Dad Tony and Mama May

by charmed4lifekaren

Summary

Since they were kids Melinda May, Tony Stark, and Richard Parker have been the best of friends, family really. As they grow up things change, Richard has a son, Melinda adopts a superpowered daughter whose family has been killed, gives birth to another, and they all become heroes, remining close until Richard dies too soon, leaving his son to be raised by May and Tony, who only just accepted their feeling for each other.
Chapter 1

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: As anyone who read my Mama May and her girls story knows I have decided to stop writing that and write this instead. I decided that I really wanted to write a Tony as a father fic, and because I didn't want to completely throw away Mama May, because I really loved that story but was having a few issues, one of which was a fundamental that was stopping me from writing, I decided I would incorporate some of the plans I had for that story into this one, which has actually helped solve my issues, including the one that was stopping me from writing.

As what happens in some of my stories I have changed some dates to make some things make sense. I have also changed some details, but they will make sure throughout this story, the ones you need to know now are:

Phil was born in 1967

Melinda was born in 1969

Sharon Carter, Trip and Bobbi Morse were born in 1987

Fitz and Simmons were born in 1990

Daisy was born in 1996

For Daisy's existence, and how Bobbi has powers you'll see what happens, but if you've read Mama May and her girls you should know what to expect.

As I said other changes will make sense throughout the story, and if there are any other major changes to thinks like dates I will flag them.

Hope you enjoy

August 8th 1987

At a party that only a few people know to be occurring seventeen-year-old Melinda May who had been dragged to the party by her mother is standing at a table with her friend eighteen-year-old Richard Parker, looking far from happy, the two of them drinking despite the fact that they aren't over age yet, and wearing fancy clothes.

"Are we really expected to believe one of these parties being held tonight is a coincidence considering what we're both starting on Monday?" Richard asks Melinda curious.

"Of course, it's not." Melinda responds, "They know we know it's not, they also don't want us to admit it." Melinda explains, as she looks around the room.

"I still can't believe your ditching me for S.H.I.E.L.D." Richard comments, after he looked around to make sure no one was within hearing range, not that it would matter considering the crowd.

"I'm not ditching you." Melinda says, as she rolls her eyes.
"Really?" Richard asks, sounding disbelieving, "Because we were all set to join the CIA together, when suddenly you announce you're joining S.H.I.E.L.D."

"You sound like my mother." Melinda informs her friend.

"Normally I'd take it as a compliment, but you mean it as an insult, so hey, and what the hell is going on May?" Richard asks, it being clear to Melinda that he wants an explanation and won't stop without one.

"If I join the CIA all I'll ever be is Lian May's daughter." Melinda explains, having once more checked to make sure no one is around.

"Please, we both know you'll get out of your Mothers shadow before your first mission, so what's your real reason?" Richard asks, knowing Melinda well enough to know there is something she isn't saying.

"S.H.I.E.L.D's a better fit for me." Melinda admits, "S.H.I.E.L.D does what I want to do, protect."

"Okay." Richard says, with a nod, realising he should have realised that, "We'll they're lucky to have you."

"Thanks Parker." Melinda says, meaning that.

"Your welcome May," Richard responds, and as he does Melinda looks around, and it is clear that she isn't checking to make sure no one is listening this time, "He's not here yet."

"I wasn't looking for anyone." Melinda says, completely lying which both she and Richard know.

"Sure, you weren't." Richard says, disbelieving, as he takes a drink, "What even makes you think he'll be here? Since starting MIT he only comes to these things when he absolutely has to."

"He told me." Melinda reveals, giving up all pretences.

"When?" Richard asks, but the second he does the answer comes to him, "You went to his graduation, didn't you?"

"Yeah." Melinda comments, and the second she does she sees the amazed and shocked look on Richard's face, "It's not a big deal."

"It's a huge deal." Richard says, looking thrilled, "Does that mean you're finally going to admit that something is going on with you two?"

"There's nothing going on." Melinda responds, without missing a beat.

"May you've been having sex with each other for a year." Richard reminds her, having lowered his voice so that no one nearby could hear.

"Which isn't a big deal, we're friends." Melinda informs him.

"We're friends, and we've never had sex." Richard points out, and once he does Melinda looks directly at him and puts her hand on his shoulder.

"That's because you're like my brother." Melinda reminds him as she and Richard have known each other for as long as either can remember.

"True." Richard admits, as he feels the same way, "But I'd appreciate it if you would stop pointing
out holes in my arguments with your logic."

"Never." Melinda says, with a smirk.

"Come on, Parker. You've got to be used to it by now." A voice says and Melinda and Richard turn to see seventeen year old Tony Stark, who like Richard is in a suit, walking up to them.

"Unfortunately." Richard admits, "It's good to see you, Stark."

"You too." Tony responds, as he gets to the table, "Mel." He greets, with a nod.

"Tony." Melinda responds, with slight smile.

"Okay, why you two stare lovingly into each other's eyes and refuse to admit that something is going on, I'm going to get another drink." Richard says, before walking away, being pretty sure that Melinda and Tony are going to give him an aneurism one day.

"I'll take one too." Tony calls after his friend.

"Same." Melinda calls.

"Of course." Richard says back, without looking back at his friends.

"You're really making a habit of this being late thing." Melinda informs Tony.

"It's the best way to do things." Tony says, with a grin, which causes Melinda to roll her eyes, though Tony knows her well enough to know its in a fond way, not annoyed. "Dance?" he asks.

"I don't dance, Tony, you know that." Melinda responds.

"And yet, I always manage to get one dance out of you." Tony say, grinning from ear to ear as he takes Melinda's hand, and the two of them head to the dance floor, Melinda seeming much more annoyed than she actually is.

A few minutes after Melinda and Tony left to dance Richard returns to the table with the three drinks and finds his friends gone, so the first thing he does is look out to the dance floor where, within seconds, he spots them dancing together.

"Of course." Richard mutters to himself, as he shakes his head at his two best friends, wondering if they will ever realise what he's known for years.

"I still don't know why you insist on dancing." Melinda comments, while she and Tony dance.

"It makes these things go quicker." Tony responds.

"That's what the alcohol is for." Melinda responds, without missing a beat, causing Tony to laugh.

"True." Tony admits, "Come on Mel, it's tradition. For eight years we've always had one dance at these things."

"Unfortunately." Melinda responds, "Thankfully this might be our last chance for a while." Melinda reveals.

"What do you mean?" Tony asks, giving Melinda a look.

"Let's talk outside." Melinda requests, as she is pretty sure that most people in the room, including
both of their parents, wouldn't approve of what she is about to tell Tony, and so it's better if she does so away from prying ears.

"Okay." Tony says, feeling slightly confused, but at the same time he suspects he might have an idea what this is about, and the two of them head outside.

A few minutes later Melinda and Tony have walked out to a balcony that overlooks a small lake.

"What's going on, Mel?" Tony asks curious.

"On Monday I'm leaving for training." Melinda reveals, never being one to beat around the bush.

"For the CIA?" Tony asks, as that's what he assumes.

"No, not the CIA." Melinda responds, not even surprised that Tony would have assumed that as thanks to the world they both live in it is the natural choice, "It was supposed to be the CIA, but I'm actually joining something else." Melinda reveals.

"Do I have to start guessing acronyms or are you going to tell me which?" Tony asks, as he assumes Melinda would either be joining an agency or a branch of the military.

"S.H.I.E.L.D." Melinda says, waiting to see Tony's reaction before she tells him more as she has never been sure what Tony knows about S.H.I.E.L.D.

"Dad and Aunt Peggy's agency. That makes a strange amount of sense." Tony responds, to Melinda's surprise, as while she expected that he might know a little about S.H.I.E.L.D that is more than she was expecting.

"You know?" Melinda asks, sounding surprised.

"Of course, I know. I'm insulted that you think otherwise." Tony says, mocking hurt, but he really isn't, "Mom and Dad fought about S.H.I.E.L.D a few times when I was growing up, it would be basically impossible for me not to know." He explains.

"Oh."

"Yeah, so you choose S.H.I.E.L.D over CIA, your Mother must be thrilled." Tony says, clearly sarcastic.

"Oh, she is." Melinda confirms, also sarcastic, "But this is the right choice for me."

"Then screw what she thinks." Tony says, causing Melinda to smile.

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, being glad for his reaction, though it doesn't surprise her.

"No need, Mel, no need." Tony responds, putting his arm around Melinda and the two of them drift into silence.

"Um guys." A voice says, after a few minutes of comfortable silence and Melinda and Tony turn to see Richard, "You've ditched me inside, and unless you want people, or I don't know your parents, to start asking questions we should re-join the party." He comments.

"In a minute." Melinda responds.

"Get over here Parker." Tony requests and Richard walks over to his two closest friends, "You're
"leaving Monday too, aren't you?" he asks.

"Yeah." Richard confirms, not even asking how Tony knows that.

"Then this is it, at least for a while." Tony says, there being a level of sadness to his voice.

"Come on, Tony. The three of us haven't been able to get rid of each other for eight years, do you really think we're going to be able to now?" Richard asks, looking at his friend.

"No way." Melinda responds, believing that, which says a lot.

"See May agrees, who else would put up with us?" Richard jokes.

"Yeah, I guess so." Tony responds, realising that while he may often doubt whether people who he thought as friends are really his friends he never has to doubt Melinda and Richard's friendship.

A few moments after Tony speaks Richard puts his arm around Melinda too, and the three of them drift into silence, and just stand together for a while, before they have to head back inside.

36 hours later

Ever since Melinda May, Tony Stark, and Richard Parker stood together on the balcony the three old friends have been spending as much time together as possible.

The morning where Melinda and Richard have to leave for their respective training has come, and as its not quiet time for her to get up and ready yet Melinda is lying in bed with Tony, in the bedroom of the Stark property that the three of them have been staying at.

"I know you're awake."

"It's creepy when you do that." Tony says, opening his eyes and turning to look at Melinda so that they are both lying on their sides, facing one another.

"It's creepy when you pretend to be asleep." Melinda responds, causing Tony to smile slightly.

"How long?" Tony asks, his voice turning serious.

"A little while." Melinda responds, not wanting to say exactly how long they have.

"So, how does this work. Does Dad send a car, or what?" Tony asks curious.

"I have the location, I have to get there myself." Melinda explains, "And I'm pretty sure your Dad doesn't have much to do with new recruits."

"That's probably a good thing." Tony comments.

"Probably." Melinda admits.

"Was he the one who talked to you about joining S.H.I.E.L.D?" Tony asks curious, being pretty sure that it's probably not the best conversation to have while in bed, but the facts of the matter is that he doesn't care.

"No, that was Aunt Peggy." Melinda admits, "But I'm pretty sure he was a fan of the idea."

"Of course." Tony says, looking slightly amused, "I bet your Moms not to happy with Aunt Peggy
right now." He comments, as he knows Lian May well enough to know that she would prefer Melinda join her agency.

"You'd be right there," Melinda admits, "But she'll get over it.... eventually." Melinda says, causing Tony to grin, "What about you, Tony? What are you going to do now?" she asks curious as Tony recently graduated from MIT, and she knows that Tony has been debating for a while what to do next.

"I'm moving to L.A." Tony reveals, "And going to be working for Stark Industries." He reveals.

"Tony..." Melinda starts to say.

"You don't have to say it." Tony says, knowing exactly what Melinda is about to say as he has through the same thing about a hundred times, "I want to get away from him, which is why I'm going to L.A, but working for Stark Industries will give me something I won't have anywhere else." Tony explains.

"Which is?"

"The ability to create whatever want." Tony explains, "Mel, working for Stark I'm going to be able to create, build, what I want instead of what higher ups want me to; I need that freedom."

"Aren't you worried about Howard making you take a leadership role?" Melinda asks, knowing perfectly well that Tony doesn't want to do that.

"A little, but that's why I'm going to L.A, to make it harder for him to do that." Tony explains, causing Melinda to grin.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, "When are you going to leave?"

"In the next couple of days." Tony admits, "With you and Parker leaving I don't have a whole lot of reasons to stay on the East Coast, and Rhodes is already out that way."

"Good." Melinda says, glad that Tony will have a real friend out there, but before she can say anymore an alarm goes off.

"Does that mean....?" Tony starts to ask.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "It's time, I got to get ready."

"Right." Tony says, leaning forward and kissing Melinda, "I'll see you around, Mel." He says, once they break apart.

"See you around Tony." Melinda responds, before getting out of bed and heading to the bathroom, being very well aware of the fact that Tony is watching her go.

A little while later Melinda, Tony, and Richard are all dressed. Melinda is securing her bag to her motorbike while Richard is basically throwing a bag into his car, and Tony is watching on.

"So, this is it for a while." Tony comments, "I guess we'll see each other.... Do you get Christmas holidays?" he asks, looking between Melinda and Richard, who look at each other.

"Not sure." Melinda admits.

"I think so." Richard responds, "But even if we don't, we'll find a way to see each other, we always
"That we do." Melinda responds, "I'll see you around, Parker." Melinda says, before hugging her friend, the person who is like a brother to her.

"See you around, May." Richard responds, as he hugs Melinda and kisses her cheek, "Don't die." He whispers to her.

"Right back at you." Melinda responds, as the two of them break apart, and once they do Richard walks over to Tony.

"See you, Tony." Richard says, sticking his hand out for his friend to take.

"I'll see you, Richard." Tony responds, and once he grasps Richard's hand he uses it to pull him into a hug. "I'll see you around, Jerk." He says with a smirk.

"You can count on it, Jackass." Richard responds, and as they break apart a smirk can clearly be seen on Richard's face as an annoyed look is on Tony's, though it is clear to both of them, and Melinda, that both insults were said with complete fondness.

Once Richard and Tony break apart Richard looks between Melinda and Tony and realises exactly what he should do.

"I've got to go." Richard says, before heading to his car, and driving off, leaving Melinda and Tony alone, as he figures that is best.

"I should go too." Melinda admits.

"I know." Tony says, taking a step forward, "You're going to be a great Agent Mel, hell you already are." He admits, "Don't be a stranger." He requests.

"Never." Melinda promises, before she takes the step that separates them and hugs Tony, "You're amazing, Tony, never let anyone tell you otherwise." She says, it being clear that the 'anyone' she is talking about is his father as more than once Melinda has been there for Tony after his father tore him down, not sure what to say Tony just kisses Melinda's cheek, hoping that the action says more than he ever could.

For a few minutes Melinda and Tony just stand together and hug before they finally break apart,

"I'll see you." Melinda says, there being so many more things she wants to say, but that is the safest option.

"I know." Tony responds, and once he does Melinda walks over to her bike, puts on her helmet, and with one last look at Tony drives away, forcing herself not to look back as she goes.
Chapter 2

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: As I write I'm deciding how much time is going to past between chapters, or even within chapters, so depending on the plot it might be a lot of time or barely any.

AN2: I want to say thank you for the amazing support you've shown me so far, THANK YOU. It means so much to me. Please leave a review/comment.

A while after Melinda left Tony she is arriving at S.H.I.E.L.D academy. Following the signs which tell her where to go she arrives at a carpark where she parks her bike then, once she has her bag, follows signs to where new recruits are supposed to go.

As she looks around at the other recruits Melinda isn't at all surprised by the fact that there are very few women, nor is she surprised by the fact that there are only a few Asians as she was expecting both those things.

For a few minutes after Melinda arrived she just wait in silence, unconsciously sizing everyone else up, something she has been doing without meaning to since she was young, until finally an agent stands in front of the group of people.

"Welcome to S.H.I.E.L.D academy. If you're an operations or communications recruit you're in the right place, if your Sci-ops you're not." The agent reveals, "I'm Agent Fowler, and because of numbers, and a recent incident involving some of the Academies facilities, operations and communications recruits will be bunking together." He reveals, and it is clear that there are people who aren't happy about that fact, though Melinda is not one of them as she doesn't really care, mainly because she figures it won't matter, "Bunks are organized into groups of four, when I call your name please come up and collect your key." He instructs, "Bunk one, Coulson, Garrett, Hartley, May." Agent Fowler says and once he does Melinda, a girl who seems to be a couple of years older than her, a man who seems to be about her age and is clearly not an operations student, and a man who clearly is and is also a few years older, all walk up to collect their keys, "Wait to I finish assigning rooms for more instructions." Agent Fowler says once all four of them have received their keys, causing them all to nod and head back to where they were each standing.

After a talk, and conversation, that Melinda mainly turns out, she is about to go to her bunk where she is shortly joined by the other three people who will be in the dorm with her.

"So, I'm Phil Coulson, Communications." Phil explains, wanting to break the silence.

"John Garrett, operations." Garrett explains.

"Melinda May, operations." Melinda answers.

"Seriously? You're in Operations?" Garrett asks, looking at Melinda in disbelief, something which doesn't surprise her.

"I could kick your ass if you want, to demonstrate." Melinda comments, looking at him,
"As if you could." Garett responds, and Melinda goes to take a step forward.

"I'm Izzy Hartley also in operations." Izzy says, before Melinda and Garett can actually get into a fight.

"Well, we've got half an hour before we have to meet everyone. Any preference on rooms?" Phil asks curious, purposely changing the subject.

"Nope." Melinda answers, as she grabs her bag and heads to one of the four bedrooms, honestly not caring about the specifics of the room.

Hours later Melinda, and her three new roommates have been to their orientation programs and Melinda, Izzy and Garrett have had their first combat class were Melinda did kick Garrett's ass.

"Hey." Phil says, as he walks into the common area of the dorm that the four students will be sharing, where Melinda is sitting on the couch, "Where's Garrett, and Izzy?" Phil asks curious,

"Garrett's sulking in his room." Melinda says, smirking slightly, "And Izzy's having a shower." She explains.

"So, the rumours are true. You kicked Garrett's ass." Phil says as he walks over and sits down on the couch as well.

"Yep." Melinda confirms, sounding proud, being proud about both what she did and the fact that it is already around the academy, "It was actually pretty easy." She admits, causing Phil to laugh.

"I might need you to show me some of those fight moves…. If you're willing of course." Phil quickly adds, not wanting to overstep.

"Of course." Melinda says, honestly being a little amused by that, "You're a coms recruit, you're going to need all the help you can get." She says.

"Wow, do you have such little opinions of coms recruits?" Phil asks curious.

"Yeah, until someone gives me a reason why I shouldn't." Melinda admits.

"Okay Melinda May, I'll give you a reason, by Christmas I will prove to you that comms recruits are just as good as operations recruits." Phil responds.

"Whatever you say, Coulson, whatever you say." Melinda responds, smirking at him, having no idea that this is going to be the start of an incredible friendship.

December 20th  1987

It has been over four months since Melinda started at S.H.I.E.L.D academy, and in that time she has turned eighteen, and has become close friends with Phil Coulson. Phil isn't the only person Melinda has become friends with as she has also become friends with Izzy and has come to a truce, at least most of the time, with Garrett, as well as forming a good working relationship with a senior agent by the name of Nick Fury.

It's a Sunday night and because the recruits have a short break for Christmas everyone is getting ready to leave in the morning. As both Melinda and Phil have to leave really early neither felt like joining in on the Academy wide party that is going on, rather they are sitting in the common area of their dorm drinking a bottle of scotch that Melinda obtained.
"You looking forward to going home?" Phil asks curious, being well aware of the fact that even after four months he doesn't know a lot about Melinda May, though he is pretty sure he knows more than anyone else at the Academy.

"I guess." Melinda answers as while there are people she is looking forward to seeing she isn't sure how her mother is going to react, nor is she sure how things are between her parents.

"You guess?" Phil asks surprised, "I can't wait to go home, can't wait to see my mom." Phil reveals, looking excited.

"Your Mom, what about your Dad?" Melinda asks curious, not knowing what she is bringing up.

"He died when I was nine." Phil reveals, as he takes a drink.

"Oh, Phil, I'm really sorry. I didn't know." Melinda admits, feeling bad about bringing it up.

"It's okay, you didn't know." Phil assures her, "I still miss him, and I don't remember much, but I'm okay." Phil responds, though it is clear that he doesn't want to talk more about it, "So, why aren't you happy about going home?" he asks, and considering what he just revealed Melinda figures she owes him an answer.

"My Mom's CIA. She wasn't too happy when I decided to join S.H.I.E.L.D instead." Melinda explains, "Plus I'm pretty sure that my parents are close to, or already have, gotten a divorce." Melinda admits.

"Oh…. I'm sorry." Phil says, not sure what else to say, and Melinda just shrugs, and takes a drink, "Is there anything you're looking forward to when you go home?" he asks, trying to change the subject to something positive.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "Seeing two really good friends of mine." Melinda admits, thinking about Tony and Richard, as she smiles slightly.

"Friends are good." Phil comments, it being clear that he is getting a little tipsy.

"Yeah, they are." Melinda confirms, smiling slightly and the two of them drift into silence as they continue to drink, and eventually talk a little more, before they head to their respective beds.

