. What is this? A Renaissance thrift store?"

His gaze swept over the vintage decor — dark wood, old paintings, antique furniture — before landing on Skye.

"Well, well," Tony grinned. "At least the kid's got some taste. A pretty assistant like you — how'd you like to come work for Stark Industries instead?"

Skye blinked, momentarily caught off guard.

"Tony Stark?" she asked, looking between him and the image of his face still frozen on her news feed — comparing them just to be sure.

"That's right — the one and only," Tony said proudly, dropping himself onto the sofa and testing its firmness. He nodded in approval. "Not bad. About a tenth as comfortable as mine."

At that moment, Pepper walked in behind him, shaking her head.

"Skye, don't mind him," she said with a tired smile. "He doesn't know when to stop talking."

"Hey!" Tony protested. "I'm being serious! If this lovely young lady wants to join Stark Industries, she can name her salary."

Pepper blinked in surprise. She'd worked with Tony long enough to know when he was bluffing – and this time, he wasn't.

Tony Stark actually meant it. He really wanted to hire Skye.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight\_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review! Your support means everything.

~~~~~

## Chapter 52: Tony's Visit

"I did some digging on you," Tony said confidently, leaning back on the sofa like he owned the place. "An orphan from an orphanage, calls herself Skye, top-tier hacker skills... Stark Industries could really use someone like you. So, what are you waiting for?"

His tone was full of smug certainty — after all, who could possibly refuse Stark Industries?

"Hey—hey—hey! You just got back, and you're already stirring up trouble. Now you're trying to poach my assistant? Believe it or not, I'll personally ship you back to the Middle East!"

Lucas walked in just in time to catch the whole exchange. Though he knew Tony could never actually steal Skye away, the guy was blatantly trying to poach someone right in front of their boss. That was crossing the line.

Tony glanced over at him with a smirk. "Kid, aside from your assistant, you really have no taste. Look at this place — it's so outdated it hurts. You call this one of New York's 'luxury apartments'? I'd call it a museum."

From Tony's perspective, this antique-filled space was hopelessly unfashionable. He was a man who lived and breathed tech aesthetics — sleek, minimal, futuristic.

"You don't know crap," Lucas said flatly, brushing him off as he walked toward the bar counter.

"Pepper, what would you like to drink?" he asked, deliberately skipping over Tony.

"I'll have that Fairy Berry Tea from last time," Pepper said warmly, clearly at home here. She and Skye had hit it off surprisingly well on their first meeting — so well that despite nearly a decade of age difference, the two chatted like lifelong friends.

Lucas poured her a glass and handed Skye a chilled white peach juice.

"Hey! Hello! Rude much?" Tony huffed, waving his hand. "You've got a handsome, charming billionaire standing right here, and you choose to ignore me? I want that peach drink from before — the one from the cave!"

He sounded more like a spoiled kid than a genius inventor. Ever since returning home, Tony had scoured the world trying to find the brand of that peach juice Lucas had given him in the cave — and failed. Not one even came close to matching the taste.

"Be honest," Tony said, taking the chilled bottle from Lucas. "What brand is this? I'm buying the company."

Lucas chuckled. "Secret recipe. One of a kind."

"Seriously? Then I'll invest," Tony said without missing a beat. "Right now. I'll have Pepper wire the money. I'll handle all the equipment and production — this flavor will crush every juice brand on the market."

The billionaire waved a hand like it was pocket change — and for him, it was.

Lucas shook his head. "Forget it. Not interested. Can't be mass-produced anyway."

He wasn't lying. He did like money, but he liked not working even more. Setting up a factory? Managing production lines? No thanks. Besides, it's not like he was short on cash — not after how much Stark Industries stock he'd quietly scooped up.

Tony raised an eyebrow. "Fine. Then pack me up a few crates of your stuff when I leave. I'll send a truck over. Name your price — I'll make it worth your while."

Now that got Lucas's attention. "You said it yourself!"

"Ha! Look at you," Tony snorted. "You've clearly never seen real money before."

Lucas resisted the urge to roll his eyes. Of course the rich brat didn't get it — for him, money was just numbers on a screen.

"Alright, seriously — what are you doing here?" Lucas asked. "You come waltzing in, mock my place, try to steal my assistant, and now you're raiding my fridge?"

Tony shrugged, sipping his drink. "You told me to drop by sometime, didn't you? So... I dropped by."

"You've got the time to hang out, but not to deal with the chaos at Stark Industries?" Lucas said incredulously.

Tony waved it off. "Just a little turbulence. Lost some money, that's all. I'll earn it back in no time."

He sounded utterly unconcerned. In truth, his focus had shifted — he'd started diving deep into studying the arc reactor in his chest, planning to pivot Stark Industries toward clean energy.

And for once, Lucas couldn't argue with him. The man's vision was ahead of its time. Energy had always defined human progress — from fire, to oil, to electricity. The next frontier would be clean, sustainable power. Tony's miniature reactor could solve most of the world's energy problems — it was renewable, efficient, and nearly pollution-free.

Sure, it required rare metals, but aside from that? It was the future.

With a technology like that, even if Stark Industries' stock hit rock bottom now, Tony would inevitably bring it roaring back. His real wealth wasn't his company — it was his mind.

Still, watching him lounge around like this, Lucas couldn't help but think, How the hell did this irresponsible guy ever become Iron Man?

In truth, Tony really was here to unwind. His research had hit a bottleneck — he was close to a breakthrough, but something was missing. So he'd come hoping Lucas's "magic nonsense" might spark a new idea.

Of course, Tony Stark's pride wouldn't allow him to ask for help outright. Fortunately, Pepper knew him too well.

"Actually," she said gently, "Tony's research has stalled a bit. He thought a change of scenery might help... maybe get some inspiration."

Lucas grinned. "Ohhh? So the great Tony Stark finally hit a wall, huh? Come on then — tell me what's got you stumped. I could use a good laugh."

Tony's expression darkened like a storm cloud. He stood up abruptly, clearly about to storm out.

"Relax, relax," Lucas said quickly, trying not to laugh outright. "Tell me what's going on. Maybe I really can help."

Tony crossed his arms. "Fine. I'll give you a chance to kiss up to me properly."

He took a breath, then began explaining. "It's mostly control issues with the armor. The response times aren't syncing the way I want — weapon deployment delays, flight system lag, energy distribution problems... small things, but they add up. And right now, I can't fix them."

Lucas leaned back with a knowing smirk. So that's what brought Iron Man to my door.

"Sounds like someone's armor could use a little... magic touch," he said, half teasing, half serious.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review! Your support means everything.

~~~~~

Chapter 53: Skye's Awakening Begins

The problems Tony faced weren't massive – but to him, they were walls he couldn't break through. After all, there's a limit to what even a genius human can handle. No one, no matter how brilliant, could simultaneously pilot a full suit of armor, monitor every subsystem, track energy consumption, and switch weapons on the fly while dodging enemy fire.