Almost twenty-four hours after Melinda was sitting with Phil, drinking and talking, she has found out that she was correct, her parents are divorcing, and is currently driving her bike into the 'main' Stark Estate that she knows for a fact Tony is currently staying at with both his parents. Even though Melinda knows, perfectly well, that she could just knock on the door she instead heads to the window that she knows leads to Tony's bedroom, and throws pebbles at it, using the right amount of force so that she doesn't break the window.

"Really Mel?" Tony asks, opening the window after about a minute of Melinda throwing pebbles at it.

"Seemed like a better choice than the door." Melinda says, with a shrug, "You going to get down here?" she asks curious.

"Give me a minute." Tony requests, and he disappears back into his room, causing Melinda to just stand and wait, leaning against her bike.

About a minute later the front door opens and Tony walks out.
"Got to say, I'm a little disappointed you didn't climb down." Melinda admits

"That's your thing, not mine." Tony says, walking towards Melinda, who is walking towards Tony, and once the two of them are close enough they hug, "It's damn good to see you." Tony admits as he hugs his friend.

"It's good to see you too." Melinda responds, hugging Tony just as tight as he is hugging her, something which continues to happen for a little while until they are both forced to break apart.

"So, we're meeting Parker?" Tony asks.

"Soon, but I thought we could drive around a little first." Melinda suggests.

"Sure." Tony responds, and with no more words the two old friends climb onto Melinda's bike, and speed out of the Stark Estate.

A little while later Melinda has pulled over at a little rest stop and both she and Tony are climbing off Melinda's motorbike.

"That wasn't too much for you, was it?" Melinda asks, with a smirk, as she knows her driving, especially on a motorbike, takes a while to get used to.

"Nothing is." Tony responds, with a smirk off his own, "So I assume you'll tell us all about what you've been up to when where with Parker, but how are you Mel?" he asks, assuming there is a reason why Melinda arranged for the two of them to spend time together before meeting Richard, he just has to find it as Melinda won't give it up easily, "Mel?" Tony asks, gently prodding when it looks like Melinda isn't going to answer him, "Come on, you know I'm not going to let it go." He adds.

"So far the academy is great. I'm top of the class. I've made some friends, good friends, and someone who's both a friend and enemy depending on the time of day, and I'm so glad to see you and Richard again, but I found out today that Mom and Dad are getting divorced; it feels wrong to be happy." Melinda admits.

"Okay, first, I'm going to tell you something you've told me before; be proud of your achievements, you've earned them, no matter what anyone else might say or do." Tony reveals, and Melinda has to smile, just a fraction, about the fact that Tony is quoting her, back at her, "And I figure it won't help things but your parents ending things have been in the cards for a while." He comments, as Lian's job has been taking a toll for a while and it was just a matter of time before things crumbled, though considering everything he was expecting them to just push through.

"Yeah, at least a year." Melinda confirm, "Still a bit of a surprise though." Melinda admits, as even though she told Phil she was expecting it she wasn't serious, "I never thought they'd actually get a divorce." Melinda admits, as she assumed her parents would continue on pretending everything was okay when it wasn't.

"I guess they couldn't pretend anymore." Tony comments, though he doesn't know why they would finally reach that decision, understanding.

"Yeah, I guess so." Melinda says, sounding uncertain and sad, something Tony hates to hear as it is so unlike Melinda, and so he walks over to his friend, and hugs her, "It's okay not to be okay. It's okay to be happy even when you're sad at the same time." He says, before kissing Melinda's head and the two friends just stand together on the deserted road hugging, Melinda allowing a few tears to roll down her face.
A while later, Melinda showing no sign that she had been recently been crying, Richard, Tony, and Melinda are sitting together at a playground with a couple of pizza boxes on the table between them,

"So, are you two going to keep me in suspense any longer. What's training to be an agent like?" Tony asks, looking between his two friends.

"It's good, it also classified." Richard says, with a smirk, which causes Tony to throw a pizza crust at him, "Hey! That's uncalled for."

"Actually, I think it's exactly what is called for." Tony comments.

"Second." Melinda says.

"Wow." Richard says, with a shocked look on his face, "I should have known you two would eventually gang up on me." He comments.

"Only when you're being an idiot." Melinda informs him, "It's classified, really?" she asks, giving him a look.

"With normal people it would be a valid excuse." Richard points.

"We're not normal, and let's be thankful for that." Tony comments, "Most of the time anyway." He admits, causing Melinda and Richard to exchange looks, "if you can't tell me about what you're doing at least tell me about the people, you met anyone decent?" Tony asks curious, and the second he does Richard gets a look on his face which Melinda realises the meaning off.

"You've met someone you really like." Melinda realises, smirking slightly

"Oh, tell us, tell us, tell us." Tony says, sounding very much like a hyperactive five-year-old, and as he looks between the smile on Tony's face, and the knowing look on Melinda's, Richard realises that he isn't going to get away with saying nothing, so he might as well make it easy on himself.

"Her name is Mary Fitzpatrick, and we've been doing a lot of our training together." Richard explains.

"Have you asked her out yet?" Tony asks curious.

"We're just friends." Richard says, rather quickly.

"But you want to be more," Melinda realises, and Richard doesn't deny that, "You should ask her out." She informs her friend.

"Maybe." Richard says, sounding uncertain, as the truth is he doesn't want to risk their friendship, "What about you, May you making friends?"

"Yeah, an occasional enemy too." Melinda responds, honestly not sure what to describe Garrett as.

"Anyone particularly special?" Tony says, trying to keep his voice natural even though he desperately wants to know.

"Kind of, his names Phil Coulson, he's becoming a really good friend." Melinda explains, and once she does Richard goes to say something, "Just a friend." Melinda confirms, "I don't see him that way, not sure I ever could." Melinda says, as she can see Phil Coulson being in her life for the rest of it, she just doesn't think it would be in a romantic way.
"I have a great idea." Tony, who is very happy with Melinda's explanation of her relationship with Phil, says.

"Your great ideas always end horribly." Richard says.

"Hey!" Tony objects throwing another pizza crust at Richard.

"In fairness, all our ideas usually end horribly." Melinda comments.

"Just yours and Tony's, my ideas end up great." Richard comments, and once more he gets hit by two pizza crusts, one thrown by Tony, and the other by Melinda, "Hey!" he objects again and his two friends just give him a look, "What's your idea?" he asks, looking at Tony.

"When we can, I guess around summer will be when we're all free, we should do something all together; the three of us, Rhodes, Mary, this Coulson, it could be great." Tony suggests.

"What makes you think I want to subject Coulson to you two?" Melinda asks, her voice completely deadpan and in response she gets pizza crusts thrown at her, but as she was expecting them she catches them, "Nice try." She says, as she puts the crusts back into the pizza boxes.

"Look, admittedly I'm worried about what you two could say to Mary, but I also think all six of us spending time together could be really good." Richard comments, "I'm in."

"That leaves you, Mel." Tony says, sticking out his leg to nudge Melinda with it, "Come on, you know you want to." He says, and once he does Melinda grabs his foot and glares at him.

"Fine, I'm in." Melinda answers.

"Yay!" Tony says, looking glad, "Can I have my foot back?" he asks curious.

"If you keep it to yourself." Melinda says, letting go of Tony's foot.

"No promises." Tony says, causing Melinda to roll her eyes, and Richard to shake his head as this is far from the first time that he's seen this kind of behaviour form Melinda and Tony, and he very much doubts it will be the last.

July 16th 1988

In the seven months that have passed since Melinda, Tony, and Richard saw each other at Christmas Melinda and Richard have both been finished their respecting training, and while Melinda has already been on her first mission, with Coulson under the command of Nick Fury, one that didn't go as well as it could, Richard hasn't, in fact he is about to get his first assignment.

As this is the first chance they have had, and likely the only chance they will have for months, Melinda, Tony, and Richard have arranged for the three of them, and their new close friends to meet up at a Stark property, that currently isn't being used, in a location that was easy for everyone to get to.

"So, Mary, Coulson, what do you know about them?" Rhody asks his friend curious, as the two of them are in the living room of the property waiting for Melinda, Coulson, Richard, and Mary.

"I know Parker likes Mary, a lot, but I'm not sure if he's asked her out yet." Tony admits, "and from what Mel's said Coulson's been a good friend to her."

"Huh." Rhody comments.
"What?" Tony asks.

"Nothing." Rhodey says, shaking his head.

"Come on Honeybunch, I know there is something you want to say." Tony says, being able to tell that but before Rhodey can answer the two of them both hear the doorbell.

"Oh the door, you should get that." Rhodey suggests.

"We're not done with this conversation." Tony says, before heading to the door, and less than a minute later Tony returns with Richard, and a women that Rhodey assumes is Mary, as she is a tall women with dark hair.

"Parker, it's good to see you." Rhodey greats.

"You too Rhodes." Richard responds, as he met Rhodey a few months after Tony did and they've been friends ever since, same with Melinda, and the two of them shake hands and engage in a quick 'man' hug.

"You must be Mary, it's lovely to meet you." Rhodey says, looking directly at Mary.

"Oh right. Mary, this is Tony Stark, and James Rhodes, guys this is Mary Fitzpatrick." Richard comments.

"It's nice to meet you both, Richard's told me great things." Mary says, looking between Rhodey and Tony.

"Great things? You lying to the women already, Parker?" Tony asks, looking at his friend.

"Nah, I just left out some of the stories were things got too crazy." Richard explains.

"So, like all of them then." Rhodey realises, "But I promise Mary, I'm not as in insane as everyone else." He explains, causing Mary to laugh.

"Give us time." Tony tells his friend.

"Speaking of time, where's May? She here yet?" Richard asks, curious, looking around.

"Nope." Tony answers, "But I'm not entirely sure where she and Coulson where coming from."

"Right." Richard says with a nod, "I'm assuming the bar is stocked." He says.

"You really should know better than asking that." Tony says.

"I really should." Richard says, before turning to Mary, "Do you want a drink?"

"Sure, I'll come see what there is." Mary says, and once she does she and Richard start to walk off to the bar.

"I've got everything." Tony says, as he hears the door open so he quickly walks over to see Melinda and a man he assumes to be Coulson walk in, "What, not ringing the bell?" he asks, walking towards Melinda.

"You've told me to just walk in enough times I figured I wouldn't bother." Melinda responds.

"Fair enough." Tony responds, "Good to see you, Mel." Tony says, before hugging her.
"Good to see you too, Tony." Melinda says, as she returns the hug, "Did I beat Parker here?" she asks curious.

"Nope, we're right here." Richard says as he and Mary walk back into the room, "May, this is Mary Fitzpatrick. Mary, this is Melinda May and I assume Phil Coulson." Richard introduces.

'You assume right. It's nice to meet you, Mary." Melinda says, "Phil, this is Tony Stark, James Rhodes, Richard Parker, and as he said Mary Fitzpatrick." Melinda says, pointing to everyone as she introduces them.

"It's nice to meet you all." Phil says, as while Melinda doesn't talk much she has talked to him about the people she cares about, so he is glad to finally meet them.

"So, are we going to have actually food or are we just going to drink…. Not that there is anything wrong with that." Melinda asks curious, looking at Tony.

"There's Chinese food in the kitchen. It was recently delivered so it's still warm." Tony reveals.

"Then let's eat it before It gets cold." Richard says, and the group of six head to the kitchen so that they can eat, drink, and for those who don't know each other get to know each other a bit more.

A few hours later Mary, and Phil are both getting along with the others like they have been apart of the group for years, something which Melinda and Richard are very glad about. As they are all a bit tipsy the group are in the living room and while Rhodey and Mary are talking on one of the couches, Tony and Melinda are off in a corner talking, and across the room from them Richard and Phil, who have been talking for about half an hour, are sitting together.

"Tony's Dad has a collection of Captain America stuff." Richard explains, as he and Phil have been talking about Phil's obsession, and as he does Phil looks excited, "Don't bring it up though, it's a sore subject."

"Really?" Phil asks, sounding surprised by that.

"Yeah, but it's not my place to explain why." Richard admits, and once he does Phil just nods, and looks away, recognizing that if he asks more he'll be pushing it.

As he looks away from Richard Phil looks over to Tony and Melinda, and the second he does Phil realises that Melinda seems a lot closer to Tony than he's seen her with anyone else,

"Richard, what's the story with May and Stark? Are they together?" Phil asks curious, for many reasons, one of which so he can understand things a lot better and know how to act.

"I don't know." Richard says, with a frustrated sigh, causing Phil to look at him, as he would have thought if anyone knew then it would be Richard, "I don't think a person on this earth, including Melinda and Tony, know what's going on with Melinda and Tony."

"That sounds complicated." Phil comments.

"Oh, it is." Richard confirms, taking a drink.

"Hey!" Mary calls from across the room, causing everyone to look at her, "Who wants to play poker?" she asks.

"I'm in." Rhodey says.
"Same." Richard answers.

"Me too." Phil, knowing he isn't great at poker, says.

"Why not." Tony answers, and finally Melinda says,

"Sure." And they all head over to the table and start to play poker together.

A while later, Melinda having won most of the rounds of poker, everyone is in bed having decided that it was bedtime a while earlier.

While everyone else has their own bedroom, because there are more than enough, Melinda and Tony are sharing, though they aren't' broadcasting that fact as they both know how Richard and Rhodey will react, and currently the two of them are both completely naked, trying to catch their breaths as they lay right next to each other.

"So, you've going to tell me what you've been doing for S.H.I.E.L.D?" Tony asks curious.

"Tony…" Melinda starts to say.

"Oh, come on, Mel, I won't tell anyone." Tony defends, causing Melinda to turn and look directly at him.

"We both know that's not true." Melinda reminds him.

"Yeah, you're probably right." Tony admits, "But still…" he objects.

"Look, I can't tell you details." Melinda admits, "But how about we agree that I'll always tell you what I can, and you don't ask for more." She suggests.

"I guess I could agree to that." Tony responds.

"Good." Melinda responds, deciding not to mention that he didn't have a choice in a matter, "Now…" Melinda says, as she starts to move closer to Tony, "Do you really want to know what I've been doing or are you up for round two?"

"I could make a joke about doing, but I'm a man of action." Tony says, before leaning forward, and kissing Melinda, as he pushes her on her back, though within seconds Melinda has flipped their positions and they continue to kiss and start their second round for the night.
Chapter 3

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AN1: Thank you so much for the support. Please, please, please, leave a review/comment.

December 16th 1991

Over three years have passed since Rhodey, Melinda, Tony, Phil, Mary, and Richard spent time together for the first time and ever since the six of them have become very good friends and spend time together whenever they can, though Melinda, Richard, and Tony still occasionally spend time just the three of them.

During the time that has passed something else has happened is Peggy Carter and Howard Stark being 'outed' from S.H.I.E.L.D. Even though Melinda has been sure not to tell Tony too many details about what she was doing, she did tell everything she knew about that.

It's night, pretty late by most people's standard and Melinda is in the medical bay of a S.H.I.E.L.D facility, Melinda sitting on a gurney, with a bandage around her upper left arm, while Phil stands by her.

"I do not need to be here." Melinda objects, as she really hates medical.

"May you were shot." Phil tells her.

"It was a graze." Melinda argues, with a shrug.

"It nicked an artery!" Phil points out, and before he can say more another agent walks in, "what is it Roiz?" he asks.

"Agent May's got an Emergency Call from a Lieutenant Rhodes. It's being transferred to the phone besides you ma'am." Agent Roiz explains, and the second he does Melinda can feel herself becoming worried, not that she would ever let that show, so instead she quickly reaches over and grabs the phone.

"Rhodey? What's going on?" Melinda asks, forcing herself not to ask if Tony is okay, as that is the first thing that came to mind when she found out Rhodey was calling her.

"It's Howard and Maria, they've been killed in a car accident." Rhodey explains to Melinda's complete shock, "Tony's handling it pretty much exactly how you'd expect, he needs you May." Rhodey reveals.

"I'll be there as soon as I can." Melinda responds, knowing where Tony is without Rhodey having to tell her, before hanging up and the second she does she is out of the bed.

"Wow, what are you doing?" Phil asks, sounding surprised, and worried for his partner.

"I've got to go." Melinda says, as she stands up, being glad that she didn't take off her shoes.
"May you're hurt, and you haven't got authorisation to leave base." Phil points out.

"I don't care." Melinda says, as she picks up her jacket that was lying on a chair, "I'm going, and you can't stop me, so I don't recommend you try." Melinda tells him in complete seriousness, and there is no doubt in Phil's mind that Melinda will do whatever she has to do if he tried to stop her.

"I'll cover for you as long as I can." Phil offers, realising that he can't stop her so he might as well do what he can to help her.

"Thanks Phil." Melinda says, looking grateful, before leaving.

In an amount of time that would be considered impressive for most people Melinda has managed to sneak out of the S.H.I.E.L.D base she was at and get to the Stark Estate on Long Island. Barley parking the bike she obtained, Melinda jumps off it and runs inside.

"May." Rhodey says, looking glad as Melinda hurries in.

"James." Melinda says, hurrying over to him, and the two friends great with a brief hug, "Where is he?"

"Upstairs, drinking." Rhodey reveals, and that fact doesn't surprise Melinda, "Peggy was here. Tony lashed out, so she went to deal with things that need to be dealt with so Tony doesn't have to, but she'll be back, she told Tony he wasn't going to push her away but thought he could use some space." Rhodey explains, having complete confidence that when Peggy gets back she will force Tony to stop drinking.

"Good, that's good." Melinda says, being pretty sure that that would be best, "Have you called anyone else?"

"Richard, he'll be here sometime today… tomorrow, I don't even know what the time is anymore, I figure Peggy would call anyone else who needs to know." Rhodey explains.

"Okay." Melinda says, before she heads to the stairs and heads upstairs.

Walking fast, though not to fast, Melinda makes her way upstairs, and heads straight to Tony's bedroom. As she knows pretty well that she will just get a 'go away' if she knocks Melinda just walks into Tony's room. Looking around Melinda sees Tony sitting on the ground, under the window, with a bottle of scotch and so she walks over and sits down next to him.

Without a word when Melinda sits down next to Tony she just takes his head and squeezes it, offering him comfort without any words, knowing that Tony talk when he is ready and so Melinda will just wait.

For the next ten minutes Melinda and Tony just sit together Melinda holding Tony's hand and showing him that she is there for him, whenever he is ready, neither of them speaking.

"They're gone, Mel, they're both gone." Tony says, tears coming to his eyes.

"I know." Melinda says sadly.

"I didn't even get to say goodbye." Tony admits, and once he does Melinda lets go of Tony's hand and puts her arm around him, "I want my Mom." Tony says, becoming close to completely breaking apart, but forcing himself not to.
"I know you do, Tony." Melinda says, pulling Tony's closer, "I know I'm not who you want right now, but I'm here, and never have to put up a front around me." Melinda assures him, "You can let it out." She says, and because he just needed to hear Melinda tell him it was okay, Tony allows himself to completely break down, as Melinda holds him.

As it has been a while since Melinda arrived Rhodey has become concerned that he hasn't heard anything from upstairs and so he has headed up to Tony's bedroom. Doing so as carefully, and quietly, as possible Rhodey gently opens the door and as he looks in the bedroom he sees Tony and Melinda both in the bed, both fully dressed, though Tony is clearly asleep while Melinda is awake and holding him.

Looking at Melinda the two of them lock eyes and with a look Melinda tells Rhodey everything he needs to know, and so he nods, while giving Melinda a look back, and then steps back out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Realising that there is nothing for him to do now that Tony is asleep, and that anyone who is likely to come to the Estate, namely Peggy or Richard, know where the spare key is, Rhodey heads to one of the spare bedrooms so that he can get some sleep himself.

The next morning, which is only a few hours later, Melinda, who has gotten no sleep herself, realises the second Tony has woken up.

"Tony?" Melinda, who removed her jacket during the night because it was getting uncomfortable, says.

"They're really gone, aren't they?" Tony asks, and Melinda can hear the pain in his voice.

"Yeah, they are." Melinda confirms, "I'm sorry, Tony."

"Just for a second I thought it was a horrible dream." Tony admits, as he turns to look at Melinda, and as he does he realises something, "Your arm, what happened?" he asks concerned.

"It's nothing." Melinda says, not wanting Tony to worry about her with everything else he has got going on.

"Mel, what happened?" Tony asks, sounding worried.

"I was hurt on a mission, but I'm okay, promise." Melinda assures her friend, and once she does Tony reaches out to touch the bandage.

"Does it hurt?" Tony asks, trying to distract Melinda from talking about him, or more specifically what he's feeling.

"Not much." Melinda responds, "You should have something to eat Tony, how about breakfast?" Melinda suggests.

"I guess I could eat, as long as you're not cooking it." Tony says, and the fact that he didn't make the, admittedly very obvious, joke tells Melinda everything she needs to know.

"I'm sure we could figure something out." Melinda says as honestly, she would be surprised if Peggy hadn't brought food.

"Okay." Tony says and even though he would like to stay in bed with Melinda where he feels safe,
A few minutes later Melinda and Tony walk into the kitchen where they find Rhodey, Richard and Peggy, and the second Melinda see them she can tell that none of them got much sleep.

"Tony." Richard says, and having no idea what else to say he just walks over and hugs his friend, "I'm sorry Man." Richard whispers the words feeling rather hollow as Melinda walks over to Peggy.

"Hey Aunt Peggy." Melinda says, before hugging the women who she calls aunt as that's what Peggy has been to her for most of her life.

"Melinda." Peggy says, returning the hug, "I got a call from Nick Fury earlier, about you." Peggy says in a quiet voice as she hugs the young women she considers to be her niece.

"I'm suspended, aren't I, or fired." Melinda responds, keeping her voice just as quiet as she doesn't want Tony to hear.

"No, you're officially on medical leave until January 1st." Peggy explains, before they break apart, the reason Fury called her as he heard what happened, and thus realised where Melinda went, and figured that the one way to assure Melinda knew what was going on was to get the message to Peggy.

"Okay." Melinda says, as Tony and Richard break apart and walk over.

"Aunt Peggy, I'm sorry about last night." Tony says, truly feeling bad about that, as he looks at his godmother, "You didn't deserve that."

"You're grieving, Tony, it's okay." Peggy says, "But you can't keep drinking, it won't take away the pain, it will just delay it." Peggy says, before hugging her godson, who's pain she would very much like to take away, but she knows she can't.

"Did you guys get breakfast?" Melinda asks, looking between Richard and Rhodey.

"Aunt Peggy brought it." Richard says, as like Melinda he has known Peggy most of his life, so he calls her Aunt as well, at her insistence.

"Good." Melinda says, looking glad, as Tony and Peggy break apart.

"What happens now, Aunt Peggy, what do I need to do?" Tony asks, wanting something to focus on and he figures his godmother will have the answers he needs.

"We can talk about it over breakfast." Peggy explains, knowing, thanks to her and Maria's insistent, that if something were to happen to Howard most of the details about what is to happen next was already figured out, same if anything happened to Maria.

"Okay." Tony says, and he, Melinda, Peggy, Richard, and Rhodey all collect the food, and coffee, tea, and juice and head to the dining area to eat and have breakfast together, during which time they all talk about what needs to happen.

December 20th 1991

After days of planning the day of Howard and Maria Stark's funeral has finally come. Due to the
circumstances of who Howard, and Maria, were the funeral will be a public one which, the people who know Tony best, know will mean he will be wearing an emotional mask the entire time.

Having just gotten change into a black dress Melinda is walking out of Tony's adjoining bathroom and over to Tony who is just standing in his suit, holding his tie, and staring at it.

"Tony?" Melinda asks concerned, as she walks over to him.

"Is this tie right, I'm not sure it right?" Tony asks, staring at it.

"It's fine." Melinda says, knowing that Tony spent about an hour debating between every tie he had, several which are new, and so she can't allow that to happen again, "I promise." Melinda says, as she takes the tie and starts to put it on Tony.

"Thanks." Tony mutters.

"Do you have what you are going to stay?" Melinda asks, as she knows Tony wrote a speech, though she doesn't know the specifics of what he wrote.

"Right here." Tony says, pointing to his pocket, not revealing that he didn't exactly write something coherent.

"Okay. If you need just look at me, or Aunt Peggy, or Rhodey, or Parker, as you speak. Focus on one of us and tune everyone else out, it will be difficult, but it will help." Melinda explains.

"Stay with me today, please." Tony requests, not caring that he is being vulnerable as it is Melinda he is being vulnerable too.

"Of course, I'm not going anywhere." Melinda promises, as she finishes tying Tony's tie, "There done." She says and once she does Tony turns towards the mirror and does up his jacket.

"You sure this tie is okay?" Tony asks, looking concerned.

"Positive." Melinda assures him putting her hand on his shoulder, and gently squeezing, "We should get going, Tony, today you definitely can't be late." Melinda tells her friend, who pauses for a moment, almost like he is trying to collect himself, but Melinda knows he is actually putting on the public persona, public mask, that he feels like he must wear.

"Okay, we can go." Tony says, and once he does Melinda nods and the two of them head out of the room, and downstairs.

About a minute or so later Melinda and Tony walk down the stairs and into the entry way where they find Richard, who is also in a black suit, and Rhodey who is in his full formal uniform, are waiting at the foot of the stairs, both Melinda and Tony knowing that Peggy, other members of the Carter Family and the Surviving members of the Howling Commandos are going to meet them at the church.

"Let's go." Tony says, as he gives his two friends looks that they recognize as grateful, and the group of four head out of the house Melinda, Rhodey and Richard knowing that they will do whatever they have to do to support Tony.

A little while later, though it feels like only seconds to Tony, he Melinda, Rhodey, and Richard arrive at the church where the funeral is being held. As soon as the group step out of the car they are hounded by press, and people, but because of their training Melinda and Richard both manage
to hide from the cameras, so that not a single image of them get taken or recorded, without making it seem like that is what they are doing. Rhodey and Tony on the other hand aren't as lucky and they both get photographed and reordered.

As they make their way through the sea of thinking Tony can't help but think about what he needs most right now, or rather who, and so he reaches out and takes Melinda's hand. The second he does Melinda squeezes it in support, which allows Tony to feel just a bit stronger as he makes his way into the church, where he is greeted with a hug from Peggy, who is wearing black.

"Let's go sit down." Peggy tells Tony once they break apart.

"Don't I have to great people?" Tony asks, trying to think of what he should be doing as it helps him not deal with everyone else.

"Not now." Peggy assures him, and the two of them, Melinda, Rhody and Richard head to the front of the church.

Once they are at the front of the church Tony sits in the middle of the front row with Peggy on his left, Melinda, who is still holding his hand, on his right, Rhody next to Melinda, Richard next to Peggy, as the other members of the Carter family and the Surviving howling Commandoes fill up the rest of the front row with their families, Richard's father, and when they arrive Melinda's parents, filling up the second row, it being clear to all of them, without anyone saying a word that they are all there not just to say goodbye to their friends but to do whatever they can to support Tony, whether or not he lets them.

Over the next hour or so the church fills up and the funeral begins. During the funeral various people who have known Howard and Maria over their lives, including Nick Fury and Peggy Carter speak, until finally Tony is invited up, but when he is called he doesn't respond.

"Tony, it's time." Melinda says, as she gives Tony's hand a squeeze and the second she does it's like he snaps out of a trace and looks at Melinda, who gestures with her head to the podium, and so Tony reluctantly let's go of Melinda's hand and heads up to the podium.

When Tony is standing at the podium, in front of everyone in the church, he realises, that for once he doesn't want to be the centre of attention, in fact he'd give anything not to be, and so remembering Melinda's words he looks directly at her, and once he does he knows that this is something he has to do but is also something he can do.

"I'd introduce myself, but you should all know how I am." Tony says, "I'm here to talk to my parents, but there isn't much to say, as you've heard a lot." Tony says, despite the fact that he doesn't remember a single thing that was said, "My mom's the most amazing women on the planet, hell she'd have to be to put up with my father." Tony comments, "And Dad, well, what can I say about Dad that you haven't already heard." He says, and as he does Melinda, Richard, Rhody, and Peggy all exchange looks as they know what Tony could say about Howard, and while it would be completely justified if he did it probably wouldn't go down well, "He was a genius, a patriot, a visionary." Tony says and one he does everyone who knows Tony well knows that he is not going to say what he really feels, "The worlds lost a great mind, that's for sure, but his vision will continue, I'll make sure of it." Tony says, "I'll miss my parents, and I know you all will too.... thank you for being here." Tony says, honestly not sure, and not wanting to say anymore, and so he walks back to his seat, and once he is sitting down Melinda once more takes his hand, something which he is extremely grateful for.

A while later the funeral is over and most of the guests have gone to a country club where the
reception is being held. As she had to go to the bathroom to change the bandage for her arm, Melinda is looking around for Tony, who she can't seem to find, but instead sees Richard and so she walks over to him.

"Parker, seen Tony?" Melinda asks.

"Wasn't he with you?" Richard asks, as that's what he assumed.

"He was, but I had to go to the bathroom and now I can't find him." Melinda admits, Richard being able to tell that she is concerned about that fact, but only because he knows Melinda so well.

"Sorry, I haven't seen him." Richard admits, growing concerned, "Maybe check outside, he could have went out there to get away from everyone." He suggests.

"That's a good idea." Melinda realises, before leaving, without another word.

A few minutes later Melinda is walking around the back of the club looking for Tony when she sees him sitting on a stone wall drinking straight out of a bottle of scotch and so she walks over to him.

"You know Aunt Peggy was right when she said that wouldn't help." Melinda points out, as she sits down next to Tony.

"You can't talk; drinking to avoid what you're feeling is your go to move." Tony tells her, "Or at least of three." He comments, knowing all to well what all three of them are.

"Your right, it is." Melinda confirms, "So I'm not going to tell you to stop, I'm just going to ask you to talk to me."

"How about I just pass you the bottle instead." Tony suggests, offering it to her, but Melinda shakes her head, as she is pretty sure that it would be a good idea for her to remain sober, "Your loss." Tony says, as he takes another drink and Melinda decides to try a different tactic.

"If you don't want to talk about what you are feeling then how about why you came out here." Melinda suggests.

"Someone complimented me on what I said today and I just had to get out of there." Tony admits, getting annoyed, "It wasn't even the truth! It was bullshit!" Tony reveals, and Melinda knows he is talking about what he said about his father, not his mother.

"You could have told the truth." Melinda comments.

"Yeah right." Tony says disbelieving, "No one would want to hear that, gotta give the people what they want." He says, sounding bitter.

"So, tell me." Melinda offers, "Tell me what you would have liked to say."

"You already know." Tony responds.

"Probably, but it might help you to actually say it." Melinda admits.

"Nah, this is helping enough." Tony says, taking another drink, and as he does Melinda gets an idea.

"Let's get out of here." Melinda suggests.
"I can't just leave." Tony says, looking at Melinda in surprise, as he would very much like to he is surprise that Melinda is the one suggesting it.

"Sure, you can." Melinda responds, "If you don't want to be here then let's go. The choice is yours." Melinda offers.

"Let's get out of here." Tony says, not even needing to think about it, as he jumps down from the wall, stumbling slightly.

"Let's go around so we aren't seen." Melinda says, watching Tony carefully to make sure he can walk straight, and the two of them start to walk around the building.

A few minutes later Melinda and Tony manage to make it to the front of the country club, and by some weird coincidence, Rhodey and Richard are out there, clearly looking for someone.

"Good you two found each other." Richard says, looking relieved, as when Melinda said she didn't know where Tony was he became worried, so he told Rhodey everything he knew and the two of them started to look for their friends.

"We're getting out of here. Do you two want to join?" Melinda asks, looking between Rhodey and Richard.

"Yep." Rhodey says, without needing to think about it.

"Of course." Richard says.

"Good, let's go." Melinda says, walking over to the car that they drove to the club in, and once there Melinda gets in the drivers seat, Tony gets in the passengers, while Rhodey and Richards get in the back, and barley waiting for the others to put on their seatbelts Melinda drives, or more specifically speeds, out of the gates.

As they speed out of the grounds Melinda, Rhodey and Richard are all thinking the same thing, that they're going to do whatever they have to do to help their friend, while Tony is wondering if he can make the pain stop by ignoring it or by using alcohol to numb it.
October 19th 1992

Months have passed since Howard and Maria died, and ever since then Melinda has been trying to spend more time with Tony, to try and help him, but with her work schedule it is rather difficult, though she has been doing her best.

It is early on a Monday morning, and Melinda and Phil are in the office of Nick Fury, who was named Director of S.H.I.E.L.D seven months earlier, something which both Melinda and Phil are very happy about. Assuming that Fury is going to assign them a mission the two friends, and partners, are just sitting together in comfortable silence.

"How are you doing, Phil?" Melinda asks her friend, breaking the silence as Phil's mother died less than a month earlier, and so while she has been supporting Tony she has also been doing everything she can to support Phil as well.

"It's hard, and hurts, I'm just taking it one day at a time." Phil admits.

"If you need anything, if there is anything I can do, just let me know." Melinda requests.

"I will, thanks May." Phil says, looking grateful, "How's Stark?" he asks curious, clearly wanting to get the subject off him.

"Not dealing, not really." Melinda admits, "He's throwing himself into Stark Industries, into creating to avoid what he's feeling." Melinda says, clearly concerned, and leaving out the fact that Tony is also drinking, a lot, as that's Tony's business not something that's hers to share.

"Oh." Phil says, not sure what to say to that, but before Melinda can respond, the door opens and Nick Fury walks in.

"Agent May, would you happen to know how sugar has been added into water that supplies the men's showers?" Fury asks curious as he walks over to his desk.

"No Sir." Melinda answers, keeping a straight face despite the fact that she knows exactly how that has happened.

"Really? Because it seems to have only effected the showers when some agents, including Agent Garrett, who have reportedly giving young female recruits a hard time, were showering." Fury says, completely believing that Melinda is the person who as behind this, he just needs her to admit it.

"Sounds to me like karmic justice…. Sir." Melinda comments.

"Is this why we are here?" Phil asks, wondering why he seems to keep getting in trouble for things
Melinda does, as even though he wasn't there when Melinda put sugar into the water there isn't a doubt in his mind that it was her.

"No." Fury says, realising that Melinda isn't going to admit that it was her, "I have a mission for you two." Fury says, grabbing two folders and throwing them across the table, at Melinda and Phil, both of whom take them and open them.

"This is a personnel file." Phil realises.

"His names Clint Barton, twenty-one." Fury explains, "Orphan, currently in the circus, and from all reports is the best marksmen in the world." He explains.

"You want us to recruit him." Melinda realises, and Fury nods, "Why us?" Melinda asks, questioning which is something which Phil wouldn't do.

"I believe you two have the best chance of getting through to him." Fury admits, looking between Melinda and Phil, "You leave in an hour. Don't let me down." He says, clearly dismissing them.

"Yes Sir." Melinda and Phil say together, and once they do they get up and head out of the room.

"Sugar in the water?" Phil asks Melinda asks, looking at her in surprise, once the door is closed behind them.

"You heard Fury, seems to me like it was well deserved." Melinda comments, looking at Phil.

"Of course, it was." Phil says, looking slightly amused, as he opens the folder, "Something tells me this Clint isn't going to be too happy to see us." He realises.

"Probably not." Melinda admits, suspecting that is why Fury is sending the two of them, "But we've got to try." She says, as the two friends continue to walk, both planning on grabbing a quick bite to eat before they have to leave.

A while later Melinda and Phil have both eaten, Melinda has changed into her flight suit, which is also her tactical outfit, while Phil is in his suit, and the two of them are in the cockpit of a small plan flying to where Fury believes they will find Clint Barton.

"Do you want me to read the file out loud?" Phil asks curious.

"Just give me the highlights." Melinda requests.

"Okay." Phil says, flicking through the papers as he quickly reads them, "Like Fury said, he's twenty-one, orphan. Abusive father, brother, ran away to the circus." Phil explains.

"Is that where he learnt to become a marksman?" Melinda curious.

"Yeah he also gained the nickname Hawkeye." Phil admits, "That's interesting." Phil says, noticing something.

"What?" Melinda asks curious.

"He doesn't use firearms, he uses a bow and arrows." Phil explains.

"Huh." Melinda says, pondering what that could mean, "Does he have a body count?" Melinda asks curious.
"Um... yeah." Phil says, checking, getting an interested look on his face.

"Phil, what is it?" Melinda asks, seeing the look out of the corner of her eye.

"He has a code." Phil realises.

"That could be helpful." Melinda realises.

"That's what I thought." Phil admits, and once he does he continues to explain the pieces of information that are in the file that will be useful for the two of them when they attempt to talk to this Clint Barton.

As they can't land directly where they believe they will find Clint Melinda lands the plane in a nearby field while she and Phil proceed on foot.

"You know if he's familiar with the area we may not find him unless he wants to be found." Phil points out.

"I know, that's why we should let him find us." Melinda reveals.

"Okay." Phil says, realising that that is probably the best way to go and so, once he nods, he and Melinda give up on all stealth and just walk around the forest.

After about half an hour of walking both Melinda and Phil are beginning to think that maybe their plan isn't working, but then an arrow flies over their heads and lands in front of them, so both Melinda and Phil turn around and see a young man in standing in a tree.

"Who are you?" Clint asks.

"Phil Coulson and Melinda May." Phil explains, "We're from the Strategic Homeland Intervention Enforcement and Logistic division and are here to see you Mr Barton."

"It's just Clint, and I've never heard of what you just said." Clint says, as he jumps down from the trees and lands in front of Phil and Melinda.

"We're S.H.I.E.L.D Agents, and we're here because we want you to be one too." Melinda explains.

"Why would I want that?" Clint says, still not being completely sure what S.H.I.E.L.D is, though he is pretty sure that joining whatever it is isn't something he wants.

"Because you can do what you've been doing in on a bigger scale." Phil explains.

"Keep talking." Clint says, looking between Melinda and Phil.

"S.H.I.E.L.D protects people, people who can't protect themselves, people who don't realise they need protection, whoever they are, if they need it we protect them." Melinda explains.

"We know what you've been doing. If you join us you'll be able to protect people who can't protect themselves." Phil says, knowing that will be something that Clint will like.

"Plus, you'll get plenty of scumbags to shoot arrows into." Melinda adds, and Clint smirks at that.

"You make a pretty good case." Clint says, "But I don't know."
"You also have people you can count on." Phil reveals, "May and I are going to train you, teach you how to be a S.H.I.E.L.D agent. So, if you say yes you won't be alone anymore, you'll be able to count on us, always." Phil reveals.

"Even if it takes you a while to see that." Melinda adds, and as she does Clint looks between Melinda and Phil.

Even though everything he has been through tells Clint that he can't trust people, his instincts are telling him that Phil and Melinda are different, a fact which he isn't quite sure is possible, and so after a few minutes of debating he finally says,

"Okay, I'll come with you, join this S.H.I.E.L.D." Clint says, hoping he doesn't regret it.

"Okay." Phil says, with a nod, "Do you have any stuff you want to bring with you?" Phil asks.

"Yeah, I'll be right back." Clint says, before hurrying away.

"Fury's going to be glad." Phil comments, once Clint is out of hearing range.

"You're getting ahead of yourself, Phil. He might not come back." Melinda informs him.

"I have faith, I think he will." Phil comments, and Melinda just shakes her head, as the two of them drift into silence.

For the next few minutes Melinda and Phil stand in silence and wait for Clint to come back. While Phil has complete faith that Clint is going to come back, Melinda is a bit more sceptical, but decides to wait for a while before she shares her opinion again.

About ten minutes after Clint left Melinda and Clint, when Melinda is trying to figure out how to bring up her suspicion to Phil, the two partners hear the sound of movement and they look to see Clint walking back towards them, carrying a single bag with his bow and a quiver.

"I've got everything, we can go." Clint says, looking between Melinda and Clint.

"Follow us." Phil says, and he turns and walks away, with Melinda and Clint walking behind them.

After a few minutes of walking Melinda, Clint and Phil arrive back at the plane that Melinda and Phil flew in. When they get to the plane Melinda heads straight to the cockpit, as Phil and Clint hang back a little bit.

"Wow." Clint mutters, keeping his voice low, but both Melinda and Phil hear him.

"If you want I can teach you to fly." Melinda informs Clint, as she sits down in the pilot's seat and starts to press the various buttons to make sure everything is alright for take-off.

"Maybe." Clint says, not sure if he'd be sticking around S.H.I.E.L.D long enough to learn to fly.

"You both should strap in." Melinda instructs, and once she does Phil sits and Clint both sit down in the jump seats that are in the back of the plane, leaving the co-pilots seat free.

Once Clint and Phil are strapped in Melinda takes off and starts to fly them back to S.H.I.E.L.D.

After a while of flying Melinda, Phil, and Clint arrive back at S.H.I.E.L.D where Melinda and Phil are only a little bit surprised to find Fury waiting for them.
"Clint, this is Director of S.H.I.E.L.D Nick Fury." Phil introduces as the group of three walk towards the Director of S.H.I.E.L.D.

"Welcome to S.H.I.E.L.D Mr Barton." Fury says, as he sticks out his hand for Clint to shake, something which he does.

"Thanks." Clint says, as he looks around, still not sure how long he is going to stay.

"Agents Coulson and May will take you to medical where you will undergo a physical and once that is done, they'll start your input assessments." Fury instructs, looking between Melinda and Phil, noticing Melinda smirk, and knowing exactly the reason for that.

"Okay." Clint says, looking hesitant.

"Follow us." Phil once more says, and once again he starts to lead the way.

A while later Clint has undertaken his medical exam, and he, Melinda, and Phil have gone to one of the gyms Melinda and Phil having decided to test Clint's physical skills before the other criteria that needs to be addressed.

"Where's May?" Clint asks, as he walks to the gym and realises that Melinda isn't there.

"Getting changed, she'll be right here." Phil explains, knowing that what is about to happen is going to be very interesting. "May's going to test your fighting abilities, and then you're going to demonstrate your marksmen abilities." Phil explains.