Lucas chuckled. "Ha! That's it? I thought it was something serious. That's an easy fix."

Tony blinked. He hadn't expected Lucas to take it seriously – he was just hoping for some weird "magical" perspective that might inspire him. But hearing the kid say he had a solution threw him off.

"You've got an idea?" Tony asked skeptically.

"Of course," Lucas said, smirking. "Beg me, and I'll tell you."

Tony rolled his eyes so hard it was a miracle they didn't fall out. "Forget it. I don't want to know anymore. Goodbye!"

He turned to leave, clearly fed up.

"Hey, hey, don't go yet!" Lucas called after him. "I haven't even said what it is. You sure you don't want to hear it?"

Tony hesitated mid-step. As much as he hated to admit it, he did want to know what kind of answer this little punk had come up with — especially one that he himself hadn't thought of.

"Fine," Tony said, turning back with a smirk. "How about you beg me to listen?"

"...", Lucas's face twisted like he'd just bitten into a lemon. Great. Instant karma.

"Alright, enough nonsense," Lucas said finally, waving a hand. "It's simple — just install your AI into the armor. Let it help you manage all the subsystems."

Tony froze. "Wait... you know about JARVIS?"

He stepped closer, brow furrowed. Hardly anyone knew about JARVIS — not the board, not the engineers, not even most of his inner circle. How did this kid know?

Lucas just shrugged. "Of course I do. I know a lot of things. Don't ask — it's the mystery of magic."

He couldn't exactly tell Tony he knew because he'd seen it in a movie in his past life. So whenever he ran into something like this, he just blamed "magic." Problem solved.

Tony eyed him suspiciously for a few seconds, then went quiet — deep in thought. The suggestion clearly struck a chord.

Without another word, he stood up and walked straight out the door. Pepper, who had been chatting with Skye, immediately followed after him with a quick goodbye. Tony didn't even take the crates of juice he'd promised to buy — his mind was already racing with new ideas.

Typical mad scientist behavior.

Once they left, Lucas pulled out his phone and dialed Natasha.

"Hey, Natasha~ remember my payment? Shouldn't it be here by now? Don't tell me Fury's planning to stiff me — unless he wants me showing up at S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ in person."

There was silence for a moment before another voice came through the line — low, calm, and unmistakable.

"Mr. Norman," said Nick Fury himself. "I keep my word. You'll have your payment first thing tomorrow morning. In return, I expect you to keep your promise as well."

"Of course," Lucas said smoothly. "Natasha can supervise the whole process."

He hung up and turned to Skye with a grin. "Get ready. Tomorrow, we're awakening your powers."

Skye froze. "W-What?"

Her hands clenched unconsciously. She didn't even realize her heartbeat had picked up. Humans always feared the unknown — especially when it was about to happen to them.

"Don't be nervous," Lucas said gently. "I guarantee it'll work. One hundred percent success rate. And it won't even hurt."

Well... he thought it wouldn't hurt. He couldn't be sure. In the show he remembered, Skye had passed out cold during the process. Whether that was from pain or shock – who knew?

"I... I understand," Skye said softly, though her voice trembled. Her body followed suit, betraying her anxiety.

"Go get some rest," Lucas told her. "I'll keep an eye on the shop tonight. Just relax – nothing's going to go wrong."

Skye nodded and retreated to her apartment upstairs. Alone was better than being watched – at least then, she could breathe.

When night fell, Lucas noticed she hadn't come down for dinner. Her door was still shut. With a sigh, he grabbed a tray and knocked gently.

The door opened a crack, revealing a sleepy-eyed Skye. She'd clearly just woken up.

"Dinner first," Lucas said, stepping inside and setting the food on her desk.

Skye barely picked at it, eating only a few bites before pushing it away.

"Feeling better after a nap?" he asked.

She nodded slightly. Sleep really was the best cure for anxiety, and it had calmed her a little.

"Lucas... what kind of power do you think I'll get?" she asked quietly. The fact that she used his name instead of "boss" showed how uneasy she really was.

"Don't worry," Lucas said with a confident smile. "You'll awaken something incredible – maybe even stronger than mine."

He wasn't exaggerating. Vibration powers – the quake of the earth itself. That was Skye's destiny.

Skye smiled faintly. Somehow, when he said it, she believed him. No questions, no doubts. Just trust.

After a few more reassuring words, Lucas left her to rest. Tomorrow would change her life forever.

Back in his own room, Lucas lay on his bed, recalling how it all played out in the show. Skye's awakening had been an accident — no one had known the obelisk's true power. She'd simply touched it, passed out, and emerged reborn.

He'd have to be careful. The obelisk's reaction could be violent. They'd need a secluded spot, and he'd have to stand well back just in case. No telling whether he counted as a "normal human" in the obelisk's eyes — and he didn't plan on finding out the hard way.

The next morning, Lucas and Skye waited at the office. Right before noon, Natasha arrived, dressed sharply as ever, a black case in hand. Beside her was Agent Coulson.

That caught Lucas by surprise. "Huh. Coulson too? Shouldn't you be babysitting Tony right now?"

Apparently, today was going to be very interesting.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - [Twilight\\_scribe1](#)