"Okay." Clint says, looking amused at the chance to show off his marksmanship, "What are you going to do?" Clint asks curious.

"I'm going to test you on some other things tomorrow." Phil reveals, being pretty sure that Clint is going to need a rest after Melinda is done with him.

"Okay." Clint says, as Melinda walks into the gym wearing her work out clothes, and no shoes.

"Barton, on the mats." Melinda instructs, as she heads straight to them.

"Good luck." Phil says, heading over to somewhere he can sit down, leading Clint to wonder why he is going to need good luck, as he walks over to Melinda who is standing in the middle of the mats.

"So, you're going to what, fight me?" Clint asks, once he is close enough to Melinda.

"No, you're gonna try to fight me." Melinda informs him.

"Try? I don't know May, I'm pretty good fighter if I do say so myself." Clint admits.

"Give it your best shot." Melinda says, fighting the urge to smirk.

"Okay." Clint says, being pretty sure he is missing something, and realising that he has nothing to loose he goes to throw a punch at Melinda but before his fist even gets close to Melinda his legs get knocked out from under him as Melinda has swiped out and knocked him over.

"First rule of being a S.H.I.E.L.D agent, don't get cocky." Melinda says, looking at Clint, sticking out her hand to help him stand up.
"Got it." Clint says, taking Melinda's hand so that she can help him back onto his feat.

Once Clint is back on his feet he and Melinda exchange looks and they start to fight, this time it is an actual fight, but it still isn't long before Clint is on the mats again.

"Not bad." Melinda says, smirking at Clint.

"You're better." Clint says, jumping back to his feet, "But I'm gonna keep trying." He admits.

"That's what I like to see." Melinda admits, and once more she and Clint begin to spar, as Phil watches on amused from where he is sitting, making a note of how many times Clint gets knocked to the ground.

November 7th 1992

A little over two weeks has passed since Melinda and Phil recruited Clint, and to no ones surprise Fury has named both Phil and Melinda to be Clint's Supervising Officers.

A she thought it would help Clint spend time around more people Melinda, Phil, and Clint are arriving at a Stark property where they are going to spend some time with Tony, Richard, Rhodey, and Mary.

"What is this place?" Clint asks confused, as he Melinda, and Phil get out of the car that Melinda has driven a little erratically.

"A Friends place." Melinda answers as they get to the front door and Melinda just opens it and walks in, causing Clint to look at Phil.

"You'll see." Phil explains, and the two of them follow Melinda inside.

Walking into the house Phil and Clint see Melinda hugging Tony.

"Holy Crap." Clint mutters, with a shocked look on his face, as Melinda and Tony break apart and Clint recognizes Tony.

"Yep, he's who you think he is." Phil confirms, having heard what Clint said.

"Tony, Parker, Rhodes, Mary, this is Clint Barton, he's just started to work with us." Melinda introduces, "Clint this is Tony Stark, Richard Parker, Mary Fitzpatrick, and James Rhodes." Melinda introduces.

"Wow, nice to meet you all." Clint explains, "You couldn't have warned me?" Clint says, looking at Melinda.

"Nah, I knew the look on your face was going to be great so I wanted to see it." Melinda admits, with a smirk, causing Clint to roll his eyes.

"Guys, before things get out of control and we introduce Clint to what we do together I have an announcement." Richard reveals.

"Ohh, please tell me that you've finally got your head out of your ass and asked Mary out." Tony says, hoping the answer is yes.

"A couple of months ago, but yeah." Mary says, looking amused.

"Finally!" Melinda says, looking amused, "I'm happy for you both." Melinda says, looking
between them.

"This deserves a toast." Rhodey says.

"I'll go get the good stuff." Melinda says, before walking away.

"Shouldn't it be you saying that?" Phil asks, looking at Tony.

"Nah, Mel knows where the good stuff is." Tony reveals, to the amusement of everyone else, including Clint who is starting to understand the dynamics between everyone a bit more.

About a minute or so later Melinda returns with an expensive bottle of scotch and seven glasses, which she hands out to everyone and then pours scotch into each of them.

"To Richard and Mary, I think I speak for all of us, except maybe Clint, when I say it's about damn time." Melinda says, with a grin, as she raises her glass.

"Here, here." Tony, Phil, and Rhodey both say and they all drink the scotch Melinda poured.

Once everyone has drunk their scotch, which is probably the best scotch Clint has ever drunk, the group of seven start to play poker together, as they continue to drink and start to know Clint a bit better, making him feel like he is becoming one of the gang.

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Hours later, Melinda wakes up, alone in the bed that Tony was in with her when she fell asleep, as those two are still undertaking their friends with benefit relationship while refusing to admit that, or at least not seeing that, it is more than that, and so, not being able to help her concern, Melinda puts on underwear and the ACDC shirt Tony was wearing and heads out of the room.

Suspecting she knows exactly where to find her friend Melinda heads to the workshop where, just like she suspected she would, she finds Tony, who is shirtless, though wearing jeans, working on something electrical, that Melinda can't identify.

"Tony, you do know it's four o'clock in the morning, don't you?" Melinda asks, walking over to him.

"No, but I figured it was somewhere around there." Tony admits, as Melinda leans against the table, right next to him, "I couldn't sleep."

"I figured." Melinda admits.

"You found my shirt." Tony realises, looking Melinda up and down, "It looks better on you." He admits.

"It's comfortable, you're not getting it back." Melinda reveals.

"Wouldn't be the first time." Tony says, as Melinda has a habit of stealing clothes from people.

"Do you want to talk about why you couldn't sleep?" Melinda asks.

"Nope." Tony says, as the truth is he was thinking about his Mom and the last time he talked to her about.

"What about what you're building, do you want to talk about that?" Melinda asks curious, and the second she does Tony gets a grin on his face, looking excited.
"It's hardware, basic at the moment, but eventually if I can get the hardware and programming right it's gonna become a natural-language user interface computer system." Tony explains, causing Melinda to look amazed.

"Is that even possible?" Melinda asks, as even with S.H.I.E.L.D she hasn't heard of something like that.

"I'll make it possible." Tony says, smiling at Melinda, "Once I get it right it's going to help me create a lot of other things, but the interface computer system will be just for me." He explains.

"That's great Tony." Melinda says, being able to tell how excited he is, and she is truly glad to see that.

"I already have a name picked out for when it finally works." Tony reveals, and Melinda gives him a look, "Just A Rather Very Intelligent System, or….

"JARVIS." Melinda realises.

"Jarvis." Tony confirms, a little bit of fondness in his voice and Melinda realises that in a way Tony is doing this to get back one of the things that he has lost.

"It sounds perfect, Tony." Melinda informs him.

"It will be." Tony says, turning back to his work, "I'm probably going to be working on this for the next few hours, but there is no reason for you to stay up."

"I'm good here." Melinda says as she pulls a chair over and sits next to Tony.

"Your choice." Tony says, and as he goes back to what he was doing Melinda just watches, as the two of them drift into a comfortable silence, both liking just being in each other's presence.
Chapter 5

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Sorry that there's been no updates in a few days, I've had no internet. In fact, I am updating this by using my phone as a hot spot.

June 26th 1993

Ever since Melinda and Phil recruited Clint the three of them have become good friends, and Clint has also become friends with Tony, Rhodey, Richard, and Mary, who he has spent a bit of time with.

As Melinda and Phil are Clint’s supervising officers the three of them have completed ever missions, since Clint was recruited, together, and just like she offered Melinda has taught Clint to fly, but as Clint had to attend a talk that all new S.H.I.E.L.D agents have to be present at Melinda and Phil are on a mission alone; a mission investigating a facility that is reportedly doing human experiments, to see what they can find.

"Looks like this place has been abandoned." Phil comments as he and Melinda, both having weapons drawn, as this seemed like an occasion where Melinda might need a weapon, are searching through the corridors of the facility.

"Maybe." Melinda admits, as it does seem like that, "Let's spread out." Melinda suggests, and that's exactly what they do.

For the next few minutes Melinda makes her way through the building, looking for any signs, and as she does she realise that Phil is right, the place has been abandoned, and it seems like in a hurry. As she moves Melinda hears sound of movement, so she quickly turns pointing her gun at where the sound come from.

"Please don't hurt me!" A voice says, sounding terrified, and as does Melinda realise that it is a child, a little girl with long blond hair and blue eyes.

"It's okay, I'm not going to hurt you." Melinda says, holstering her gun, doing so because she won't traumatise a child, not if she can avoid it, "Hi, I'm Melinda." Melinda says, taking a step forward, towards the girl, trying to make herself seem as less threatening as possible, and as she does she sees the girl move bag and grab hold of the metal bar of the cart she is trying to hide behind, clearly trying to get away and make herself seem as small as possible, "What's your name?" Melinda asks, in a kind voice, not moving forward.

"Bobbi…." The girl answers, still sounding afraid, so much so that she is stuttering, "Bobbi Morse." She answers.

"Well hi Bobbi, are you here alone?" Melinda asks, squatting down, so that she is closer to Bobbi's height, keeping her voice calm as she notices Phil, but she gives him a look telling him to stay back, as she doesn't want to overwhelm Bobbi, and Bobbi nods,

"They left, they all left." Bobbi says sniffling slightly.
"Okay, you're being really brave right now Bobbi." Melinda says, doing her best to be reassuring, "Do you mind if I come closer to you?"

"No! Stay back! I don't want to hurt you!" Bobbi says, clearly afraid and as she does Melinda sees her bend the metal bar she is holding onto with her bare hands, "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to do that!" Bobbi explains, looking afraid of what she did.

"It's okay, Bobbi." Melinda says, doing her best to hide her surprise, "Do you know how you did that?"

"They did it to me!" Bobbi says, sounding upset, "People took me, hurt my parents, hurt me! Made it so I could that." Bobbi explains, and as she does Melinda realises that whoever was here were experimenting on children, a thought that horrifies her as well as fills her with anger, but she does her best to hide that,

"I'm sorry that happened to you Bobbi." Melinda says, "But you know I don't think you'll hurt me, not if you don't want to." Melinda says, moving forward a little bit more, "I'm going to stick out my hand, do you think you could take it?"

"I don't want to hurt you." Bobbi explains, still looking terrified.

"You won't, take my hand." Melinda tells the girl, moving a little bit forward, and sticking her hand out to Bobbi.

Clearly worried, and still afraid, Bobbi hesitantly reaches out and takes Melinda's hand.

"That's great Bobbi, it's okay, I've got you." Melinda says, pulling Bobbi up to her feat, as she too stands, realising that while Bobbi does have a strong grip the young girl isn't hurting her.

The second Bobbi is standing and is close to Melinda the little girl lets go of Melinda's hand, and just hugs her, tightly, and even though it does hurt a little it's nothing Melinda can't handle, and as she hugs Melinda she starts to cry.

"It's okay, Bobbi, it's okay." Melinda says, as she returns the hug, being pretty sure that this is the first kindness the girl has been shown in a while, looking over to Phil as she does who is looking at his partner with a look of pride.

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Hours later Melinda and Phil arrive back at the S.H.I.E.L.D facility, Melinda carrying Bobbi who hasn't wanted to let go of Melinda.

"May, the doctors have to run some tests." Phil says, looking between Melinda and Bobbi.

"No, no please, please don't. Don't hurt me." Bobbi says, sounding afraid, holding on Melinda tighter, but still not tight enough to hurt her.

"I won't let anyone hurt you, I promise, but the doctors have to make sure you're okay." Melinda explains., "I'll stay with you." Melinda assures Bobbi looking down at her.

"Promise?" Bobbi asks, looking up at Melinda.

"Promise." Melinda assures the young girl, with a comforting smile, "Will you let the doctors make sure you're okay?" Melinda asks.

"Okay." Bobbi says, sounding hesitant, and once she does Melinda takes Bobbi to the medical
area, sticking to her promise and not moving further away from the young girl than she has to.

Five days Later

Five days have passed since Melinda and Phil found Bobbi and ever since then Melinda has barely been away from the young girl, just like she promised, partly because it seems like Melinda is the only person Bobbi trusts, though she does seem to have some level of trust in Phil and Clint, though it is more than clear that she doesn't trust anywhere near as much as Melinda.

From the tests that were ran on Bobbi during the first night, and things she has said in her time at S.H.I.E.L.D it has been discovered that Bobbi's parents, and brother, were killed and through people performing experiments on Bobbi she has developed enhanced strength, enhanced agility, and her healing ability has also been enhanced.

It is one of the rare occasions in the past five days where Melinda has been away from Bobbi and she is in Fury's office, arguing with him.

"No, no way." Melinda tells Fury.

"There aren't many choices, May." Fury tells her, "Any potential foster families will have to be informed of Bobbi's abilities, and she has no family." He reminds Melinda, "That leaves a group home, but again, with her abilities we're struggling to find one that will take her." Fury explains, "It looks like a juvenile facility may be her only option." He says, not mentioning that a S.H.I.E.L.D facility might be the other option.

"That's not an option!" Melinda argues, "Nick, she's already terrified of her abilities, if you lock her up she's going to shut down completely, or maybe even lash out." Melinda says, not wanting that for Bobbi.

"If you have another suggestion Agent May I'd love to hear it." Fury informs Melinda.

"Let her come home with me. I'll foster her, and in a year, when I can, I'll adopt her." Melinda explains.

"You've already looked into the legal requirements." Fury realises.

"I have." Melinda confirms, "Nick, I can do this, I want to do this." Melinda says, leading out the fact that she feels like she has to.

"It's not a good idea, Melinda." Fury says, it being one of the rare times that he's used her first name.

"I think it is." Melinda says, "Bobbi's six years old and she's been through hell. She's lost everything, everyone she loves, let me give her something good, something stable, and as close to a normal life as possible." Melinda explains, "Don't stop me, Nick, let me do this." She requests.

"Okay." Fury says, sounding reluctant but he recognizes that Melinda is going to find a way to take in Bobbi no matter what he says or does, "But I still don't think this is a good idea." He admits.

"Noted." Melinda says.

"You can take her home today. I'll inform those who need to know." Fury says.

"Yes Sir." Melinda responds.
"Dismissed Agent May." Fury says, and Melinda heads out of the room, feeling very glad about what just happened.

Hours later Melinda and Bobbi are both at Melinda's place, and even though it is still relatively early Bobbi has fallen asleep in Melinda's spare room, a room that will now be Bobbi. As she knows Bobbi might be having difficult in another new place for the first time Melinda is doing what she has done several times, and what she will continue to do, checking on her, making sure she is okay and sleeping.

As she checks on Bobbi Melinda hears a knock on the door and as she knows it is either her parents, or Tony, Melinda quietly leaves Bobbi's room, closing the door behind her and heads to the front door.

Looking through the peep hole, something she normally wouldn't do, but she has a kid in the house, Melinda sees that it is her parents on the other side and so she opens the door and lets them in.

"Hi Dad, Mom, come in." Melinda greets as she lets her parents into the apartment.

"Millie, it's good to see you." William greets, hugging his daughter and kissing her on the cheek.

"Good to see you too, Dad." Melinda responds, "Mom." She says, with a nod.

"Your call was extremely cryptic, what's going on?" Lian asks her daughter.

"Let's sit down." Melinda says, leading her parents over to the couch, and once they are there Lian and William sit down on the couch while Melinda sits on an armchair nearby.

"Tell us Melinda, what's so important that you called us here?" Lian asks her daughter, as they don't talk much.

"Five days ago, Phil and I were on a mission together." Melinda explains, her parents knowing who Phil is, "I can't go into details." Melinda admits, and neither of her parents' question that, "But during the mission we found a six-year-old girl, she had been experimented on, and gained abilities because of these experiments." Melinda explains, "I've taken her in, pending formal adoption." Melinda says, knowing that when it gets closer to the end of the year trial period she'll ask Bobbi if she even wants to be adopted, as while it is what she would like to do the choice is up to Bobbi.

"Tell us Melinda, what's so important that you called us here?" Lian asks her daughter, as they don't talk much.

"Thanks Dad."

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Lian asks, clearly doubting that it is.

"Yes, I do." Melinda confirms, not at all surprised that her mother doesn't think it's a good idea.

"You really don't know what you're getting yourself into and the fact that this girl has powers only makes things more complicated, will make things more difficult." Lian informs her daughter, "you really should think this through."

"I know Bobbi's power could make things complicated, but I don't care." Melinda informs her mother, "When I look at her I see a scared little girl who I just want to protect and give a home to, so that's exactly what I'm going to do." Melinda reveals, "I already care about her, Mother, and can't imagine her growing up with anyone else." Melinda admits, "So I'm going to do everything in my power to give her a safe home, to make sure she knows she always has a home, and is loved,
"and if you can't get on board with that…." Melinda starts to say, clearly talking passionately, like this is something important to her.

"I can." Lian says, cutting off her daughter.

"Good." Melinda says, being glad about that.

"Do you have tea Millie? I would hope so if you invited us over here." William says, wanting to defuse the tension.

"Sure Dad." Melinda says, getting up and heading to the kitchen to get her father what he asked for, wanting to avoid fighting with her mother.

About an hour and a half later Melinda's parents have left, and Melinda is drinking tea as she goes over some of the paperwork she has on fostering and adoption law, as she wants to be as prepared as possible.

As she reads Melinda hears another knock on the door and so she puts down what she is reading, on the table under some other papers, and heads to the door. This time, as she has no doubt who it is because she recognizes the knock, Melinda doesn't bother to look through the peep hole instead she just opens the door.

"Hey Tony." Melinda says, greeting her friend, with a hug, looking glad to see him.

"Hey." Tony says, returning the hug, "What's going on, Mel?" Tony asks, as they break apart and Melinda closes the door behind them.

"We should sit down." Melinda says, and with a confused look on his face, Tony and Melinda head to the couch and sit down, "Five days ago Phil and I were on a mission." Melinda reveals.

"Wait, are you actually telling me mission details?" Tony asks, looking shocked.

"Some of them, yeah." Melinda confirms, "We were investigating a building where we had evidence that people were using science in the worst way possible."

"What do you mean?" Tony asks, as he could thing of several ways that fit that description.

"They were experimenting on people, on children." Melinda explains.

"That's horrible." Tony says, looking horrified, "Please say you arrested them, or did something to them."

"We're still looking for the people behind the experiments." Melinda admits, "When we were investigating the building we found one of the victims, a six-year-old girl." She explains.

"Is she okay?" Tony asks, not completely sure why Melinda is telling him this.

"Physically, yes, but her entire family have been killed and these experiments have given her abilities." Melinda explains.

"What kind of abilities?" Tony asks, looking interested.

"Enhanced strength, enhanced agility, and her healing ability has also been enhanced." Melinda explains.
"That sounds like..." Tony starts to say.

"I know." Melinda finishes, not needing Tony to finish what he was going to say. "That's probably what they were going for."

"Just another part of dear old dad's legacy." Tony says, sounding bitter.

"No, it's not." Melinda says, "I'm the last person to defend your Dad, but he didn't do this Tony. He created something, it's other people who have chosen to create something similar, or maybe it's nothing like it, and use it for something horrible." Melinda explains.

"Why are you telling me this, Mel?" Tony asks, not seeing the reason why Melinda would tell him this, apart from the possible connection to his father, but he doesn't think that's enough for Melinda to break her biggest rule.

"Because that little girl, Bobbi, who was experimented on is asleep in my spare room." Melinda explains, "I've taken her in, I'm fostering her and when I legally can I'm going to adopt her, if that's okay with her." Melinda explains, to Tony's shock.

"You took her in?" Tony asks, looking at Melinda in complete shock.

"I found her Tony, she was so afraid, so alone, and once I assured her she wouldn't hurt me she's clung to me." Melinda explains, and as she does Tony can hear the emotion in her voice, "I can't let her go to foster care or a juvenile facility after that." Melinda admits, "I want to do whatever I can for her, I want to give her a normal life, a family. I want to make sure she always knows she is loved, and safe, and I know I'm only one person, but...."

"Hey, don't go there." Tony says, reaching out and taking Melinda's hand, "You're going to be a great Mom to her, and a really hot one." Tony says, causing Melinda to roll his eyes, "Don't ever doubt that. As we both know one parent can be a thousand times better than two."

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, looking grateful, and the two of them drift into silence.

For a few minutes Melinda and Tony sit in silence, Tony still holding Melinda's hand, until the silence is broken by a scream, and so Melinda gets up and runs into Bobbi's room, with Tony right behind her.

When Melinda and Tony get to Bobbi's room it is clear that she is having a nightmare and so Melinda hurries over to Bobbi's bed while Tony stays back at the door, not sure what to do.

"Bobbi, it's okay, you're safe, wake up." Melinda says, as she climbs onto the bed and sits down next to Bobbi, as she gently shakes her.

Seconds after Melinda gently shakes Bobbi she wakes up, bolting upright with a look of terror on her face.

"Bobbi, you're okay, you're safe." Melinda assures the young girl.

"Melinda...?" Bobbi asks, looking confused.

"Yeah, I'm here, you're okay." Melinda assures her and realising what is going on Bobbi just turns and hugs Melinda, as she starts to cry, "I've got you, it's okay." Melinda says, running her hand through Bobbi's hair, as she hums, trying to reassure her.

At the doorway Tony is watching on with a smile on his face, knowing, without a doubt, that what
he said was right and Melinda is going to be an incredible mother. So, because he doesn't want to intrude, nor does he want to scare Bobbi because she doesn't know him, he says out of the room, closing the door slightly as he goes.

(Line break)

About forty-five minutes later Melinda walks back into the living room, where she finds Tony hanging up his phone.

"Hey, how's Bobbi?" Tony asks, looking at Melinda, showing genuine interest.

"Asleep again, but I don't know how long that's going to last." Melinda admits as she walks over and sits down next to Tony, "I feel so useless, I just want to help her."

"Mel, you are." Tony assures her, "I just saw that for myself." He reveals, and as he does, "Here." He says, handing Melinda over a piece of paper.

"What's this?" Melinda asks, looking confused.

"I made a few phone calls. It's the best family lawyer in the country, they're expecting your call, and don't worry about how much it will cost, I'm going to cover it." Tony reveals.

"Tony, you don't have to do that." Melinda says, looking amazed.

"Yeah, I do. Mel, you're the best thing that little girl has going for her right now, so if there is anything I can do to help the two of you become a family I'm going to do it." Tony reveals.

"Thank you, Tony." Melinda says, not sure if three simple words are enough.

"I thought about buying you a house, but I figured you'd kill me." Tony says trying to defuse the tension as while he does believe his words he is still going to do that, when he finds the perfect place of course.

"Trust that instinct." Melinda tells Tony, with an amused look on her face.

"Sure, I will." Tony says, and if Melinda wasn't as tired as she is she would realise that he is lying to her.

"You know I always think you look great, but you look like tired, Mel." Tony tells his friend.

"I am." Melinda admits, "It's been a long week." She admits.

"Yeah, I bet it has been." Tony says, "Go get some rest, Mel."

"I will, but I think there is a conversation we need to have first." Melinda admits.

"Huh, guess there is." Tony realises, "We going to stop?" he asks, as he and Melinda have always agreed that they will stop the benefits part of their friends with benefit relationship whenever one of them wants to, without hard feelings.

"No." Melinda responds, knowing that she doesn't want to, "But I don't want Bobbi to know, it will be too confusing and she's my priority now."

"As she should be." Tony says, as he knows he was never his father's priority, so the truth is he would never let himself be the reason that Bobbi isn't Melinda's, "We'll figure things out, we always do. You'll be a great Mom, Mel, and I'll do anything I can to help… if you'd let me."
"You don't like being around kids." Melinda says, knowing that.

"I'm not good with them." Tony corrects, "But for your daughter I'll do my best." Tony informs his friend.

"You have a great heart, Tony, even if you don't show it often." Melinda says.

"Don't spread it around, I have a reputation." Tony says, causing Melinda to laugh, and yawn, at the same time, "Okay, you need sleep." Tony tells Melinda, "I'll sleep on the couch." He offers.

"The couch isn't that comfortable." Melinda points out.

"Not the worst place I've slept." Tony says, saying what both he and Melinda know, "It's for the best."

"Okay. I'll see you in the morning." Melinda says, before getting up and heading into her bedroom. After Melinda leaves the kitchen Tony makes himself comfortable on the couch and before long everyone in Melinda's apartment are fast asleep.
A few hours after she went to bed Melinda wakes up, and even though she only got a few hours of sleep she wakes feeling well rested. Once she is awake Melinda doesn't get up, she just lays in her bed, and as she does she realises that she can smell good food, something which she is pretty sure she has never woken up to in her apartment and so she gets up and heads out to the kitchen.

When Melinda walks into the kitchen she finds Tony taking all kinds of breakfast food out of take away containers and putting them onto plates.

"You went out and got breakfast." Melinda says, looking slightly surprised, as she walks towards Tony.

"Well yeah, I wasn't going to let Bobbi get food poisoning on her first morning with you." Tony explains.

"You know for the record you can't cook either." Melinda informs her friend.

"I know, why do you think I went and brought food." Tony comments, causing Melinda to shake her head.

"It looks like you got every possible breakfast food there is." Melinda says, looking around.

"I wasn't sure what Bobbi likes, and I also wasn't sure if her abilities caused her to need to eat more." Tony says, as his father talked about Steve Rogers's appetite increasing after he was given the super soldier serum, so he can't help but wonder if it would be the same for Bobbi.

"I'm not completely sure what she likes either, she's eaten anything she was offered the last few days." Melinda admits, "And yeah, the Doctors at S.H.I.E.L.D who examined her said her metabolic rate has increase, and the more she uses her powers the more food she will need." Melinda explains, knowing for a fact that Tony will understand the science a hell of a lot more than she will.

"I'll keep that in mind." Tony says, "Does Bobbi have control of her powers?" Tony asks curious.

"Some, not a lot." Melinda admits, as Tony gets an idea, "Why?" she asks curious.

"I think I might have an idea how to help her get a bit more control, or at least understand how to control them a bit, I'll let you know if the idea pans out." Tony says, looking distracted by what he is thinking, which is a look Melinda has seen on Tony's face a million times, so she knows what it means.

"Okay." Melinda says, trusting him completely, "I was…” Melinda starts to say, but before she can say anymore both she and Tony hear,

"Melinda?" And Melinda turns to see Bobbi standing partly inside her room and partly out of it.
"Good morning Bobbi." Melinda says, and she realises that Bobbi looks hesitant, "It's okay you can come out." She says, and Bobbi still looks hesitant, and so Melinda walks over to her, and squats down next to her, while giving Tony a signal to say walk out from behind the bench, but not get too close, which is exactly what he does, "Bobbi, this is Tony." Melinda introduces, "He's a really good friend of mine. I've known him since I was a little older than you, he won't hurt you." Melinda promises.

"Hi Bobbi, it's really nice to meet you." Tony says, honestly having no clue if he is saying the right thing.

"Hi." Bobbi says, looking nervous.

"You know Tony brought us breakfast, are you hungry?" Melinda asks curious.

"A little…" Bobbi answers, strutting slightly.

"Well, what would you like?" Tony asks Bobbi, wanting to show her that she has no reason to be afraid of him, but he has no idea how to do that, "I got bacon, and eggs, and waffles, and pancakes, and toast, and sausages, and fruit." Tony says, looking at all the food, trying to make sure he doesn't forget anything.

"Pancakes… please." Bobbi says, in a quiet voice.

"Good choice." Tony says, with an approving nod, "We have bird shape or star shapes, which would you like?" Tony asks curious, as when he was buying breakfast he mentioned that he was buying it for a child so the pancakes were made into different shapes.

"Birds…. I like birds…” Bobbi says.

"Birds, you've got it Little Bird." Tony says, and the second he calls Bobbi Little Bird she grins and looks a lot less afraid.

"Is there syrup?" Bobbi asks, walking over to Tony.

"Yep, different kinds too." Tony says, walking back over to the counter.

"Wow." Bobbi says, looking amazed, like she just realised how much food there is, as Melinda stands up, with a smile on her face, feeling like things went a lot better than she was expecting, "Melinda, there's chocolate syrup!" Bobbi says, looking excited, from the chair she has climbed up onto.

"So, there is." Melinda says, as she walks over to join Bobbi and Tony with what is going to be a very filling breakfast.

A little while later Melinda, Tony and Bobbi have eaten a lot of the breakfast Tony brought, though both Melinda and Tony know that the reason that so much of the food has been eaten is because of Bobbi's enhanced metabolism.

During breakfast it has been clear that Bobbi is still hesitant around Tony, but Melinda realises that she is quickly warming up to him, something which doesn't surprise her.

"Can I have more orange juice?" Bobbi asks Melinda.

"Of course." Melinda says, pouring her a bit more, "Are you still hungry?" Melinda asks, as she
pours the drink.

"No." Bobbi answers, "Thank you for breakfast, Tony." Bobbi says, looking at him.

"You're very welcome." Tony tells her, as Bobbi drinks some of the juice that Melinda poured her, "What's the plan for today?" he asks, looking at Melinda, knowing that she would have figured that out already.

"Well, Bobbi doesn't have many things, so I thought we could go shopping, if that's okay with you." Melinda says, looking at Bobbi.

"You mean with people… that I could hurt?" Bobbi asks, looking nervous.

"You won't hurt anyone Bobbi, I'll be with you the whole time." Melinda promises.

"Tony too?" Bobbi asks, looking at him, it being clear that she wants him there, and as she does Melinda looks at Tony too.

"Yeah, I guess I could come." Tony says, honestly having no interest in going shopping, but Bobbi clearly wants him too, so he can't say no to that.

"Great." Melinda says, resisting the urge to smirk as she is pretty sure at this point, because of what Bobbi means to her, she could ask Tony for anything she she'd get it, "Do you want to go wash up and get ready?" Melinda asks Bobbi.

"Okay." Bobbi says, jumping down from her chair, and running to her bedroom.

"Less than an hour, is that the quickest you've ever been charmed by a girl?" Melinda asks curious, with a teasing tone.

"Nah, I think that record belongs to you." Tony says, causing Melinda to laugh.

"Do you want to use the bathroom first while I clean up." Melinda suggests.

"Nah, I'll clean up." Tony comments, and Melinda gives him a shocked look, "Yeah, I'm never going to offer to clean up again, so you might as well take advantage of it."

"Okay." Melinda says, "Just listen for Bobbi, make sure she's okay." Melinda requests.

"Of course." Tony says, and with a nod Melinda heads into the bathroom while Tony gets started on cleaning up.

**July 10th 1993**

Ever since Bobbi moved in with Melinda has been off work while the two of them get used to their new circumstances. Tony, Clint, Coulson, and Melinda's parents have all spent time with Melinda and Bobbi, but for the most part Melinda and Bobbi have been alone as they get used to their new situation. It is a Saturday afternoon and Melinda and Bobbi are in the living room of Melinda's apparent, waiting for Richard, Rhodey and Mary, who Bobbi hasn't met yet, along with Tony, to arrive.

"Who's going to be here?" Bobbi asks curious, looking nervous.

"My friends, Richard, James, and Mary." Melinda explains, "They're really nice; and they're looking forward to meeting you." She explains, as she has called Richard, Rhodey, and Mary about
her taking in a kid, and Tony explained the more sensitive details to them, because she couldn't
over the phone.

"Okay." Bobbi says, looking nervous, "Tony will be here too, right?" Bobbi asks, looking at
Melinda, as they both hear a knock the door.

"Yep, that will be him." Melinda says, standing up.

"How did you know?" Bobbi asks, looking surprised.

"I recognize his knock." Melinda explains, as she heads to the door, and opens it to let Tony in.

"Hey." Tony greats, "Can you hold the door open." Tony requests.

"Okay." Melinda says, side stepping a little so that she can open the door fully, and as she does
Tony leaves her site, and then a few seconds later returns to view carrying a large object, that is
covered in plastic, "Tony, what is this?" Melinda asks.

"You'll see in a second." Tony says, putting the object down.

"Hi Tony." Bobbi says, with a grin, looking less afraid than she has in the past.

"Hey Little Bird." Tony says, before heading back out of the apartment, and returning with a very
large, what looks like, stuffed toy in the shape of a bird, a mockingbird, Melinda thinks.

"Is that everything?" Melinda asks.

"Yep." Tony says, and Melinda closes the door.

"What is all this, Tony?" Melinda asks curious, as she walks over to him.

"Well this, is for you." Tony says, handing the toy, that is about half the size of Bobbi, to her.

"A bird." Bobbi says, looking amazed, taking the toy, hesitantly as it is clear to Melinda that she
doesn't want to accidently destroy it.

"Yep, a Mockingbird." Tony tells Bobbi and Melinda, "And you know there is something very
special about that toy."

"There is?" Bobbi asks, looking interested, and the truth is that Melinda is very interested too.

"Yep, you can squeeze it as hard as you want, or hit it, and it won't be destroyed." Tony explains,
having used the S.H.I. . reports Melinda gave him, and some of his father's old notes on project
rebirth, which he actually couldn't find very many off, to create a soft toy that Bobbi couldn't
destroy.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, looking glad, like she can't quiet believe what Tony is saying.

"Yep, give it a try." Tony says, giving her an encouraging look, and feeling worried Bobbi tries to
squeeze the toy as tight as she can, but nothing happens, it doesn't break, or get damaged in
anyway.

"Wow." Bobbi says, looking amazed, "Thank you, Tony." she says, before hugging him, to the
surprise of both Melinda and Tony.

"You're very welcome, Little Bird." Tony says, as he returns the hug, realising that it is a bit tighter
than what he would expect a hug to be, but it's not hard enough to hurt him, and once they break apart Melinda mouths 'thank you' to Tony as Bobbi has destroyed several stuffed animals in the past week, so it would mean a lot to her to have one that she couldn't accidently destroy.

"What's this?" Melinda asks curious, walking over to the other object Tony carried in.

"A punching bag, and gloves." Tony answers.

"I'm assuming they're not regular ones." Melinda assumes.

"They are. They just have sensors over them so that Bobbi's strength, and the amount of force she exhibits can be further tested and understood." Tony explains, "Hopefully it will help you understand your abilities a bit more." Tony says, looking at Bobbi, "Us to." He adds, looking at Melinda.

"Thank you." Melinda says, looking at Tony grateful, and knowing that building things to help them is how Tony shows he cares.

"No need to thank me, Mel, if it helps that's what matters." Tony explains, and as he does there is a knock on the door.

"Do you want to move this to the corner, we'll set it up later." Melinda says, looking at Tony.

"Sure." Tony says, as Melinda heads to the door, "Do you want to help me?" Tony asks, looking at Bobbi, knowing what Bobbi can be like around new people and so he wants to distract her a little.

"Sure." Bobbi says, as she gently puts her toy down on the couch and walks over to Tony and together the two of them pick up the punching bag and move it to the corner as Melinda opens the door and lets Rhodey, Richard, and Mary into the apartment.

As Bobbi turns and sees strange people in the apartment she looks afraid and tries to hide behind Tony.

"It's okay, Little Bird, they won't hurt you." Tony assures her, having no idea how to reassure a scared kid whose been through hell.

"Tony's right Bobbi, these are our friends that I was telling you about." Melinda says, walking over and squatting down next to Bobbi, "That's Richard, that's James, and that's Mary." Melinda introduces pointing to each of them as introduces them, "Can you say hello?" Melinda asks, "It's okay." Melinda says, with an encouraging nod.

"Hi." Bobbi says, sounding nervous.

"Hi Bobbi, it's really nice to meet you." Rhodey says.

"Hi." Richard says, with a kind wave.

"Hey Sweetheart." Mary greats.

"You know, I think Mary, Richard, and James would like to see your room. Do you want to show them?" Melinda asks curious, trying to help Bobbi be a little more open, and at Melinda's suggestion Bobbi looks between Melinda and Tony, both of whom are looking as encouraging as possible, and around the room.

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a hesitant nod.
"Tony and I will be right here." Melinda assures Bobbi.

"Okay." Bobbi says, nodding once more, and she heads over to her room, with Rhodey, Richard, and Mary right behind her, though they are all keeping a respectful distance.

"You're incredible." Melinda says, walking over to Tony and hugging him, and once she is sure everyone else is in Bobbi's room she kisses him.

"I'm just doing what I can to help." Tony explains as they break apart, as there aren't a lot of things he can do to help Bobbi what he can do is create things that help her.

"Which is exactly why you're incredible." Melinda explains, "We should go check to make sure Bobbi's okay." Melinda says, Tony nods, and the two of them head into the bedroom where Bobbi is explaining things around the room to Richard, Rhodey, and Mary, it being clear that Bobbi is nervous, but trying to be less afraid as Rhodey, Richard and Mary are trying to be as reassuring as possible.

October 20th 1993

Ever since Melinda took in Bobbi the young girl has started to feel a little more comfortable around other people, and is less afraid of hurting them, but it is clear that Melinda is the person she is most comfortable around. However, that being said she developed a level of comfort around Tony, Phil, Clint, Rhodey, Richard, Mary and William all of whom she has spent time around.

Even though both Melinda and Bobbi were nervous about it Bobbi has also started school, and since she started it has been clear that Bobbi loves learning and to both their reliefs there hasn't been an awkward to explain incident.

While Melinda feels that Bobbi is the best thing in her life and she is beyond happy that she took her in, she has found herself struggling and feeling like she isn't being as good of a parent as Bobbi deserves. While she feels guilty Melinda is also starting to feel like she has things under control a little more as her father moved in a couple of weeks ago, just before they moved across the hall to a three-bedroom apartment, so that he can look after Bobbi Melinda when Melinda suddenly has to go out of town on a mission.

It's late at night and Melinda, who was called into S.H.I.E.L.D because of an emergency thirty-six hour earlier, is finally returning to her new apartment where she finds her father sitting on the couch reading a book.

"Hey Dad." Melinda says, walking over to him, "How's Bobbi?" she asks concerned.

"Completely fine, she's asleep." William explains, "Her spelling test is on the counter as she got everything right and made me promise to show you when you got home." William explains, as Bobbi wanted to stay up until her mother got home, but she got too tired.

"That's great." Melinda says, feeling proud.

"She also insisted that she called Tony to tell him." William explains, "Are you and Anthony dating, Melinda?" William asks, and thanks to the tone Melinda feels like she is once more a teenager getting in trouble.

"No Dad, we're just friends." Melinda explains, telling the complete truth.

"Bobbi said he's around a lot, and I've seen that the last few weeks." William reveals.
"That's because we're best friends. We've always been there for each other, that's never going to change." Melinda tells her father, as just because they are close, and have sex occasionally, doesn't mean their relationship is more than what it is.

"If you say so." William tells his daughter, it being clear that he doesn't believe her, "Bobbi said that Tony is making her Halloween costume, that she's seems very excited about."

"She's thrilled about it." Melinda says, knowing that all too well, and she sees the look on her fathers' face and because of that she knows what he is thinking, "I'm tired, I'm going to go to bed." Melinda says, before heading to the kitchen where she looks at Bobbi's test and then puts it on the fridge before heading to bed, wondering if anyone other than her and Tony will ever understand the relationship the two of them share.

March 12th 1994

In the almost nine months since Bobbi moved in with Melinda she has become less afraid, more open which Melinda suspects is partly because Bobbi has developed more control of her abilities. Her control has increased so much that she never accidently breaks anything anymore, she can control how much strength she uses, something which has been possible thanks to all the things Tony created to help her, and the support she has gotten from not just Melinda and Tony, but William, Clint, Coulson, Richard, Rhody, and Mary as well.

It's a Saturday afternoon and Melinda has had a day off S.H.I.E.L.D, something which is a rarity, and as she and Bobbi had had a great day, just the two of them, Melinda decides its time to bring something up with Bobbi and so she walks through Bobbi's open door and over to where she is playing with Lego, something which she enjoys playing with, and sits down across from her.

"What are you building?" Melinda asks curious.

"A plane, like you fly." Bobbi explains.

"Wow, that's cool." Melinda says, meaning that, "Bobbi, can you stop playing for a minute, there is something I want to talk to you about." Melinda explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, putting down what she is doing, and looking at Melinda.

"Do you like living here with me, Bobbi?" Melinda asks curious.

"Of course." Bobbi answers, "Why would you ask that?" Bobbi asks, looking confused.

"Because, if it's okay with you, I would like to adopt you." Melinda explains.

"That means you'd be my Mom, for real, right?" Bobbi asks, sounding uncertain.

"It does." Melinda confirms, feeling like that was a pretty simple explanation, but it works, "What do you think about that? Is that something you'd like?" Melinda asks curious.

"Yes, yes!" Bobbi sys, looking excited.

"Okay." Melinda says, grinning form ear to ear, "I'll get started on the paperwork right away…. I love you, Bobbi." Melinda tells her daughter, as that what Bobbi is to her, a daughter, even if she may not legally be.

"I love you too, Mom." Bobbi says, before quickly moving and hugging her tightly and as she does Melinda realises that this is the best moment of her life, her little girl calling her Mom for the first
June 26th 1994

Since Melinda asked Bobbi if she wanted to be adopted the young girl has celebrated her seventh birthday with a party that was attended by her family, Tony, Rhodey, Richard, Mary, Coulson, Clint, and Peggy all people she now calls Aunt or Uncle as well as her grandparents and Sharon Carter, who was brought to the party by her Great Aunt Peggy, who has become a good friend to Bobbi.

Finally, the day has come where the judge is going to make a decision about whether Melinda's adoption of Bobbi is going to be approved. Even though her court appointment isn't for a little while Melinda and Bobbi are already at the court house with Tony, Coulson, Clint, Richard, Rhodey and Mary who are supporting her, though Melinda is currently standing a little away form her family, or she was until Tony walks over to her.

"Hey, Little Bird." Tony says, with a smile.

"Uncle Tony!" Bobbi says, grinning at him, as Tony squats down in front of her

"You know, I think Uncle Clint has some gummy bears and if you ask real nicely he might give you some." Tony informs her.