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review!
Your support means everything.

~~~~~

## Chapter 54: Awakening of Power

When Natasha and Coulson stepped into the office, several men in black suits remained stationed outside, standing watch. Clearly, the Obelisk was far too valuable in Nick Fury's eyes — he wasn't about to risk it getting stolen.

"What exactly do you need this thing for?" Natasha asked, handing the black case directly to Lucas without the slightest hesitation, as though she were carrying nothing more than an ordinary briefcase. "S.H.I.E.L.D. has had entire teams of scientists study it, and no one's been able to figure it out. You're telling me you know?"

Don't be fooled by the plain look of the case — it was a marvel of S.H.I.E.L.D. engineering. It used biometric locks for both fingerprint and iris scans, came with an advanced temperature-stabilizing system, impact shielding, and sensors that constantly monitored the Obelisk's condition.

Coulson added, "She's right. S.H.I.E.L.D. spent massive resources and still couldn't determine what it really is." He handed Lucas a pair of specially designed gloves. "Put these on. Touch it barehanded, and you'll turn to stone instantly."

Lucas slipped on the gloves and opened the case.

Inside sat a tower-shaped slab of stone – unremarkable at first glance, but pulsing faintly with energy. The power emanating from it was so intense that Lucas could feel it prickling against his skin even through the gloves.

Snap!

He immediately shut the case. What was harmless to an Inhuman could be deadly to an ordinary human.

"Skye, pack up. We're closing shop for the day," Lucas said before turning to Natasha and Coulson. "I'll need an isolated location – somewhere with no people around."

Coulson nodded and began making calls right away, while Natasha kept her eyes fixed on Lucas.

She knew him too well. If he wanted the Obelisk, then he already understood what it was — and probably where it came from.

"You know what that thing really is, don't you?" she asked.

This time, Lucas didn't bother denying it. He nodded. "Yeah. I know what it is — and what it's for."

"I knew it." Natasha crossed her arms. "You're planning to use it on Skye, aren't you?"

She really was top-tier — one look at the situation, and she had already pieced it all together.

Lucas nodded again. "Exactly."

"I'm warning you," Natasha said, her tone deadly serious. "Skye is my friend. If anything happens to her — if she so much as stops breathing — I'll kill you myself."

She meant it. Skye reminded her too much of her own sister, Yelena.

Lucas raised a hand reassuringly. "Relax. She won't be in any danger. I promise."

He wasn't lying — Skye would only lose consciousness for a while, not her life.

By the time Coulson finished arranging the site, Lucas didn't even need to ask to know that S.H.I.E.L.D. would have it crawling with agents and sensors, observing every detail. But that was fine. Skye's powers wouldn't manifest immediately anyway — they would develop gradually. Nothing S.H.I.E.L.D. saw today would give them the full picture.

Soon, they arrived at the designated location — an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of New York. The place looked like it hadn't seen life in decades.

"Nice spot," Lucas said with a smirk. "Perfect for what we need."

He extended his magical senses. As expected, S.H.I.E.L.D. agents surrounded the area, stationed hundreds of meters away. The air was thick with surveillance — thermal scanners, hidden cameras, data collectors, and likely more advanced instruments to monitor the Obelisk's energy readings. Fury never missed an opportunity for data collection.

Lucas set the case down at the very center of the vast warehouse. There was plenty of room for Skye to move — or collapse — safely.

"Skye," Lucas said gently, "in a moment, you'll open the case yourself and touch the Obelisk with your hand. That's all you have to do. Leave everything else to me. There's no danger, I promise."

"Just... touch it?" Skye asked hesitantly. She'd imagined some kind of energy infusion ritual, not... a tap.

Lucas chuckled. "That's all. Just touch it. When you do, it'll release a burst of energy. We'll step back — far back — and wait until it's over. Then we'll come get you. You might feel dizzy, so be ready for that."

Skye nodded, determination flickering in her eyes. There was no turning back now.

"Alright," Lucas said, giving her a reassuring smile. "We'll be outside. Remember, just a touch."

He turned and walked out of the warehouse, leaving Skye alone inside.

"Leaving her in there by herself doesn't feel right," Natasha muttered as she joined Lucas and Coulson a hundred meters away. Both agents raised binoculars to keep Skye in sight, surrounded by a forest of scanning instruments and thermal monitors.

Lucas glanced at the equipment. "Relax. She'll be fine. Trust me."

Inside the warehouse, Skye's hands trembled as she stared at the black case. It looked like a beast ready to swallow her whole. Her heart raced — what if she awakened something useless... or failed entirely?

Despite Lucas's reassurances, her nerves wouldn't calm.

"Alright... let's do this," she whispered, psyching herself up. "Come on, Skye. You've got this!"

She pressed her finger against the scanner.

Beep!

A red light swept across her eye — iris scan complete. Then came a sharp click! The locks released, and a faint mist of chilled air escaped from inside.

Her hands shook as she lifted the lid. The Obelisk sat before her, stone-gray but alive with faint ripples of light that flowed across its surface.

The moment she gazed at it, she felt it – the Obelisk was responding to her. It recognized her.

Inside the artifact, fragments of Terrigen crystals pulsed faintly – not pure enough to form Terrigen Mist on their own, but ready to react when triggered by contact.

Skye took a deep breath, steeled herself, and pressed her palm against it.

Instantly, blinding energy surged from the Obelisk, wrapping around her in a storm of white mist.

**BOOM!**

A deafening shockwave exploded outward, shattering the air. The warehouse trembled violently as the blast of energy expanded in every direction.

The wave hit the outer perimeter like a hurricane. Instruments toppled. Monitors screamed. Red warning lights flared as the readings went off the charts.

Lucas reacted in a split second, grabbing both Natasha and Coulson and dragging them back as the shockwave swept past, tearing through the ground where they'd stood moments before.

All around them, S.H.I.E.L.D.'s sensors went haywire — data spiking to maximum, alarms blaring, systems flashing uncontrollably.

And at the center of it all stood Skye — engulfed in light, her silhouette barely visible — as the Obelisk completed what it had started.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - [Twilight_scribe1](#)

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review! Your support means everything.

~~~~~

Chapter 55: The Birth of Quake

The surge of energy came fast – and vanished just as quickly. In only a few breaths, everything was calm again. The warehouse and the ground around it were marked with deep scorch lines, evidence of the power that had just erupted.

"Mm. Looks like it's done."

Lucas stretched out his senses, confirming that the surrounding energy had completely dissipated. Once certain it was safe, he darted toward the warehouse – his body flickering like he was teleporting, a faint green wind swirling in his wake.

When he arrived, the sight that met him was both reassuring and worrying: Skye lay unconscious on the ground, the Obelisk resting beside her.

Lucas ignored the artifact and hurried over, scooping Skye into his arms. Just then, Natasha and Coulson burst into the warehouse behind him.

"Lucas!" Natasha shouted, fury flashing in her eyes. "What the hell did you do to her?!"

In an instant, she drew her pistol and pressed it against Lucas's forehead. Years of walking the line between life and death told her that Skye was still breathing — otherwise, Lucas would already be dead.

"Easy," Lucas said calmly. "She just fainted. Nothing's wrong. I told you — I wouldn't let anything happen to her."

He could feel it — a strange, harmonious energy flowing through Skye's body. It wasn't chaotic or violent; it was like a steady river, merging naturally with her life force.

"The rest is up to you," Lucas said, glancing at Coulson. "The Obelisk's served its purpose. You can take it back."

He started toward the exit, Skye in his arms.

"Oh, right!" He turned back and called over his shoulder. "Tell Fury to send my one million. I'm in a hurry~"

Coulson couldn't help but smirk slightly. "I'm sure the Director won't forget."

At that very moment, Fury was watching everything live from S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters. From the moment they'd entered the warehouse, every sound and image had been transmitted back in real time.

Lucas nodded, satisfied, and disappeared with Skye in a swirl of green light.

Inside the warehouse, S.H.I.E.L.D. agents swarmed in to collect samples and data. Every sensor reading, every energy trace had already been uploaded to their systems. In the labs, teams of scientists were poring over the results, their excitement barely contained.

But Fury wasn't focused on the data. His attention was locked on the playback — on the girl who had touched the Obelisk and survived.

He replayed the footage again and again. The energy burst, Skye collapsing... but no petrification.

"Motherf—" Fury slammed his hand on the table. "What the hell is that girl?"

His mind was racing. He was dying to ask Lucas directly, but that was impossible. Lucas was unpredictable — powerful, detached, and dangerously indifferent toward S.H.I.E.L.D. One wrong move could turn him into an enemy they couldn't afford to make.

Fury pulled the old pager from his pocket, his thumb running over its worn surface as he weighed his options.