"Okay." Bobbi says, looking happy as she hurries over to where Clint is talking with Rhodey, as Tony stands up.

"You need to take a breath, Mel." Tony tells her, "Relax."

"I can't Tony. What if the judge doesn't approve the adoption?" Melinda asks, sounding worried.

"Then he's an idiot." Tony tells Melinda, "Mel, anyone in their right mind can tell that you are an amazing mom to Bobbi, and that the best thing for her would be to approve your adoption."

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, looking grateful, and not sure what else to say Tony just leans forward and hugs his friend, wishing there is more he could do, besides pay for the lawyer Melinda is using, as he knows Melinda's adoption being refused would destroy not just Melinda, but Bobbi as well, which is something he couldn't handle.

A little while later Melinda is sitting in a courtroom, between her lawyer and Bobbi, as Tony, Phil, Clint, Rhodey, Richard, and Mary are watching on from the public gallery.

"Ms May, I have reviewed all the relevant documentation, your statement, Bobbi's statement, the various character statements you have supporting you I have come to my decision." The Judge reveals, "While the requirements of your job would usually give me pause, the support you have of family and friends, and the fact that your father now lives with you, is enough to alleviate those concerns." The judge admits, and Melinda feels hope rise inside of her, "And it is to my great pleasure to approve Melinda Qiaolian May's adoption of Barbra Susan Morse, congratulations Bobbi from this moment on you are legally Barbra May Susan Morse." The judge says, and once he does Melinda just hugs her daughter tight, not seeing the glad looks on her friends, her families, faces.

December 3rd 1994

Months have passed since Melinda adopted Bobbi and besides the fact that Melinda is legally
Bobbi's parent not much has changed in the way they act with each other.

It's mid-morning on a Saturday and Melinda and Bobbi are in Bobbi's bedroom, both wearing nice dresses, as Melinda is helping Bobbi with bows that are on her shoes.

"So, what do I have to do again?" Bobbi asks curious, as she plays with the Mockingbird soft toy that Tony made her.

"You're going to walk down an isle with Sharon, and your both going to have baskets with flower peddles, which you're going to throw out at the people who are sitting around." Melinda explains.

"I throw them softly, right?" Bobbi asks, wanting to make sure.

"Yep." Melinda confirms, "Done." Melinda says, with a grin.

"Thanks Mom, I just couldn't do it." Bobbi explains.

"That's okay." Melinda assures her daughter, as there is a knock on the door, "Yeah." Melinda says, and once she does the door opens and Tony, in a suit, walks in.

"A lovely car for two lovely ladies has arrived." Tony says, putting on a posh voice.

"You're funny, Uncle Tony." Bobbi says, with a laugh.

"I know." Tony says, with a smirk, "You ladies ready to go?"

"Depends, which car did you bring?" Melinda asks curious.

"Black Mustang." Tony answers, having chosen that car for a specific reason.

"Yeah, I think we're ready." Melinda says, standing up, and as she stands up Bobbi puts her toy on her bed, and stands up too.

"Then after you." Tony says, slightly bowing, causing Melinda to shake her head at him as she and Bobbi walk past him, and head out of the apartment, going to the wedding of Richard Parker and Mary Fitzpatrick.

A couple of hours later Richard and Mary are now Mr and Mrs Mary Parker, and their reception is in full swing. While most people are mingling Melinda is sitting at a table drinking a glass of scotch, as she looks around. As she looks around she sees her daughter happily playing with Sharon Carter, and a little boy about her age who Melinda recognizes as Gabe Jones' grandson Antoine Triplett.

For a few minutes Melinda watches her daughter, and her friends, and once she is sure that Bobbi is okay she keeps looking around the room and as she does she sees Phil happily talking, and flirting with a friend of Mary's, Richard, and Mary dancing together, and Rhodey and Clint are clearly listening to stories being told by Peggy and the Howling Commandoes who are at the wedding.

"You look like you're a hundred miles away." A voice says, and Melinda looks up to see Tony.

"I'm not." Melinda answers, looking at Tony, as she puts her drink down.

"Well then, lets dance." Tony says, sticking out his hand and Melinda doesn't move to take it, she just gives him a less than impressed look, "Come on Mel, give me one dance before Parker has me thrown out because of my speech."
"That's not going to happen." Melinda says as she takes Tony's hand and stands up, "Richard knew what he was getting into when he named you best man." She comments, as they walk to the dance floor, "And we both know he wasn't really that mad."

"Maybe." Tony says, sounding uncertain, as they begin to dance.

"There is no maybe about it." Melinda tells him, "And for the record, I admire the restraint you showed in telling stories." Melinda says, as she knows Tony could have told much worse stories than the ones he did tell.

"It's his wedding day, I figured I'd be nice." Tony explains, shrugging slightly, causing Melinda to laugh slightly as she is pretty sure that no one would describe the story Tony told as nice, "I can't believe he and Mary are finally married, I still remember when he was too afraid to ask Mary out because he didn't want to ruin their friendship."

"It seems like so long ago." Melinda admits, as everything that happened before Bobbi came into her life seems like a lifetime ago, "But I guess they decided the risk was worth it."

"Guess so." Tony confirms, and once he does the to of them continue to dance together, just like they have many times before, enjoying themselves even though Melinda would never admit that fact.
Chapter 7

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: WARNING. IN THIS CHAPTER THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP WHERE ONE PERSON HAS ALTERIOR MOTIVES, USING THE OTHER PARTY, AND IS LYING ABOUT CRUTIAL THINGS.

May 27th 1995

For months Melinda has been spending every minute she isn't working with Bobbi, who is now eight years old, and quiet often she has been joined by some combination of Tony, Phil, Clint, Rhodey, Richard and Mary, and the truth is Melinda very much likes that fact.

Against her better judgement Melinda has agreed to go out for drinks with Phil, Clint, Isabel Hartley and her girlfriend, and fellow S.H.I.E.L.D agent, Victoria Hand, and she Is already counting the minutes until she can go home to her daughter.

"Come on, May, he's been checking you out all night." Izzy informs her.

"I came out to drink with my friends, not hook up with some guy." Melinda argues.

"There is no reason why you can't do both." Hand tells her.

"Apart from the fact that I don't want to." Melinda says, an edge to her voice.

"I don't know why you wouldn't want to, he's hot." Izzy says.

"How would you know?" Melinda asks, giving her a look.

"Just because guys aren't my thing doesn't mean I can't appreciate them." Izzy responds, "You should talk to him."

"Izzy's right, you should go talk to him, you're not dating anyone, are you? You deserve a personal life." Phil says, wondering if Melinda will admit that she and Tony aren't just friends like she's been claiming for years.

"Just because I'm not dating anyone doesn't mean I want to." Melinda argues.

"Give it up guys, Mels isn't going to talk to him." Clint says, causing everyone to look at him, "It's impulsive, fun, which are two things Mel isn't anymore." Clint argues, teasing Melinda as he knows her well enough to know that the best way to get her to do something is to bait her into it.

"I'm not fun or impulsive anymore?" Melinda asks, giving Clint a glare.

"Nope." Clint says, drawing out the word, "It's been months since you've pulled a prank, months since you've had fun. Let's face it Mels, the old you would already talked to that guy, and possibly hooked up with him in the bathroom, but you're boring now, so you're not going to talk to him." Clint says, knowing what he is doing is borderline stupid, but he's game enough to try.

After Clint finishes his speech Melinda glares at him intensely and downs the rest of her drink,
"That's what you think." Melinda says, before getting up and heading to the bar.

"Wow, you do realise how stupid that was, don't you?" Phil asks Clint, being ninety nine percent sure that that is going to end badly for Clint.

"Yeah, but it got her to go talk to the guy." Clint says.

"You're so going to get a massive prank pulled on you." Izzy reveals.

"I know, again, it's worth it, Mel needs some fun." Clint explains, as he, Phil, Izzy, and Hand watch Melinda walk up to the guy at the bar who has been checking her out.

Being very well aware of the fact that her friends are watching her Melinda walks over to the man who has been checking her out, a man who is has dark hair and is pretty good looking.

"Hi." Melinda greats.

"Hey." The man responds.

"I'm Melinda May, I saw you checking me out so I figured I'd come say hello." Melinda explains.

"Cal Johnson, I'm really glad you did." Cal admits, "Can I buy you a drink?" he asks.

"Scotch." Melinda requests, "Make it a double." She says, and once she does Cal orders scotch for both of them, which arrive within about a minute.

"To meeting new people." Cal toasts, not being able to think of anything else, and he and Melinda clink their glasses and start to enjoy their drinks together.

"I should go, I've got to get home." Melinda, who is completely naked, in an unfamiliar bed, as she sits up.

"Do you really have to?" Cal asks, though he knows exactly why Melinda would need to get home, but because he isn't supposed to know he doesn't say anything.

"I really do." Melinda says, as she swings her legs over the edge of the bed, and Cal sits up too.

"Tonight, was fun." Cal notes, "How would you feel if we did it again sometimes, this time with an actual meal first." He suggests.

"I'd like that." Melinda says, looking around and seeing a pad and paper, which she writes on, "My number." Melinda says, handing him the pad, "Use it." she says, before kissing Cal.

"Oh, I will." Cal assures Melinda as she gets up and heads to the bathroom to get change, Melinda not realising that this is all part of Cal's plan.

June 10th 1995

Since Melinda met Cal the two of them have gone on several dates, and even in the short time they have been dating Melinda realises that she actually really likes him, and she has also gotten Clint back for his comment by pulling one big prank and getting him blamed for another.

It is a Saturday evening and Melinda has spent all day with Tony and Bobbi, the three of them having spent all day outside enjoying the summer weather. Having just put Bobbi to bed Melinda is walking back into the living room where Tony is sitting on the couch, it just being the two of
them and Bobbi in the apartment as William is out of town on business.

"Bobbi asleep?" Tony asks curious.

"Yep, just took a very long story." Melinda admits, as she walks over and sits down next to Tony, "Extra energy must be a side effect of her abilities, because today was exhausting." Melinda says, being pretty sure she has been on missions that are less exhausting than running around after her eight-year-old.

"That's because your old." Tony teases, causing Melinda to playfully shove him.

"You're only six months younger than me Smartass." Melinda informs him.

"Six months is can be a long time, I'll be happy to demonstrate the difference six months can make in stamina." Tony says, with a flirty grin, and it is clear to Melinda what he is offering, and so she knows what she has to do.

"Tony I'm seeing someone, someone I really like." Melinda reveals.

"Which means we're stopping." Tony realises, having known that this was a possibility since they began, but never really thought it would happen as while they have both had short relationships with other people it has never been anything serious enough for them to stop what they have been doing since they were teenagers, though there have been times where they paused things.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "It's new, but I like this guy Tony, a lot." Melinda says, Tony being the one person who she would admit that fact to.

"That's great, Mel." Tony says, with a smile, "All I want is for you to be happy." He admits, telling the complete truth, "But at least tell me he's good enough for you." He says, causing Melinda to smile slightly.

"His name's Cal, he's a doctor." Melinda explains, and Tony makes a note of both those facts, "My instincts tell me he's a good man, and I'm enjoying spending time with him."

"And you're happy." Tony realises, and Melinda nods, "Then I'm happy for you." Tony says, meaning that completely, "So, if I'm not going to demonstrate my stamina what you propose we do?" he asks.

"I have videos of that new show you made me watch over Christmas." Melinda reveals.

"FRIENDS?" Tony asks.

"Yeah, I've been recording it." Melinda reveals, "I have every episode since the last one we watched together."

"Then put it on, I'll grab the alcohol." Tony says, standing up.

"And popcorn." Melinda requests, as she heads to where she keeps the videos as Tony heads to the kitchen.

A few minutes later Melinda and Tony are sitting side by side on the couch, as they drink, eat, watch TV and enjoying each other's company it being clear that the fact that they are no longer having sex isn't going to change things.

August 19th 1995
Ever since Melinda and Cal started dating the two of them have been on frequent dates, or as frequent as they can manage with both of their respective work schedules and Melinda's obligations with Bobbi, who Melinda always puts before everything else.

It's a Saturday night and Tony, Rhodey, and Richard are in at Tony's house, or one of them at least, in his workshop. As Tony is working on something, Richard and Rhodey are sitting around drinking together.

"Okay, when is May going to be here? I want to play poker." Rhodey asks curious.

"She's not coming." Tony reveals, not looking up from what he is doing.

"What?" Richard and Rhodey say together, both sounding surprised.

"You couldn't have told us that an hour ago?" Rhodey asks, looking at his friend.

"I forgot." Tony admits.

"Where is she? I thought she was going to come tonight because Bobbi's sleeping over at the Carter's." Richard comments, as last he knew Bobbi was sleeping over with Sharon Carter and her parents.

"She's on a date with Cal." Tony explains, and as he does Richard and Rhodey exchange looks.

"They've been dating, what three months?" Rhodey asks.

"Almost." Tony corrects.

"Have you met Cal?" Richard asks curious.

"Nope, but I know Mel really likes him. She's really happy." Tony explains, and as he does Richard and Rhodey once again exchange looks, "I'm happy for her."

"Sure, you are." Rhodey says, before he can stop himself, as while he knows that Tony only wants Melinda to be happy he doesn't think Tony would be happy about the fact that Melinda is in a serious relationship with someone else.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Tony asks, looking at his friend.

"Tony, you're in love with May, have been for a decade." Richard explains.

"Mel's my best friend, that's it." Tony admits, wondering how many times he has to say that.

"That's not a denial." Rhodey notes, "Tony, I known you for a long time, you and May…." 

"Are friends, who occasionally have sex, that's it." Tony explains, "It's simple." He explains.

"It's the furthest thing from simple." Richard argues, "Can you honestly say that you like the fact that May's in a relationship."

"That has nothing to do with anything. Mel's the one in a relationship, she makes her own choices, it has nothing to do with anything." Tony explains, and as he does the doorbell goes off, "That will be the pizza, I'll go get it." Tony says, before heading out of the workshop.

"Wow." Rhodey says, as Tony walks out, "Notice his specific words?" he asks Richard curious.
"Yep, he never answers a question straight." Richard realises, "But he's not happy about the fact that May is dating Cal."

"That's obvious." Rhodey says, with a nod.

"Do you think he's ever going to admit the truth?" Richard asks curious.

"I don't know, and I don't know if May ever will either." Rhodey says, as he firmly believes that Melinda is in love with Tony just like Tony is in love with her.

"Me either." Richard admits, and the two of them drift into silence as they wait for their friend to return with the pizza, both wondering what it will take their friends to realise what those who know them best have known for years.

November 4th 1995

For almost six months Melinda and Cal has been dating, and as Melinda didn't want her daughter to get attached in case things have gone wrong she hasn't introduced Bobbi to Cal, in fact Bobbi doesn't even know much about him, but Melinda feels like now is the right time for that to change.

It is a Saturday afternoon and as William had to go out of town to attend an important meeting Melinda isn't doing a mission all weekend, unless Fury desperately needs her to, and she is currently in the living room of their apartment playing checkers with Bobbi.

"You've gotten really good at this." Melinda notes, feeling very proud of her daughter.

"Yep! Uncle Phil taught me." Bobbi reveals, looking proud of herself.

"Of course, he did." Melinda says, realising that makes a lot of sense, as there is a knock on the door.

"Is that your friend?" Bobbi asks, a level of nervousness to her voice, as Melinda informed her that she'll be meeting a friend of Melinda's that she has never met before.

"Yep, it should be." Melinda says, standing up.

"Mom is Cal your boyfriend?" Bobbi asks curious, and that's what she suspects, and while she doesn't know much she knows that her mother has been spending time with someone named Cal for months.

"Yeah, he is." Melinda confirms, "I like him, Bobbi, that's why I want to introduce him to you. Are you still okay with meeting him?" Melinda asks curious.

"Yeah." Bobbi says, with a nod, even though she is still nervous.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a reassuring smile, before heading to the door. One Melinda is at the door she checks to make sure it is Cal on the other side before she lets him in.

"Hey." Melinda greets as she opens the door.

"Hey." Cal responds, greeting Melinda with a hug and quick kiss.

"There's someone I'd like you to meet." Melinda says, taking Cal's hand and leading him over to the living room feeling nervous as while she has told Cal about Bobbi, though not about her powers, the two of them have never met and she would really like for things to go well, as it is the next step in their relationship "Cal, this is my daughter Bobbi." Melinda introduces, "Bobbi, this is
Cal Johnson, my boyfriend.” Melinda introduces.

"Hi Bobbi, it's really nice to meet you." Cal says, squatting down so that he is more of Bobbi's height, "Your Mom talks about you all the time." Cal reveals, telling the truth.

"It's nice to meet you too." Bobbi says, feeling a little nervous, though she still manages a smile.

"So, your Mom and I were talking, and we were thinking the three of us would go to the park and then to get some dinner, what do you think about that?" Cal asks curious.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, looking excited and both Melinda and Cal nod, "I'll go get my jacket." Bobbi says, before running to her room.

"See, I told you, I'm great with kids." Cal says, standing up once Bobbi is out of hearing range, smiling at Melinda.

"So, I see." Melinda says, knowing a few seconds doesn't really say much, but it's good sign, "I'm glad I decided to introduce you two." Melinda admits, as for her this is a big deal, and right now it seems like the right choice.

"So am I." Cal says, and once he does Melinda leans in and kisses him, this time a real kiss rather than the brief one they shared when he arrived, only breaking apart when they hear Bobbi's footsteps running back to the room.

"You ready?" Melinda asks her daughter, who nods, "Then let's go." Melinda says, and grabbing her keys and other things she needs, she, Bobbi and Cal leave the apartment Melinda quiet looking forward to spending the afternoon with her daughter and boyfriend.

Hours later, having spent an enjoyable day with Bobbi and Cal, Melinda wakes up in her bed, and the first thing she realises is that Cal isn't in it, something which is strange as he was definitely in it when they went to bed. Not being able to describe the feeling she has Melinda gets up, grabs a gun out of habit, and heads to Bobbi's room, feeling the need to check on her daughter.

The second Melinda enters Bobbi moments later she knows that her instincts are right and something is horribly wrong as she finds Cal standing next to Bobbi's bed, where her daughter is sound asleep cuddling the bird toy Tony made her, and thanks to the angle of the door to Bobbi's bed Melinda can see that he is taking Bobbi's blood.

"What the hell are you doing?" Melinda asks, hurrying over to him, and pulling him away from her daughter.

"I need to know if she's one of us." Cal explains, to Melinda's confusion, and Melinda punches him, something which does basically nothing, as he turns back to what he is doing, clearly going to continue to take her blood.

"You're not touching her." Melinda says, going to pull him away from Bobbi again.

"You can't stop me!" Cal reveals, before throwing her across the room, with ease like he was throwing a piece of crumpled paper and not a human being.

As she lands on the ground, in pain, having hit her head, Melinda reaches for the gun that fell out of her hand as she fell. Once she has it Melinda turns the safety off, points it at Cal, and fires, hitting him in the shoulder.
The second the gun fires Bobbi wakes up, and it is clear she is confused.

"BOBBI, YOU'RE IN DANGER!" Melinda tells her daughter, and even though she still slightly asleep Bobbi still manages to push Cal, who has finished drawing Bobbi's blood, and clearly not controlling her strength which she always usually does, Bobbi pushes him so hard that he is pushed out of the nearby window.

"MOM!" Bobbi yells, sounding terrified as she gets up, drops her toy and runs towards her mother, who puts the safety back on the gun.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, attempting to hurry to her daughter, but she is unsteady on her feet, "Are you okay? Do you feel okay?" Melinda asks, sounding worried.

"I'm fine." Bobbi answers, "Mom, you're bleeding." She says, sounding worried.

"I'm…." Melinda starts to say, but before she can finish she feels dizziness overtake her, "Call Coulson." Melinda says, as she collapses, being able to focus enough to know that considering the circumstances Phil is the best person to call.

"MOM." Bobbi yells, sounding terrified.

When Melinda wakes, having no idea how much time has passed she realises two things right away, the first is that she is in a S.H.I.E.L.D medical facility, and the second is that Phil and Bobbi are sitting next to her bed.

"Hey." Melinda says, her voice sounding slightly horse, and because neither were looking at her both Phil and Bobbi are surprised.

"Mom!" Bobbi says, sounding thrilled, as she hurries over and climbs onto the bed, next to her mother.

"Gently Bobbi, remember." Phil says as the young girl hugs her mother.

"It's okay, Phil." Melinda says, as she hugs her daughter, "Are you okay?" she asks, pushing Bobbi's hair out of her face and looking at her closely.

"I'm fine." Bobbi responds, and Melinda looks over to Phil for conformation as while she trusts her daughter she won't feel better until she knows for sure.

"She's fine, I made sure of that myself." Phil assures Melinda, who looks relieved at that, "You should be proud, Bobbi called me, told me everything that happened, and sat with you while she was waiting for me." Phil explains.

"I called Uncle Tony too." Bobbi reveals, and Melinda is very glad to hear that.

"He's on his way." Phil explains, as he has been keeping Tony updated, and knows that Clint is meeting him when he arrives so that Tony can get access to the S.H.I.E.L.D facility.

"That's good, Bobbi, you did good." Melinda says, hugging her girl again and kissing her head, feeling bad that Bobbi had to see that, "Cal?" Melinda asks, looking over at Phil, not removing an arm from Bobbi who lays down next to her and snuggles into her side.

"Gone. I had a team try to track him, nothing." Phil reveals, far from happy about that.

"Phil, he had powers." Melinda reveals.
"I know." Phil says, as Bobbi told him, "We'll find him." He says, believing that, but before Melinda can say anything the door opens and a S.H.I.E.L.D doctor walks in.

"Agent May, it's good to see you awake." The Doctor says, "I have some test results of yours I would like to talk to you about, if your daughter and Agent Coulson would like to step out."

"They can stay." Melinda says, without needing to think about it, as she knows that Phil will know everything eventually so he might as well find out now.

"Okay." The Doctor answers, "Your injuries are relatively minor, a concussion, and some bruising but your blood work did indicate something that surprised us and so we ran further tests."

"What did they show?" Phil asks worried, feeling like maybe he should have taken Bobbi out of the room.

"Congratulations Agent May you are five weeks pregnant." The Doctor answers, thanks to S.H.I.E.L.D tech an exact foetal age can be determined, "We performed tests to make sure and I can tell you with complete confidence that the foetus is perfectly healthy and wasn't injured at all."

"Thank you…." Melinda says, sounding completely shocked, not sure what else to say.

"Now, there are few things I would like to discuss with you." The Doctor says, and as he does Phil recognizes the look of Melinda being overwhelmed.

"Doctor can you give us a moment first?" Phil requests, being pretty sure it would be best.

"Of course." The Doctor responds, before stepping out of the room.

"May?" Phil asks concerned, "Are you alright?" he asks, leaning forward.

"I… I don't know." Melinda admits, as one day having another child was part of her plan, whether that be biological or by adopting, but she wasn't expecting it now, and certainly not after what just happened with Cal.

"Mom, what does that mean?" Bobbi asks, looking confused.

"It means you're going to have a little brother or sister." Melinda says, resting her hand on her stomach, as she looks at her daughter, already knowing that she is going to have, and keep, the baby.

"Wow." Bobbi says, sounding amazed.

"You're an incredible Mother, May, your kids won the lottery." Phil says, smiling at his friend as he puts his hand on her arm, "And you're not alone, I'm here for you, and so Stark, Clint, your Dad, Rhodey, Richard, Mary, your Mom, we're all here for you," Phil promises, knowing that he will always be there for his partner, his friend, no matter what.

"Thanks Phil." Melinda says, feeling a combination of overwhelmed, scared, and happy, as the three of them drift into silence.

A little while later the S.H.I.E.L.D doctor have explained to Melinda what pre-natal care she will require, and Melinda is just resting in her hospital bed, as her daughter lies next to her, and Phil sits nearby.

For a while the three of them have been sitting/lying in silence until the door opens breaking the
silence, and Tony, with Clint right behind him, hurries into the room.

"Mel." Tony says, looking glad to see her awake, "Are you okay?" he asks worried.

"Uncle Tony, I'm going to be a big sister!" Bobbi says, looking excited, before Melinda can answer.

"You…w…what?" Tony asks, looking at Melinda in shock, like he isn't sure he can believe what Bobbi just said.

"Hey Bobbi, do you want to come down to the cafeteria with Uncle Clint and I?" Phil asks, as he knows that Melinda and Tony have to talk in private.

"Can I mom?" Bobbi asks, looking at her mother, who is looking at Tony's shock face.

"Sure, just stay with your Uncles." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Okay." Bobbi says, climbing off the bed, and heading out of the room with Phil and Clint.

"Mels is pregnant?" Clint ask Phil, sounding surprised as they close the door behind them, and while Bobbi is walking a little in front of Clint and Phil they are carefully watching her.

"Yeah." Phil confirms.

"Wow." Clint says, looking surprised, as he wasn't expecting that and it is easy to focus on that rather than to focus on the guilt he is feeling a he pushed Melinda into talking to Cal, "Rhodes, and the Parkers will be here soon." Clint reveals, "All three of them already have high security clearance so Fury is giving them access given the circumstances." He explains, why Fury doesn't know about Melinda's pregnancy, yet, he does know Melinda has been hurt by Cal.

"Good, that's good, May needs her family." Phil says, and the two of them continue to walk behind Bobbi, both of them making sure that Bobbi doesn't leave either of their sights.

Back in Melinda's room Tony is still standing in surprised, not sure what to say or do.

"You look how I feel." Melinda admits, needing to break the silence as even though she usually likes silence right now she doesn't want silence.

"Are you okay?" Tony asks, snapping out of his shock, as he walks over to the chair that Phil was sitting in and sits down.

"I just got a concussion." Melinda admits.

"That's not what I was asking this time." Tony tells her, knowing Melinda would have known that, "Are you okay." He once more asks.

"I don't know, Tony." Melinda admits, "I trusted him, I thought he was a good person, he completely fooled me." Melinda says, tears coming to her eye, but she quickly wipes it away.

"Hey, don't blame yourself." Tony tells her, as he reaches out and takes Melinda's hand, "It's not your fault."

"It feels like it is." Melinda reveals, "He took Bobbi's blood, he said he wanted to know if she was one of 'us'." Melinda explains.
"What does that mean?" Tony asks, looking confused.

"I don't know." Melinda says, "He had powers, and so far, S.H.I.E.L.D can't find him."

"No one can stay hidden for long, I'll see what I can do to help, if there's anything." Tony reveals.

"You don't..." Melinda starts to say.

"Don't even start Mel, if I can do anything I will. He hurt you, and Bobbi, he can't get away with that." Tony says, showing how protective he is of Melinda and her daughter.

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, looking grateful, and as she does she realises something, "I need to find a new place to live, I can't stay at the apartment." Melinda realises, as that could put Bobbi at risk, and she won't do that.

"About that." Tony starts to say, causing Melinda to give him a look, "You know when I said I thought about buying a house and you said you'd kill me?" he asks.

"Yeah." Melinda says, giving him a look.

"I kind of did anyway." Tony reveals, and Melinda just gives him a less than impressed look, "I know, it's over the top, but I couldn't help myself. It's four bedroom, two stories, backyard, and what I'm guessing is most important right now, no one but me, and now you, knows about it." Tony explains, "It's ready to move into right away...I may have also made sure there was basic furniture." Tony reveals.

"You really got to get control of this speeding problem of yours." Melinda informs her friend.

"It's not a problem." Tony reveals, "I know you don't like it when I buy you expensive stuff." Tony says, as he usually respects that and tries not to, "And you don't have to live there forever, just use it as a safe place why you find somewhere else." He suggests, and Melinda debates what to do.

"Okay... just until I figure things out." Melinda says, as she realises that it is the safest option for Bobbi.

"Good." Tony says, being pretty sure that it would be the best option, and realising now there is only one thing left for them to talk about, "So, you're pregnant." He says, drawing the words out.

"Yeah, five weeks." Melinda reveals, "I'm going to have the baby, Tony." Melinda reveals.

"I figured." Tony responds as he knows Melinda well enough to know that she would keep the baby, and raise it, even with what it's father did, "I'm here for you, Mel." Tony says, leaning forward, "I'll help any way I can." Tony promises.

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, and she squeezes Tony's hand, feeling touched by her friends, but horrified in herself, and betrayed by what Cal has done to her.

"Mel?" Tony asks, as he can see the look on Melinda's face that tells him she is trying to hold it together, "You don't have to pretend around me." He says, repeating her words back at her, as he knows Melinda hates showing when she is hurting, or in pain, but that doesn't mean that she has to hold it together around him.

For a few minutes Melinda fights an internal battle, trying to hold it together, but she finally loses the battle and starts to break down and cry, allowing herself to feel everything she has felt over the last few hours.
If it was anyone else who was crying Tony wouldn't know what to do, but when it comes to Melinda he always knows, and so stands up, moves over to the bed, sits down next to Melinda, and puts his arm around her.

"I got you, Mel." Tony tells his best friend as he kisses her head, as she cries, knowing that right now there is nothing he can do for Melinda other than just support her.
Chapter 8

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Sorry, I was meant to update this yesterday, but I was distracted by personal stuff and completely forgot. Hope you enjoy.

Just a note. I am about 7 chapters ahead, but I'm going to continue updating every second day because I have exams coming up and that way I'll be able to keep updating during that period. Once my exams are done I should be able to increase updates.

The next morning Melinda has been discharged form medical and Tony is driving her home, back to the apartment, as that's where everyone else is.

"She's with the others?" Melinda asks, wanting to be sure as Tony took Bobbi to sleep at one of his families properties a few hours earlier.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "Coulson, Clint, Rhodey, Parker, and Mary are all with her your apartment, they're getting started on packing and promised not to let her out of their sight." Tony explains.

"Good, that's good." Melinda says, knowing she wants to get the packing done as quickly as possible so that she can get Bobbi to somewhere that Cal doesn't know.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "When does your Dad get back?" Tony asks curious.

"In the morning. He knows I was hurt, but not the rest, I'm going to tell the rest when I see him." Melinda explains, being pretty sure that telling her father is going to be easier than when she has to tell her mother.

"That's a good idea." Tony says, approvingly.

"Yeah, so I'll talk to him, drop Bobbi at school and then head into S.H.I.E.L.D." Melinda explains, knowing that she has to make sure the school's security is up to scrap.

"You're going to work tomorrow?" Tony asks, sounding a little surprised by that, though he realises that he shouldn't be.

"I have a meeting with Fury first thing." Melinda explains.

"And he'll know everything, won't he?" Tony asks, as he has met Fury several times and from what he knows he knows Fury seems to know everything going on with his agents.

"Yeah, I'm one of his agents and was at a S.H.I.E.L.D medical facility." Melinda says, with a nod, "Which means our conversation will be about me going on restricted duty for the remaineder of my pregnancy." Melinda explains.

"You sound thrilled about that." Tony says, sarcastically.

"Basically, it means I'll be doing paperwork." Melinda says, looking less than happy, and Tony
knows how much Melinda would hate that, "Though considering everything I suspect Fury will have me creating mission plans for other agents." Melinda explains.

"Is that a good thing?" Tony asks, as he isn't completely sure.

"It's better than regular paperwork." Melinda admits, and the two of them drift into silence as Tony, the only person Melinda will let drive her places without argument, drive back to the apartment.

A while later Melinda and Tony have arrived back at the apartment and have joined the others in packing up the apartment, not sorting anything just packing everything up, while the adults Melinda, Tony, Richard, Rhodey, Clint, Phil, and Mary are doing their best to distract Bobbi while keeping an eye on her.

As she likes them to be packed in a certain way and doesn't want Bobbi to accidently punch them Melinda is packing her weapons into a special case, while the others are packing boxes in the kitchen and living area.

"Mels." Clint says, knocking on the open door, "Can I come in?" he asks.

"Yeah." Melinda says, and Clint walks into the room, closing the door behind him, "What's up, Clint?" Melinda asks, being able to tell that something is bothering him.

"I owe you an apology, Mels." Clint realises, and Melinda just gives him a confused look, "You didn't want to talk to, Cal, I forced you too, and he….. I'm sorry." Clint says, his voice breaking as if there is one thing he truly hates it's a man hurting his partner.

"You didn't force me into anything Clint." Melinda tells her friend, walking towards him, "And you have no reason to apologise, okay, it's not your fault." Melinda assures him.

"But…" Clint starts to say.

"But nothing, what happened isn't your fault, not even close." Melinda says, before hugging her friend, someone who is like a little brother to her.

"Thanks, Mels." Clint whispers, "You're an amazing Mom to Bobbi, and you're going to be a great Mom to the baby too."

"Thanks Clint." Melinda says, as the two of them break apart, and once they do the two of them go back to packing up the apartment.

**December 25th, 1995**

Since finding Melinda found out she was pregnant she, Bobbi, and William have moved into the house Tony brought Melinda. Even though Melinda swore it was just temporary finding someone else to live is bottom of her list right now, as she actually quite likes the house and knows that is partly because Tony knows her well enough to know what kind of house she would like.

Since Cal disappeared S.H.I.E.L.D hasn't been able to find him, which is unsettling on several levels, and just like Melinda suspected she would she has been put on restricted duty by Nick Fury; but, to her relief she isn't just doing paperwork. She is also planning other agents' missions, and Fury has even let her supervise some training and classes which makes it a little more bearable.

It's very early Christmas morning and Melinda, who is about twelve weeks pregnant, is in her adjoining bathroom being sick, because in recent weeks she has learnt that her morning sickness
comes at all different times just not when is considered to be morning.

"Drink." Melinda hears a voice say as she leans against the toilet bowl, with her eyes closed, trying not to be sick again, and she opens her eyes she turns to see Tony, who sits down across from her.

"Thanks." Melinda says, taking the cup and taking a small sip, "How'd you know?" Melinda asks.

"I heard." Tony reveals, as he is sleeping in the room that is going to become the babies in a few months, but for now has a spare bed in it, "You've always been a loud vomiter." Tony reveals, as he has seem Melinda be sick, many times form alcohol, but this is different, and Melinda gives him an annoyed look.

"What's the time?" Melinda asks, as she didn't get a chance to look at the clock before she had to run to the bathroom.

"Three am." Tony asks, "I checked on Little Bird, she's sound asleep." He reveals.

"Good." Melinda says, sounding relieved, though she very much doubts Bobbi will be asleep for long.

"Has this been happening a lot? Morning sickness in the middle of the night?" Tony asks curious, being pretty sure it needs a new name.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "But on the plus side when it does happen in the middle of the night I'm usually fine during the day, which means…"

"You'll be able to enjoy Christmas with Bobbi." Tony realises, knowing how important it that would be to Melinda.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, and she feels like she is going to be sick again, but then she's not, and so she just drinks more of the water, "You should go back to bed, Tony." Melinda tells her friend.

"I will when you do." Tony responds, as he figures the lease he can do is keep Melinda company. Hearing that Melinda gives Tony a grateful look, but before she can say anything she is once more sick.

Hours later, during which time Melinda got a couple of hours sleep after her morning sickness for the day stopped, Melinda, Tony, and William have all been woken up by Bobbi and all four of them are down in the living room opening Christmas presents.

"Thank you, Millie." William says to his daughter, who gave him a first addition of a book he loves.

"You're welcome Dad." Melinda says.

"It's my turn again, isn't it?" Bobbi asks, looking excited as they have been taking terns opening presents.

"Yep, pick a present to open." Melinda says and Bobbi gets up and walks over to the presents that are surrounding the tree.

For a few moments Bobbi looks around at the presents, trying to decide which one she wants to open, before finally stopping at a pretty big one, that is an unusual shape.
"This one!" Bobbi says, checking the label, "It's from Uncle Tony!"

"Yep, that it is Little Bird." Tony says, walking over to her, "Open it." he says encouraging, and the second he does Bobbi hurriedly rips the wrapping paper of the present.

"A new bike!" Bobbi yells, sounding excited, as she sees a brand new purple pushbike, which unknown to her Tony built, from scratch, "Thank you, Uncle Tony!" Bobbi says, hugging him tightly.

"You're welcome Little Bird, I'm glad you like it." Tony says, returning the hug.

"I love it." Bobbi says, "And I love you, Uncle Tony."

"I love you too, Bobbi." Tony responds as Melinda takes a picture of them from across the room, and once they break apart Tony squats down and whispers something to Bobbi.

"Which one?" Bobbi asks, looking at Tony.

"That one." Tony says, pointing to one of the presents, and as she sees where Tony was pointing Bobbi walks over to it, picks it up and carries it over to Melinda.

"Here Mom." Bobbi says, as she hands her mother the present, "It's from Uncle Tony." Bobbi explains.

"What is it?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony.

"If I told you it would kind of defeat the purpose of wrapping it." Tony says, trying not to display that he is nervous about how Melinda is going to react, "Open it." he encourages, and that's what Melinda does.

"Tony…" Melinda says, looking at the present which is an object which Melinda recognizes as being the baby blanket Ana Jarvis made for Tony when he was a baby, something which he has always been protective off, in amazement, feeling completely touched.

"You don't have to say anything, I wanted you to have it, thought you might like it." Tony explains, trying to act like it's no big deal.

"I love it." Melinda tells him, giving him a pointed look as she knows how big of a deal it is for Tony to give her this, "Thank you." Melinda says, complete sincerity in her voice, and after a few moments of pause Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and William continue to open their Christmas presents together.

January 28th 1996

It has been almost five weeks since Christmas and since then Tony has spent more time in DC with Melinda and Bobbi, though he often stays at a Stark property, than in LA which has caused the press to speculate that he is neglecting Stark Industries despite the fact that the company is doing better than ever thanks to him. It's a Saturday afternoon and for Melinda it is a big day as she is at an OBGYN appointment, with Tony where she is going to find out the sex of the baby.

"You really didn't have to come." Melinda tells her friend, as he offered to come to the appointment with her, from where she is lying on the bed as Tony stands next to her.

"I know, I wanted to." Tony explains, looking around, "So, what your ninja senses telling you? Boy or Girl?"
"I do not have ninja senses." Melinda says, rolling her eyes.

"You kind of do." Tony responds, "So?" he asks curious.

"I'm not sure." Melinda admits, as she puts her hand on her stomach, "I just want to know so that I can stop saying 'it'" Melinda explains, causing Tony to laugh as that is such a Melinda answer.

"And you can start picking names." Tony comments.

"I already have a middle name picked out, no matter if the baby is a boy or girl." Melinda explains.

"Oh?" Tony asks, looking curious.

"Yeah, I'm not going to say what the name is though." Melinda admits, and before Tony can say anything to that the door opens and Melinda's doctor walks in.

"Melinda, good afternoon." Melinda's doctor says, as she walks in and then she gets a surprised look on her face as she clearly recognizes Tony.

"Good afternoon Doctor Benson. This is my friend Tony, he here's supporting me today." Melinda explains as in her experience when you act normal around someone who is star struck by Tony they quickly act normal again.

"Of course," Doctor Benson says, "It's nice to meet you." She says, looking at Tony.

"You too." Tony says, with a charming grin.

"Now, Melinda your blood work is all looking good, everything seems to be where it should be at this strange." Doctor Benson says as she sits down on the chair at the ultrasound machine, "Now I'm going to do an ultrasound to check to make sure everything is how it should and then if the baby is in the right position I should be able to tell you the sex." She explains, and Melinda nods, "Lift your shirt." She requests, and Melinda does that, "This gel is going to be cold." She explains and over the next minute or so Doctor Benson starts to use the ultrasound machine, "Okay, weight and size is exactly where it should be." Doctor Benson says, before pressing another button on the machine and the fast flutter of the baby's heart echoes throughout the room.

"Is that the heartbeat?" Tony asks, as he has never heard anything like that.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, smiling at her friend.

"It's strong, completely healthy." Doctor Benson says, before moving the ultrasound machine wand a little more, "Congratulations Melinda, you're having a girl."

"A girl." Melinda says, sounding so happy, "Bobbi's going to have a little sister."

"She's going to love that." Tony says, as he and Melinda exchange smiles, both of them knowing that Bobbi wants a sister, something which isn't surprising considering what happened to her brother.

**May 6th 1996**

Ever since Melinda found out she was having a girl she has been doing her best to get everything organized, something which she feels she is on top of thanks to the help she has gotten from Tony, her father, Clint, Coulson, Rhodey, Richard, Mary as well as her Mother and Peggy.

At seven months pregnant Melinda is clearly showing and is finding herself being tired easily, as
well as experiencing a lot of other rather unpleasant, but common with pregnancy, symptoms.

It is a Wednesday afternoon and Rhodey, Richard, Mary, Coulson, Clint and Tony are all at Melinda, Bobbi's and William's house, with the three of them, because it is Bobbi's 9th birthday and her wish was for a day with all of them.

As it is actually a nice day everyone is outside in the backyard and Bobbi is playing soccer with Clint, Coulson, Tony, Richard, Melinda, Rhodey, and Mary as William takes photos of everything that is going on, as he sets up all the food.

Having just taken the ball to Clint Melinda, who is feeling completely exhausted, has to take a moment to catch her breath.

"Mel, you okay?" Tony asks, having noticed what Melinda did.

"Yeah, just need a minute." Melinda explains.

"Maybe you should sit down." Tony suggests.

"No."

"Mel…" Tony starts to say.

"It's Bobbi's birthday, and she wants to play soccer and spend time with all of us, I'm not going to ruin that for her." Melinda explains, taking several deep breaths, and it is clear that Melinda is about to re-join the game, but before Tony can say anything about that they both hear.

"Bobbi that's cheating, that's not nice." Being said by Phil, and so Melinda and Tony exchange looks and walk over to where the others are.

"What's going on?" Melinda asks.

"Nothing." Bobbi answers, not understanding why Phil said she cheated.