Meanwhile, in Lucas's personal realm — the Chocobo Space — things were quiet.

He hadn't returned to the office. Skye's body needed time to adapt; the awakening process required her system to synchronize with the new energy within her. When she woke up, it would mean her transformation was complete.

Other Inhumans didn't usually fall unconscious during Terrigenesis — their crystals were pure. But the Obelisk contained more impurities than Terrigen itself, which forced Skye's body into a longer adjustment phase.

After setting Skye down to rest, Lucas wandered into the small garden in front of his cabin. The Sakiel greens had fully matured, and he decided to harvest them. Once the crops were cleared, the chocobo "Onion" could finally regain its fighting form. For now, the bird was only good as a mount — it had zero combat ambition.

He gathered the vegetables, watching as new seeds automatically sprouted in their place, and re-planted them with a flick of his wrist.

After that, he soaked in the hot spring, sighing in satisfaction.

Three days passed. The agency remained closed, and Lucas stayed inside the Chocobo Space, keeping an eye on Skye.

On the fourth day, while he was preparing dinner, he heard faint footsteps from upstairs. Peeking around the corner, he saw Skye wobbling down the staircase, weak from hunger but awake at last.

Her face was pale, her steps unsteady, but when she spotted the food, her eyes practically lit up green.

She devoured her meal like she hadn't eaten in weeks. Only when she finished did she finally slump back, sighing contentedly.

"So," Lucas asked with a teasing smile, "what kind of ability did you awaken?"

He already knew the answer – but he wanted to hear her say it.

"Vibration," Skye said, eyes bright with excitement. "I can create shockwaves... kind of like—"

"—an earthquake?" Lucas interrupted, grinning.

Her eyes widened. "Exactly! It's like an earthquake, just smaller in scale. But..."

Her voice dropped. "There's a downside. The vibrations affect me, too. If I push it too hard, I can literally shatter my own bones."

Lucas was impressed. She'd learned that much in only a few hours of awakening – much faster than he expected. This wasn't how it went in the version of events he remembered.

"Don't worry," he said. "I can fix that. I just need the right material... once I get it, your body will be able to handle the power safely."

And that material, of course, was vibranium.

Skye nodded. Together, they stepped outside to test her powers.

Lucas pointed at a nearby tree. "Start with that. Try channeling your vibrations through it."

She placed her hand on the trunk.

Buzz!

A low hum pulsed — and the entire tree exploded from the inside out, splintering into pieces before collapsing.

Lucas swallowed hard. Holy hell. That kind of power, focused on a human body, would mean instant death.

Skye looked equally shocked. She hadn't expected it to be so strong — or for her hand to go numb afterward.

They tested next on stone, then water, and finally the ground itself. Each time, the results grew more astonishing. A boulder the size of a bathtub shattered into gravel. The lake's surface rippled violently, as if a bomb had gone off underwater. The earth itself cracked beneath her feet, miniature earthquakes rolling outward.

Only her attempt to vibrate air failed — the medium was too diffuse for her current control.

By the end, both of her arms were shaking uncontrollably. She could barely lift them.

Lucas examined her with a focused look, pressing a hand lightly to her forearm. Through his magic, he could sense the strain in her bones.

"Based on what I can tell," he said, "you can safely use this power maybe ten times before your arms give out. Any more, and your bones will literally snap."

Even that warning couldn't dampen Skye's excitement. For the first time, she had power.

Later that night, they returned to the office — Lucas heading straight to bed, while Skye lay awake, still giddy at the thought of what she could now do.

Meanwhile, back at S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters, the lights burned late. Dozens of analysts were dissecting the collected data, trying to uncover the secrets of the Obelisk — or the girl who survived it.

Across the table, Fury sat in silence, his one good eye narrowing as he looked at Coulson and Natasha. His expression was darker than ever.

The age of Quake had begun.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight\_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review!
Your support means everything.

~~~~~

## Chapter 56: S.H.I.E.L.D. Stirring Up Trouble

Nick Fury sat behind his desk, his single eye narrowed, glaring at Coulson and Natasha who sat across from him. His expression was thunderous.

"Are those damn lab geeks complete idiots?" Fury roared, slamming his palm on the desk. "They've got piles of data and high-definition footage right in front of them, and still not a single useful result! Instead, they've managed to turn half the research team into statues! What the hell are they even good for besides eating? Motherf—!"

His shiny bald head had even lost its usual gleam as his anger boiled over.

Fury took a deep breath, then barked, "Coulson, forget about the research. I want you to make contact with Tony Stark. See if you can bring him into the Avengers Initiative."

That was still his top priority. The world was becoming increasingly unstable — and now there was someone like Lucas walking around. Fury couldn't afford to take chances anymore.

Coulson nodded. He'd already been the one who escorted Tony back from the Middle East; reestablishing contact would be easy enough.

"Natasha," Fury continued, turning to her, "I want you to stay close to Lucas. Find out what you can about the Obelisk — and about that girl, Skye."

Since S.H.I.E.L.D. had already rented the apartment near Lucas's place on company funds, Fury figured Natasha might as well use it to keep tabs on him. She was close to Skye, after all — maybe close enough to get some answers.

Natasha didn't respond right away. Because of her friendship with Skye, she didn't want to deceive her. She decided she'd just be honest; if Skye didn't want to talk, she wouldn't push.

As for Lucas... she wasn't confident at all. Her usual methods — charm, manipulation, seduction — were completely useless on him. The guy saw straight through her, knew exactly who she was and what she represented. Around him, she had no secrets.

Sighing, Natasha left headquarters and returned to the apartment. She passed the locked office door of Lucas's agency, then quietly retreated to her own room.

---

The next morning, Lucas and Skye were sitting in the office like usual — bored out of their minds. Lucas truly was spacing out, while Skye was lost in thought, analyzing her powers.

She didn't dare use them recklessly. The last thing she wanted was to accidentally shatter her own bones.

That was when Natasha walked in. Lucas didn't even need to think — of course Fury had sent her. With how paranoid that "black egg" was, he'd never pass up a chance to spy or probe for information.

Lucas knew exactly what Fury was thinking. The only reason S.H.I.E.L.D. hadn't locked him, Skye, Gwen, and Peter up in some underground lab for "study" was because Fury didn't yet have the guts to try.

"So," Lucas said flatly, not even bothering with greetings, "what does that shiny-headed bastard want to know this time?"

He wasn't one to beat around the bush — especially not with people he didn't like. And when it came to S.H.I.E.L.D., his dislike was mutual and deep-rooted.

That said, he did make exceptions. He actually respected Coulson, Natasha, and Clint Barton. Those three were nothing like the rest of the agency.

Coulson was a good man — principled, kind, steady.

Natasha seemed dark and manipulative on the surface, but Lucas knew her heart wasn't. She was tough, but not cruel.

And Barton, though quiet, was the kind of person you could trust to guard your back in a fight.

Lucas didn't mind being friends with them — as long as Fury and S.H.I.E.L.D. as an institution stayed far out of it.

Natasha looked conflicted, glancing briefly at Skye.

"It's fine," Lucas said with a shrug, reading her hesitation easily. "Neither of us blames you. I know Fury sent you. You're just caught in the middle."

That broke the tension. Natasha smiled again, regaining her usual confident, teasing poise — the charming femme fatale once more.

She started asking questions about Skye — mainly why Skye had been able to touch the Obelisk without turning to stone.

"That's because Skye isn't an ordinary human," Lucas explained casually. "You know what happens when regular people touch the Obelisk – they turn to stone. Clearly, Skye isn't one of them."

It was an answer that explained everything and nothing all at once.

"Then what exactly is the Obelisk? What does it do? Where did it come from?" Natasha pressed. As she spoke, she casually tapped the small earpiece behind her ear – an obvious signal that Fury was listening in.

Lucas rolled his eyes. "The Obelisk is actually a crystal – called a Terrigen Crystal. It's not just a rock, it's a medium. You could also call it... a key."

"A key?" Natasha repeated. "A key to what?"

"To unlocking powers," Lucas said. "Anyone the Terrigen recognizes can awaken an ability – become what you'd call a superhuman."

He didn't hold anything back. There was no point. The Obelisk was only useful to Inhumans – for ordinary humans, it was deadly. No matter how hard S.H.I.E.L.D. or HYDRA tried, they could never mass-produce superpowered soldiers from it.

"Superhuman?" Natasha's eyes widened, then darted to Skye. "Then that means..."

"Yeah," Skye said, smiling faintly. "I've already awakened."

She wasn't hiding it — not from Natasha. She trusted Lucas, and by extension, she trusted Natasha too. As long as Lucas was around, she wasn't afraid of S.H.I.E.L.D. trying anything.

"Incredible..." Natasha murmured. Her mind was already spinning through implications — could this lead to artificially creating superhumans? But she quickly dismissed the thought. She'd seen what happened to people who touched the Obelisk. This wasn't something you could replicate.

Lucas shook his head. "Only certain people can awaken. Everyone else just turns to stone. You've seen it yourself."

"Certain people?" Natasha asked. "Meaning what exactly?"

Lucas hesitated for a moment, then said, "That ties into where the Obelisk came from. Actually..."

He launched into an explanation — a carefully edited version of the truth. He told Natasha (and through her, Fury) about the Inhumans, but with key details omitted or altered.

"So Skye," Natasha summarized slowly, "is a descendant of this... Inhuman race?"

"Exactly," Lucas confirmed. "That's why she could awaken her powers instead of turning to stone."

Natasha frowned, curiosity getting the better of her. "And how do you know all this?"

Lucas gave her a grin. "Magic, of course. I can sense the energy inside Skye — it's the same as the Obelisk's."

When in doubt, blame magic. The perfect answer.

Natasha had nothing to say to that. Magic was the kind of word you only heard in fairy tales — and yet, standing in front of Lucas, she couldn't even argue. She didn't understand it, couldn't verify it, and had no grounds to question it.

All she could do was accept it.

And somewhere, far away in S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters, Nick Fury's expression darkened even further as he listened in.

S.H.I.E.L.D. had stirred up something far beyond its control.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review! Your support means everything.

~~~~~

Chapter 57: Tony's Call for Help

Neither Natasha nor anyone else in S.H.I.E.L.D. had the faintest idea that sorcerers were walking right among them. Right there in New York stood one of the three Sanctums, guarded by mages of the Masters of the Mystic Arts. And in the distant stronghold of Kamar-Taj, countless more magicians had watched over Earth for thousands of years, defending it from the corruption of other-dimensional demons.

They were the true protectors of Earth. Compared to them, S.H.I.E.L.D. was little more than a noisy children's club—running around playing hero, calling themselves the "guardians of the planet." If the sorcerers ever bothered to listen, they'd probably laugh themselves to death.

"Anything else you want to ask, Director Fury?" Lucas said lazily, though the question was clearly aimed at the earpiece Natasha was still wearing.

Natasha paused briefly, then asked,

"Besides Skye, how many Inhumans are out there? And where are they now?"

Lucas certainly couldn't tell Fury that the Inhumans were living on the dark side of the moon. If S.H.I.E.L.D. actually found that out, they'd send a fleet up there

tomorrow—and then Black Bolt would probably scream them all into dust. Literally. The guy's voice could shatter worlds.

Besides, Lucas wasn't even sure if the Inhumans truly existed in this version of reality.

He spread his hands. "No idea. For all I know, Skye might be the only descendant left in this world. Magic's powerful, sure—but it's not omnipotent. If you want to find them, you'll have to do it yourselves."

Natasha nodded, then switched off the comm link. Fury had gotten all the answers he was going to get—and none of them were useful. The man sat at headquarters, listening to the feed, feeling like he'd just wasted his time.

"Listening to him talk," Fury muttered darkly, "is like listening to a wall."

"Finally!" Natasha groaned, stretching as she made a beeline for the fridge. "I thought that interrogation would never end. I'm dying of thirst."

She poured herself a tall glass of chilled fruit juice and took a long drink before turning to Skye.

"So, Skye, how do you feel? Any side effects from awakening your powers?"

Skye smiled. "Not really. Other than my ability being a bit dangerous, I feel completely normal."

"Oh?" Natasha raised a brow. "And what's your ability exactly? It sounds like it's pretty strong."

Skye nodded proudly. "It is. When I first awakened, I could shatter a stone the size of a water tank with my bare hands."

Natasha blinked. "You did what?"

Skye's grin widened. "Lucas calls it 'seismic energy' – like an earthquake."

For a moment, Natasha just stood there speechless.

Earthquake-level powers? If that wasn't terrifying, she didn't know what was. If Skye ever lost control, she could probably level a city block in seconds.

"Lucas," Natasha asked after a moment, "can I awaken powers like hers?"

Lucas looked up from the couch, eyebrow raised. "You? No. You're a normal human. Skye's method won't work for you."

Natasha crossed her arms, half pouting. "Then what about your magic? Can you teach me that?"

"That's even less possible," Lucas replied flatly. "My magic can't be replicated. No one else can learn it."

He wasn't lying. His magic came directly from his mysterious system — it wasn't something that could be passed on or studied.

Natasha sighed in defeat. "Figures. I guess I'm stuck being a regular human forever."

Moments later, she and Skye linked arms and announced they were going shopping, leaving Lucas alone in the office.

He'd been invited, of course, but refused instantly. "Shopping with two women?" he'd scoffed. "What am I gonna do, carry bags?"

He'd learned long ago: once a woman starts shopping, she becomes a tireless, perpetual-motion machine — one that never runs out of energy.

Lucas was just about to take a nap when his phone suddenly rang.

He glanced at the caller ID — Tony Stark.

"Yo, Tony! How's the new armor coming along? My suggestions were brilliant, weren't they—"

He didn't get to finish before Tony's anxious voice cut in.

"Lucas, I need your help. Pepper's in danger."

Lucas's expression hardened immediately. His mind flashed to the timeline he remembered — there were two incidents involving Pepper after Tony's return. One when she broke into Obadiah Stane's office to steal files, and another when she investigated that secret Stark Industries warehouse that wasn't listed in the company records.

Since it was still daytime, it had to be the first one. Pepper must've been caught stealing the files.

"Don't worry," Lucas said quickly. "I'll head to Stark Tower right now. I'll bring Pepper back to my office — she'll be safe here."

"Thank you, Lucas. Seriously, thank you," Tony said, the relief in his voice palpable. In times of crisis, there was only one person he trusted without question — Lucas.

The moment the call ended, Lucas leapt onto his mount, the big yellow Chocobo he affectionately called "Onion," and shot across the city toward Stark Tower.

When he arrived, he spotted Pepper Potts stepping out of the building with Agent Coulson beside her. Her expression was tense, frightened.

"Lucas?! What are you doing here?" Pepper and Coulson said in unison when they saw him.

"Tony called. Said you were in danger. I'm here to take you somewhere safe," Lucas said briskly. "No time to waste. Coulson, you're coming too."

Coulson nodded, and the three quickly piled into a car, speeding off toward Lucas's office. Lucas rode Onion close behind, keeping watch from the air.

Once they arrived, Pepper still looked pale and shaken, clutching a black USB drive tightly in her hand.

"Relax," Lucas said softly. "You're safe here. No one can touch you while you're under my roof."

He immediately called Skye, telling her and Natasha to come back.

The two women had barely stepped into the mall when they got the call – and, sighing in frustration, turned right back around.

When they arrived and learned Pepper was in trouble, both of them snapped to full alert.

"What happened?!" Skye demanded.

"Yeah, what's going on with Pepper?" Natasha asked as Coulson filled them in.

Pepper had snuck into Obadiah Stane's office to steal confidential files and was caught in the act. Stane had chased her down himself, and she'd only escaped because Coulson happened to arrive at the right time.

In the car, Pepper had shown Coulson the contents of the stolen files — detailed records proving Stane had been secretly selling Stark Industries weapons to terrorists and had even been involved in Tony's kidnapping.

Lucas's expression darkened. "Give me the USB. I'll take it to Tony myself. You stay here — Skye will protect you."

He wasn't taking chances. For all they knew, Stane might've already sent assassins or snipers after her. If Pepper so much as stepped outside, she could get a bullet through the head — and Tony would lose it.

Pepper hesitated, then handed Lucas the drive. Coulson stood as well, ready to move.

"I'll go with you," he said. "And I'll have agents shadow Stane. With the evidence you found, he's finished. Selling weapons to terrorists? That's enough for the death penalty."

Lucas nodded, tucking the USB safely away.

The two men headed out immediately — and with Onion's speed, they'd reach Tony's Malibu home in minutes.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight\_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review! Your support means everything.

~~~~~

## Chapter 58: Joining the Fight

When Lucas arrived at Tony's oceanfront mansion, even he couldn't help but gape in awe. Sure, Lucas wasn't short on cash these days—but compared to Tony Stark, he was practically a broke college student. The sheer scale and luxury of the place made him feel like he'd wandered into a sci-fi movie set.

Of course, that made sense—he had seen this mansion before, in the movies. Back then, it had looked cool, sure, but standing in front of it now? It was something else entirely. Sleek architecture, futuristic design, and an overwhelming sense of genius money could buy.

Just as he was about to knock, Jarvis's calm, polite voice echoed through the entryway.

> "Mr. Norman, Mr. Stark is currently in the workshop. I will guide you there."

"No need to be so formal, Jarvis. Just call me Lucas."

A line of glowing arrows appeared along the floor, leading him deeper into the house. Following the light, Lucas soon reached the basement lab—and there was Tony, looking utterly exhausted, hunched over his workbench.

He was fine-tuning the armor. It had already completed test flights, but the weapons systems still needed calibration.

"Tony, I brought the flash drive," Lucas said, stepping closer.

Tony looked up, red-eyed and drained. "Pepper's safe, right?"

"With me watching her? Relax," Lucas replied.

Tony exhaled, his shoulders slumping in relief. "Thanks, Lucas. Really. I don't even know how to repay you."

He meant it. The thought of offering money crossed his mind, but he dismissed it immediately—it would feel like an insult. Friendship wasn't something you could buy.

(If Lucas had known what Tony was thinking, he'd have told him to go ahead and try. Getting buried under piles of Stark cash didn't sound half bad.)

Before Tony could say anything else, Jarvis's voice interrupted.

> "Sir, Mr. Obadiah Stane is here to see you. He's waiting in the living room."

Tony frowned. "I'll go meet him."

He set his tools down and headed for the stairs.

"Hold up," Lucas said sharply. "You're not even going to look at what's on the drive before you go up there?"

At this point, Tony was just suspicious of Stane—not certain. He hadn't seen the damning evidence yet, and his guard wasn't fully up. Stane, on the other hand, had come fully prepared.

"I'll check it later," Tony said curtly. "Let's see what game he's playing first."

He turned and disappeared upstairs.

Lucas sighed and started to follow, but then a familiar ding sounded in his head.

> [Ding~ System mission triggered: "I Am Iron Man." The host must participate in the battle against Iron Monger and witness the birth of Iron Man!]

Lucas rubbed his temples. "Participate to what extent? You want me to kill Iron Monger myself?"

> [The host must take part in the battle in person. Full engagement required.]

Lucas groaned. "Figures. Can't even spectate in peace. You're really something, system."

He had planned to sit back, maybe cheer Tony on from the sidelines—but now? He was apparently part of the show.

Before he could complain further, Tony suddenly came stumbling back down the stairs—collapsing hard onto the floor.

The arc reactor in his chest had gone dark. A thick black liquid was leaking from the ports.

"Ka—Ka..." Tony tried to speak, but his throat locked up. His skin had gone chalk white, and dark veins were spreading across his chest like spiderwebs.

Lucas's eyes widened. He knew this scene.

He scanned the lab frantically and spotted the old arc reactor Pepper had encased in glass—the one she'd turned into a keepsake.

Without hesitation, he smashed the case open, yanked out the old unit, and slammed it into Tony's chest port.

"Hold still, man."

The moment it clicked into place, the light returned—bright and steady. Tony sucked in a deep breath, color slowly returning to his face as the dark veins receded.

Lucas exhaled. "There. Back online."

Now Tony didn't need to guess who had betrayed him—he knew. Obadiah Stane had tried to kill him.

---

By the time night fell, Pepper, Skye, Natasha, Coulson, and a small team of agents had traced one of Stane's secret warehouses.

"Pepper, you really didn't need to come," Natasha said as she adjusted her pistol. "Coulson and I can handle this."

When the agents discovered the site, both Natasha and Coulson had planned to investigate alone. It was likely storing illegal weapons Stane had been selling under the table.

But Pepper had insisted on joining them. No matter how they argued, she wouldn't stay behind. So now, what should've been a small covert operation had turned into a full squad escorting one stubborn CEO.

"I have to see it myself," Pepper said firmly. "If Obadiah's been lying to Tony, I want to know."

Meanwhile, Skye was on the phone with Lucas.

"What?! You're telling me Pepper went with them?" Lucas said, instantly switching to speaker mode.

"Yeah," Skye replied, her tone uneasy. "I came along too. I didn't want her walking into danger alone."

"Send me your location right now," Lucas ordered. "You guys are walking into something way above your pay grade."

As soon as Skye sent the coordinates, Lucas relayed them to Tony. In seconds, the armor assembly sequence began—each mechanical arm whirring to life, locking the pieces of the Mark III armor onto his body.

Lucas couldn't help but grin despite the tension. Man, this scene never gets old. The clanking metal, the hiss of hydraulics—pure mechanical poetry.

When Tony was fully suited up, Jarvis synced the coordinates to his HUD.

"Let's move," Tony said.

He blasted out of the mansion, jets roaring. Lucas mounted Onion and shot into the air right after him.

---

At the warehouse, Coulson's team stood before a heavy security door. Pepper was swiping her access card again and again, frowning.

"Damn system! I swear, I'm replacing this thing," she muttered, frustrated.

"Let me try," Coulson said, signaling an agent. The man handed him a spherical breaching device.

Before he could use it, Skye stepped forward. "No need."

She placed her palm against the reinforced door.

Vvvvvmmmm—!

The metal vibrated violently, fracturing from within. In seconds, the entire door shattered into glittering shards that clattered to the ground.

Everyone stared in stunned silence.

Most of the agents already knew Skye had awakened some kind of power—but none of them had seen it in action. Now they had.

The massive steel door hadn't just dented or cracked—it had been pulverized.

Even Natasha was impressed. She knew Skye's ability was vibration-based, but she hadn't realized just how devastating it was.

One hit from Skye, and a person could be reduced to paste.

And this was her holding back.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review!  
Your support means everything.

~~~~~

c 59

"Door's open. Let's move."

Skye didn't rush in right away. She gestured for the S.H.I.E.L.D. agents to take point instead. Her powers were strong, yes—but dangerous to her as well. The less she had to use them, the better.

Coulson led the team forward, gun raised, every step careful and deliberate. Natasha was right behind him, while the agents flanked them in formation, keeping Pepper securely in the center.

The warehouse was pitch black, utterly silent. Their flashlights cut thin cones through the darkness, doing little to dispel it. The narrow beams only made the place feel colder, emptier—haunted.

"What on earth was Obadiah doing here?" Pepper whispered, frowning.

She knew Stark Industries inside and out. As Tony's assistant, nothing in the company escaped her. But this warehouse? It didn't even exist in the archives. That could mean only one thing—it was Obadiah's private project. And that made it dangerous.

"Stay sharp," Natasha murmured. Her instincts screamed that something was wrong. The silence wasn't peace—it was the kind that came right before gunfire.

Then—

Vrrrrmmm...

A single red light flared to life behind Pepper, followed by the grinding roar of machinery.

"Down! Everyone out—NOW!"

Natasha spun around, firing instantly toward the glow. The other agents reacted fast, unleashing a volley of gunfire. Skye grabbed Pepper by the wrist and bolted for the exit, Coulson covering them and firing over his shoulder.

RATATATAT!

Bullets filled the air—then men began to fall. One by one, the S.H.I.E.L.D. agents dropped like wheat before the scythe, cut down by a wall of lead. Only Natasha's reflexes saved her from being shredded.

And then she saw it.

The red glow wasn't just a light—it was eyes.

Through the faint flash of muzzle fire, she finally saw the monster rising from the dark.

"Holy—crab cakes..." she breathed.

The thing was huge—over three meters tall, a steel titan with glowing eyes and thick armor plating. Massive cannons and rotary guns gleamed under the flashlights.

The Iron Monger. Obadiah Stane's twisted imitation of Tony's design.

Natasha didn't hesitate. She turned and ran.

> "Since you've come this far..."

Obadiah's voice boomed through the armor's speakers, dripping with arrogance.

> "Don't bother leaving!"

A shoulder panel snapped open. A missile launched with a scream.

BOOM!

The explosion tore through the warehouse roof, sending debris raining down as fire filled the space. Natasha dove through the blast, tumbling across the concrete. When she emerged, her suit was scorched, one arm blackened and useless.

"Natasha!" Skye sprinted to her, dropping to her knees.

She checked the wounds—mostly burns and shrapnel cuts. The arm was broken, but she was alive.

Coulson barked orders, rallying what was left of the agents. "Fall back! Get Pepper and Romanoff out of here!"

But the Iron Monger wasn't about to let anyone escape. Its cannons roared again, spraying bullets and micro-missiles. The air filled with fire and metal.

Coulson's men didn't stand a chance. Their pistols barely scratched the armor. Each hit made a faint plink—and that was it.

> "Hahaha! You see now? Against real power, all you can do is DIE!"

Obadiah's laughter was pure madness. He was drunk on it—the destruction, the domination, the feeling of being untouchable.

Within seconds, nearly every agent was down. Only Coulson was left, empty gun trembling in his hand. S.H.I.E.L.D. reinforcements were miles away.

Then came the whine of a rocket.

Obadiah fired straight at Pepper.

"NO! GET DOWN!" Coulson shouted, sprinting forward—

Too late.

BOOOOOOM!

Flames erupted, throwing him backward. The blast lit up the night sky, swallowing Pepper, Skye, and Natasha whole.

Coulson hit the ground hard, pounding his fist against the dirt. "Damn it!"

But as the smoke cleared—his eyes widened.

Pepper was still there. So was Natasha.

Skye stood in front of them, arms outstretched. Invisible ripples of force pulsed from her palms, bending the air itself. Not a single fragment of shrapnel had reached them.

The rocket had detonated early—disintegrated midair under the crushing waves of her vibration field.

When the last echo faded, Skye's arms dropped limply to her sides. Pain shot through her bones—both arms shattered from the strain.

Still, she'd saved them.

Before anyone could react, the ground shook. The Iron Monger landed with a thunderous crash, raising one massive metal fist—

—and sent Skye flying.

She slammed into a wall and went limp.

Obadiah's faceplate hissed open, revealing his sweating, twisted grin.

> "Well, Miss Potts," he sneered. "Curiosity really does kill the cat. You think being Stark's little secretary makes you untouchable? Let me show you who really runs Stark Industries!"

He raised his right arm; the rotary cannon spun up with a whine.

And then—

SHOOM!

A beam of golden light streaked down from the sky, slamming into him like a meteor.

The Iron Monger was ripped off his feet and hurled across the street, tearing a deep trench into the asphalt.

> "Now you know who's really in charge, you greedy bastard!"

The voice was sharp, furious—and unmistakable.

Tony Stark, clad in the red-and-gold Mark III armor, landed in a burst of sparks.

The real Iron Man had arrived.

"Tony?!" Pepper gasped, tears streaking her soot-covered cheeks.

Tony flipped up his faceplate. "I'm sorry, Pepper. You got dragged into this because of me. Go. Get to safety. I'll explain everything once this is over."

The rare steadiness in his voice silenced her. He wasn't joking now.

Pepper nodded through her tears. She tightened her grip around Natasha—still unconscious—and with Coulson's help, started retreating from the battlefield.

Behind them, sparks flared again.

The battle between Iron Man and the Iron Monger had begun.

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight\_scribe1

~~~~~

Chapter 60: The Battle Against the Iron Monger

At the same time, heavy S.H.I.E.L.D. reinforcements finally arrived. They didn't bring much in the way of heavy weaponry, but under Coulson's command, they quickly sealed off every street in the area.

Unlike how things went in the original timeline, the S.H.I.E.L.D. blockade cleared out all civilians and traffic, leaving the streets deserted. That gave Tony Stark the freedom to unleash his full power without worrying about collateral damage.

> "Tony Stark!"

Obadiah's voice thundered through the Iron Monger's speakers as he lumbered forward, his mechanical steps cracking the asphalt beneath him.

> "I have to admit, your genius truly is something to behold! To think you built a weapon this advanced. Join me, Tony! Together, we can rule this planet as its ultimate masters!"

Tony's visor glowed faintly as he hovered, eyes narrowing behind it. "Where did you even learn about this tech?"

The Iron Monger loomed over him, massive and menacing.

Obadiah chuckled. "Oh, you mean the Iron Monger? Credit where it's due, Tony—it all started with you. I don't know how you destroyed that base in the Middle East, but in the wreckage, I found this masterpiece. Our ideas combined created something truly magnificent... a machine that can reshape the world!

Come, Tony! Join your Uncle Obadiah and let's change humanity's destiny!"

He spread his metal arms wide, the armor's servos groaning as red light shone from its chest and eyes. The sheer bulk of it dwarfed Tony's Mark III—like a giant facing an ant.

Tony smirked under his helmet. "Change the world? With that ugly oversized action figure of yours?"

A new voice cut in from behind Obadiah.

> "And who said you get to change anything?"

"Who's there?!"

Obadiah spun around just in time to see a young man approaching, a crystalline sword strapped across his back.

It was Lucas. His face was dark with fury, his eyes cold enough to freeze the air itself.

He and Tony had arrived together—but Lucas had detoured to save Skye, who had been swatted into the air by the Iron Monger's blow. Already gravely injured, she'd fallen unconscious immediately. Seeing that scene had snapped something inside Lucas. His killing intent now radiated like a storm.

Obadiah Stane was not walking away alive.

Lucas handed the unconscious Skye to Pepper, warning her sharply, "Don't let S.H.I.E.L.D. take her. Not even Coulson. Got it?"

Pepper had nodded without hesitation. As one of the few people with full access to Stark Industries' internal systems, she knew well enough that "agents" weren't always to be trusted. She guarded Skye herself while medics worked on stabilizing her broken arms.

Now, Lucas turned back to the battlefield.

> "Who am I?" He sneered. "I'm your damn father."

He shot forward like a cannonball, one foot slamming square into the Iron Monger's chestplate.

BOOOOM!

The impact dented the armor inward with a deafening crunch, sending the massive machine crashing backward into a heap of twisted concrete and rebar.

Obadiah's eyes went wide in disbelief—he hadn't expected that much force from a man in plain clothes.

Before he could recover, Tony swooped in, unleashing a salvo of micro-missiles from his forearm launcher. A dozen explosions blossomed across the Iron Monger's body in quick succession.

When the smoke cleared... not even a scratch.

The armor's thick plates had taken the full barrage without flinching.

Lucas blinked. "Seriously, Tony? What the hell was that—fireworks?"

Tony scoffed. "They're micro-tracking missiles! Top of the line! It's not my fault this tin can's built like a damn tank!"

In truth, Tony hadn't loaded the Mark III with high-yield explosives. It was built for flight and defense, not total destruction. But he'd clearly underestimated his opponent.

Then came the roar of gunfire.

BRRRRRTTTT!

The Iron Monger's chest-mounted rotary guns came to life, spewing a hailstorm of armor-piercing rounds. The air filled with tracers as chunks of concrete erupted around them.

Tony was forced to jet skyward, while Lucas dove behind an overturned car. Even Tony's armor was being battered by the sheer volume of fire—Lucas, a man of flesh and blood, would've been shredded if he got caught.

"Tony!" Lucas shouted over the noise. "Draw his fire! I'll take out that damn cannon!"

Tony got the message instantly. He shot upward again, firing repulsors and flares to pull Obadiah's aim away from the ground.

The Iron Monger followed, its sensors locking onto the airborne target. Lucas was beneath its notice—a fatal mistake.

Typical of Obadiah—arrogant, overconfident, blind to anything that didn't shine or scream money. Even after Lucas had dented his armor with a single kick, the man still saw Tony as the only threat, simply because Tony wore a suit.

Big mistake.

With a flicker of green light, wind gathered around Lucas's feet.

He launched himself forward, his body a blur of afterimages.

SHHHK!

The crystal sword sliced through the air—and the Iron Monger's machine-gun arm went spinning into the sky, the severed edge smooth as glass.

The kinetic backlash sent Obadiah's entire frame staggering.

He stared at his ruined arm in shock. "Impossible! That alloy is custom-forged! No material on Earth could—how did you—what is that sword made of?!"

Lucas raised the blade, its translucent edge gleaming faintly in the firelight.

"You don't need to know," he said coldly. "All you need to do... is die."

He swung again—

> "Damn you! Get away from me!"

Obadiah roared and fired his thrusters, the Iron Monger rocketing into the sky to escape.

Lucas tilted his head back, eyes narrowing. Then he pulled a small whistle from his belt—a chocobo whistle.

A sharp, triumphant cry echoed through the night as Onion, his chocobo, appeared in a burst of wind. One bite of a Gysahl Green later, Onion's feathers bristled with energy, its eyes gleaming with battlelust.

With a shriek, the great bird spread its wings and shot upward after the Iron Monger.

High above, Tony and Obadiah were already clashing midair. Without his heavy machine gun, Obadiah relied on swarms of mini-missiles, his armor belching fire.

> "Tony!" Obadiah shouted over the comms. "You made your choice! Then die like your pathetic father!"

Missiles erupted in a dozen trails of fire, all locking onto the Mark III.

Tony's systems screamed in warning. "Jarvis—countermeasures! Now!"

~~~~~

For 20 advanced chapters, visit my Patreon:

Patreon - Twilight\_scribe1

~~~~~

If you enjoyed Marvel Manifestor, please give it a Power Stone and leave a review!
Your support means everything.

~~~~~