"Bobbi, you shouldn't lie to your Mom." Richard explains.

"What are Uncle Phil and Uncle Richard talking about, Bobbi?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"I used my powers to run and dodge." Bobbi answers, and Melinda realises that they are getting to a complicated issue as while she has always tried to teach Bobbi not to be ashamed of her powers she has also been sure to make it clear she should be careful how and where she uses her abilities, and so Melinda walks several steps towards her.

"Bobbi we've talked about using your powers." Melinda says to her daughter.

"Yeah, but only about not using them around people who don't know about them, everyone here knows about them." Bobbi explains, not seeing what she did wrong.

"Give us a minute." Melinda requests, looking at everyone else, and everyone else nods and walks away, leaving Melinda with Bobbi.

"Why did Uncle Phil say I cheated, I didn't do anything wrong." Bobbi explains, looking confused, as Melinda squats down slightly, being pretty sure that getting up is going to be difficult, but she wants to have this conversation with Bobbi when they are more of the same height.

"Bobbi you power makes you special, allow you to do things other people can't." Melinda explains.
"I know, does that mean I can't play sports?" Bobbi asks, still not understand what her mother is saying.

"Of course not." Melinda tells her daughter, as she pushes her daughter's hair behind her back, "Bobbi you can play sports, you can do everything other kids do, but what you can't do is use your powers to give you an advantage, not in sports or things like it, it's not fair; do you get that?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"I think so." Bobbi realises, looking uncertain, "Uncle Phil said I was cheating because I used my speed, and it would be cheating if I used it in a competition, but if I used them to defend myself, or get away from someone who was trying to hurt me that's okay?" Bobbi asks as her mother and her had a talk about using her abilities after Cal took her blood.

"Exactly." Melinda tells her daughter, "I've said this before, but it's really important you remember it, you should never be ashamed of your powers Bobbi, okay, never, but need to be careful when you use them." She reveals. "Okay?"

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod, "Can we keep playing soccer now?" Bobbi asks.

"Of course, but how about we have birthday cake first." Melinda suggests.

"Yes!" Bobbi says, looking happy, and as she does Melinda tries to stand up, but finds out that she is not able to.

"Bobbi, I need you to take my hands and pull, okay." Melinda requests.

"Okay. Is this a time where I use my powers?" Bobbi asks her mother.

"Yes." Melinda confirms, and her daughter does exactly what her mother suggested and helps her mother back onto her feat, "Thank you."

"Is Baby Sister okay?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Yeah, she's good." Melinda says, putting her hand on her stomach, and as she does she feels the baby kick, "Bobbi, pass me your hand." Melinda says, and Bobbi, who knows why her Mom would suggest that does so.

"That still feels so cool." Bobbi says, with a grin, "Do you think it feels cool?"

"Yeah, I do." Melinda admits, "Let's go have some cake." Melinda says, and Bobbi runs over to the table where everyone is while Melinda walks behind her.

July 2nd 1996

Ever since Bobbi's birthday Bobbi it has been clear to Melinda she is putting more thought into when she uses her powers, but at the same time Melinda has realised that when she uses them she is more comfortable with them.

As Melinda's due date is getting closer Tony has been spending even more time in DC, so that he can help out when Melinda needs it whether or not she wants to admit it. Even though the press has been speculating on what he has been doing Tony hasn't said a word as he knows how much Melinda values her privacy, and the truth is he doesn't think the press have any right to know what he's been doing.

It is a Tuesday and because it is a warm summers day Tony has taken Bobbi out to get ice cream
while Melinda takes a nap, and the two of them are returning home, with a lot of ice cream.

"Uncle Tony, we could have gotten more." Bobbi tells him, as they walk into the house.

"We got plenty Little Bird, we got all the good flavours." Tony explains, as he closes and locks the door behind them and starts to walk through the house.

"But…" Bobbi starts to say, and as they walk, but as they do Tony sees something.

"Mel." Tony says, dropping the ice cream and going running, with Bobbi right behind him, as she knows that for Tony to drop ice cream something must be going off and seconds later Tony and Bobbi get to Melinda who is lying on the floor, barely conscious with blood on the floor around her and covering her crotch "Bobbi get the phone, fast." Tony requests, and Bobbi goes running, "Mel, can you hear me?" Tony asks, as he gets to Melinda's side.

"Tony… the baby…. Something…wrong." Melinda says, barely being able to speak, clearly in pain.

"Bobbi's getting the phone, we'll get you to the hospital, and you and the baby will be fine." Tony says, not sure if he believes that, but trying to be as positive as possible.

"Daisy…. Her name's Daisy." Melinda says, before losing consciousness.

"Mel, no, wake up Mel." Tony begs, taking Melinda's hand, "Come on, Mel, stay with me." Tony begs, his voice breaking, "Just hold on." He once more begs, "Don't leave me." He says as Bobbi gets back to him with the phone.
Chapter 9

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support. PLEASE, PLEASE LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

After what feels like a lifetime to Tony he, Melinda, and Bobbi get to the hospital, the three of them having been rushed there in an ambulance.

"Twenty-six-year-old female, thirty-nine weeks pregnant, from what we could tell on the ultrasound in the rig there's an almost complete placental abruption, mother and baby both in distress." The Paramedic says as they arrive at the hospital

"Prep for emergency c section, now." Someone who Tony recognizes as Doctor Benson says.

"What's happening, will they be okay?" Tony asks, as he hurries behind the gurney that Melinda is on, Tony holding on to Bobbi's hand for dear life.

"Mr Stark, I can't answer that right now." Doctor Benson admits, "We've got to get Melinda to surgery right away if we ant a chance at saving them." She explains, "I know Melinda has elected you as her medical next of kin and so I will give you an update when I can." Doctor Benson explains, "Nurse, show Mr Stark to the waiting room." She requests, "I'll tell you more as soon as I know anything." She explains before hurrying off.

"Uncle Tony?" Bobbi asks, sounding upset, and Tony looks down at Bobbi, "Is Mom going to be okay?" she asks, sounding vulnerable and so much younger than she is, and so Tony picks her up, and holds her.

"I don't know, Little Bird, I don't know." Tony admits, doing so even though it almost kills him to do so.

About ten minutes later Tony is sitting in the in the waiting area with Bobbi, trying his best not to show how absolutely terrified he is about the possibility of losing Melinda, and Daisy. Due to how concerned he is Tony barely notices what is going on around him, with the exception of Bobbi who is just as afraid as him, or he doesn't really notice until Rhodey, Richard, Clint, Coulson, and Mary, hurry into the waiting room.

"Tony." Phil says, as Tony gets up and walks over to them, "What happened?"

"Bobbi and I went out for ice cream…. We got back and found Mel… there was blood… she was barely conscious." Tony explains, clearly struggling with what he is saying, "The say it was a, a…" Tony says, struggling to remember which says a lot to the others as they know what Tony's memory is like, "Placental Abruption. They took her for an emergency c-section." He explains.

"They're gonna be okay, right? Mels and the baby?" Clint asks, looking upset, but desperately trying not to show it as Melinda's his family, and he can't lose any more of his family.

"I don't know…" Tony says, looking completely defeated which is something that not even Richard, who has known him longest, has ever seen, "And her names Daisy." He says, causing the
"Tony, your hands." Mary says, in a concerned voice and Tony looks down to see blood on his hands.

"I tried to help… tried to stop it." Tony explains, staring at his hands that are shaking slightly and as he does Rhodey walks towards him.

"Okay, come on." Rhodey says, walking over to his friend.

"I can't go… I've got to wait for news." Tony explains.

"You got to clean your hands. We'll be really fast." Rhodey explains.

"I can't leave Little Bird, can't leave Bobbi." Tony says.

"We'll stay with her." Richard promises, "We won't let her out of our sight." He promises.

"And we'll come and get you if anything changes." Mary assures him.

"Come on, Tony. The bathroom is right down the hall." Rhodey says, putting his hand on his friends shoulder and leading him to the bathroom, as he figures no other way will get Tony to go there.

About a minute later Rhodey and Tony get to the bathroom, and Rhodey leads Tony over to the sinks. When they get to the sinks Rhodey waits a few seconds, but Tony makes no effort to move, and so Rhodey starts to wash his friends' hands for him.

"Tony, talk to me." Rhodey requests, as he honestly feels creeped out as Tony being quiet is so beyond strange to him, "Please." He adds.

"I should have been there Rhodey. There was so much blood." Tony reveals, his voice quiet, but Rhodey can still hear everything he is saying, "She can't die, … I can't lose her… or Daisy." Tony admits, and the truth is that while Rhodey wasn't expecting Tony to admit that he can't lose Daisy he isn't surprised that he feels like that.

"Mel's never given up without a fight in her life, she won't start now." Rhodey tells his friend, as Tony's hands are completely cleaned of blood, "You just need to believe that she, that they, are going to be okay." Rhodey says, doing his best to be reassuring, but he isn't sure he is succeeding.

"I…. you were right." Tony admits, and while he has a suspicion what Tony is talking about Rhodey can't believe that Tony is going to admit what he thinks he is going to admit, and so he doesn't say anything, "Mel isn't just my best friend, she…. My everything." Tony admits, as tears come to his eyes, "Her and her girls are the best thing in my life….. they need to be okay." He says, knowing he would give every single cent he has to do whatever he can to make sure they were okay, if only he could.

Hearing the emotion in his best friends voice Rhodey knows there is nothing he can say to help him right now, and so he just hugs his friend, without saying a word.

Forty-five minutes later Tony, Bobbi, Coulson, Clint, Rhodey, Richard, and Mary who have now been joined by Lian and William May are all waiting together in the waiting room, with Bobbi sitting close to Tony. While everyone is trying to stay strong for Bobbi, it is clear that with every
minute that passes everyone is becoming more worried, and honestly some members of the group are becoming surer that it is going to be bad news.

Finally, about fifty minutes after Rhodey and Tony's talk in the bathroom Doctor Benson walks into the waiting area.

"Doctor Benson, how's Mel?" Tony asks, standing up, "How's the baby?" he asks, not saying Daisy as his mind is working well enough to know that Doctor Benson wouldn't know who he meant if he said her name.

"Maybe we should talk in private." Doctor Benson suggests, as she looks around at everyone.

"Doctor are they okay?" William asks, asking what everyone is thinking.

"Melinda lost a lot of blood, and the baby wasn't breathing." Doctor Benson explains, and as she does everyone, with the exception of Bobbi who is too young to understand fears the worse, "But we managed to resuscitate the baby after a minute and ever single test is positive, there seem to be no side effects, but we're going to monitor her over the next couple of days." Doctor Benson explains, to everyone's relief.

"And May?" Phil asks, being the only one brave enough to ask.

"She's stable. We replenished her lost blood and she should wake up soon." Doctor Benson explains.

"Can I see her?" Tony asks, feeling beyond happy but he knows he won't truly believe it until he sees Melinda and Daisy for himself.

"At the moment hospital policy only allows one person to be with her. Once she has woken up, and I have run some tests, and the baby has been brought into her the rest of you can visit as well." Doctor Benson explains.

"It should be Anthony." Lian says, causing everyone to look at her, "Bobbi's too young to wait with Melinda alone, and you're who she will want to see first." Lian says, looking at Tony.

"Okay." Tony says, with a nod, not planning to argue.

"I'll take you to her." Doctor Benson says.

"In a minute." Tony says, before turning and kneeling in front of Bobbi, "Hey Little Bird, did you understand what the Doctor said?" he asks.

"Not really." Bobbi admits.

"Well, your Mom and your Baby Sister are both okay." Tony reveals, it feeling better than he thought possible to be able to say that.

"Can I see Mom?" Bobbi asks.

"Not quiet yet." Tony answers, "She's still asleep, so I'm going to sit with her why you wait here
with Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle Coulson, Uncle Clint, Uncle Rhodey, Uncle Richard, and Aunt Mary." Tony explains, "You need to stay with them, and I'll come and get you as soon as you can see your Mom, okay?" Tony asks.

"Promise?" Bobbi asks.

"Promise." Tony confirms.

"Okay." Bobbi says, and she gives her uncle a hug.

Once Bobbi and Tony break apart Bobbi follows Doctor Benson to Melinda's room while everyone else sits down once more.

About a minute after Tony left to the others he walks into Melinda's room and as he does he has to pause for a second just inside the door, take in the fact that she is okay. After taking a few moments Tony walks over to the bed,

"Hey Mel, you scared the crap out of me." Tony admits, as he places a gentle kiss on Melinda's head before sitting down next to her and taking her hand, "Your girls are both fine. Bobbi's in the waiting room and the Doc says Daisy's complete fine, guess she's a stubborn as her Mom." Tony comments, "But they need you, so you need to wake up." Tony says, as he squeezes Melinda's hand.

For about ten minutes Tony just sits with Melinda, being reassured by the machines that tell him she is breathing, until he finally feels Melinda's hand move in his.

"Mel?" Tony asks, leaning forward, "Mel, can you hear me? Open your eyes." Tony says.

"Tony…" Melinda says, as she opens her eyes, and Tony can see the second what happened and where she is registers with Melinda, "Daisy, where…" Melinda starts to say, as she attempts to sit up.

"Daisy's fine. The doctors say she's fine." Tony assures Melinda, "But you need to move slowly, you lost a lot of blood." He reveals, as he presses the button to raise Melinda's bed a little so that she is sitting up a bit more, knowing better than trying to stop Melinda from doing something.

"She's okay?" Melinda asks.

"She's okay." Tony assures her.

"What happened?" Melinda asks.

"The Doctors say it was a placenta abruption." Tony says, as he moves so that he is sitting on the edge of Melinda's bed, still holding her hand, "You almost died."

"Wasn't the first time." Melinda answers.

"Mel, this is serious." Tony says, and that illustrates to Melinda just how worried he was.

"I'm okay, Tony." Melinda assures her friend, in a kind voice, realising that while she is used to almost dying Tony usually isn't around when that happens, so he's never had to face it.

"But you almost weren't." Tony says sadly, "I found you bleeding, and the doctors rushed you to surgery, and I thought I was going to lose you." He says.
"You didn't… I'm right here." Melinda says, as she squeezes Tony's hand.

"I know." Tony says, squeezing Melinda's hand in return, "I love you, Mel."

"I know. I love you too, Tony." Melinda responds, saying the words without hesitation.

"No, I mean I'm in love with you, and I have been for a long time, I just couldn't admit it." Tony reveals, "But when I thought I was going to lose you…." Tony says, tears coming to his eyes, as Melinda squeezes his hand once more, "I want us to be more, I want us to give us, give a relationship, a real shot." Tony admits.

"Tony… I love you too." Melinda once more repeats and from the look on Melinda's face Tony knows that she means it in the same way he does, "And giving us a real shot is something I really want too." she admits.

"I can hear the but coming." Tony says, feeling a little bit of disappointment.

"But you mean too much to me to me for me to try giving us a real shot when things are going to be so crazy for a while." Melinda admits, "Getting Daisy settled, figuring out a routine with both her and Bobbi is what I need to focus on right now." She explains, "But once things have settled down a bit…"

"Hey, it's okay." Tony says, squeezing Melinda's hand, "I should have realised. Bobbi and Daisy come first, that's the way things should be, how they need to be." Tony says, feeling bad that he didn't even think about that, "We'll figure things out."

"We will." Melinda says, leaning forward slightly, "This isn't a no, it's not even close, it's just not right now."

"I know." Tony says, before leaning forward, closing the gap between the two of them, and kissing Melinda.

Even though Melinda and Tony have kissed many times before there is something different about this time, they can feel the fact that something has changed, that it's a new beginning.

"So, would you like to meet your daughter?" Tony asks curious, once they break apart.

"Desperately." Melinda responds.

"Okay, I'll get the doctor." Tony says, before getting up and leaving the room.

Over the next few minutes Doctor Benson runs some test on Melinda to assure she is okay, which she is, and once Doctor Benson is satisfied that Melinda is alright Daisy is brought into the room, and over to Melinda's bed.

As Melinda can't move enough to pick her up right now, and the doctors and nurses have left, Tony, feeling completely terrified as he has never held a baby this small, though he has read how to as he didn't want to risk hurting Melinda's baby, picks her up.

"She looks just like you." Tony reveals, being glad about that fact.

"Yeah?" Melinda asks.

"Yeah." Tony responds as he gently passes Daisy over to Melinda.
"Hey Sweetheart." Melinda says, smiling down at her daughter, "She's incredible." Melinda says, feeling overwhelming love for her daughter, "I didn't get a chance to tell you her whole name." she realises.

"No, you didn't." Tony confirms, as he sits down on the edge of Melinda's bed once more.

"Tony I would like you to meet Daisy Lin Antonia May." Melinda introduces, having decided to give Daisy the Chinese name for intelligence for her first middle name, and the second she does Tony feels beyond touched.

"Mel… I'm honoured." Tony says, not sure what else to say, "But are you sure you want to saddle your daughter with my name?" Tony asks.

"I don't see it like that, not even close." Melinda tells Tony, "Since the day we met you've always been here for me, been my constant, that I've always been able to count on." Melinda explains, "So I don't see it as saddling Daisy with anything, rather I consider it a privilege to name her after the best man I know." Melinda reveals, it being clear to Tony that she completely believes what she is saying.

"I don't know what to say." Tony admits.

"You don't have to say anything." Melinda assures him.

"I do have a promise to keep." Tony reveals, "I promised Bobbi I'd come get her when you woke up." Tony explains, "She's in the waiting room with Coulson, Clint, Rhodey, Parker, Mary, and your parents. Are you up to seeing them, or just Bobbi?" Tony asks curious.

"Everyone's fine." Melinda assures Tony.

"Okay. I'll be right back." Tony says, before getting up and leaving the room, leaving Melinda with her newborn daughter.

"Hey, Sweetheart." Melinda tells her daughter, "I want you to know that you are loved, so much, and not just by me." Melinda admits, "I'm not perfect, but I promise I will always do everything in my power to be the best mother to you, and your sister. I will always protect you, do whatever I can to keep you safe, and I promise you I will always love you, no matter what." Melinda says, leaning down and placing a kiss on her daughters' head.

For the next few minutes Melinda just holds her daughter, watching her, until the door opens and Tony returns to the room with Bobbi, Clint, Coulson, Rhodey, Richard, Mary and her parents, and as they all walk into the room Bobbi hurries over to the bed, and once she gets to the side of the bed she looks hesitant, not sure if she should climb up.

"You can climb up, just be careful." Melinda tells her daughter, and Bobbi does just that, "This is your sister." Melinda introduces.

"She's beautiful Millie." William tells his daughter.

"That she is." Richard adds.

"Thanks Dad, Parker." Melinda says.

"She's so small." Bobbi says, looking amazed.

"She's a baby Bobbi, she's supposed to be small." Clint explains.
"Would you like to hold her?" Melinda asks her daughter, and Bobbi shakes her head.

"I don't want to hurt her." Bobbi says, sounding afraid, as the baby is so little that Bobbi is sure she would break her.

"You won't." Melinda assures her daughter, as the others exchange looks, "I know it." Melinda says, "Come sit next to me." Melinda says, and as she does Bobbi moves and sits next to her mother, "I'm going to put her in your arms, you won't hurt her." Melinda says, and she gently hands her baby daughter over to her older daughter, "Watch her head, put your hand under it." Melinda says, and Bobbi does exactly that.

"Wow." Bobbi says, feeling amazed as she holds her little sister, "Hi there, Daisy I'm your big sister." Bobbi says, as Melinda puts an arm around Bobbi.

"So, Daisy May?" Mary asks Melinda curious.

"Daisy Lin Antonia May." Melinda explains, and as she does Rhodey and Richard exchange looks.

"Intelligent, good choice." Lian says, approvingly it being clear to Melinda that she approves that Melinda picked a Chinese middle name.

"Thanks Mom." Melinda responds, being glad that her mother isn't going to fight her on that.

"Antonia, really?" Rhodey asks, with a slightly teasing smile, "Don't you think Jamie would be a good choice?" he asks.

"Sorry Rhodes, but I'm sticking with Antonia, it's perfect." Melinda explains, looking a little amused.

"Well then, welcome to the family Daisy Lian Antonia May." Richard says, wishing he had a drink to toast right now.

"You're in for a wild ride." Clint adds, to the amusement of everyone else, and once he speaks the room drift into silence, and after a while other people around the room take turns holding Daisy.
Chapter 10

**Disclaimer:** I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

**AN1:** Thank you for the support. PLEASE, PLEASE, LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

July 9th 1996

A week has passed since Daisy was born and because of the complications that occurred both Melinda and Daisy have been in hospital, but it is finally the day where they are going to be release from hospital and go home, as they have both been given a clear bill of health.

Waiting to be picked up Melinda is sitting in her hospital room holding Daisy who is wrapped in the blanket Tony gave Melinda back at Christmas when suddenly Bobbi runs into the room.

"Hey Mom." Bobbi says, with a grin.

"Bobbi? Is someone with you?" Melinda asks, as she would have expected someone to be with Bobbi.

"Uncle Tony is. We were racing." Bobbi explains, "He said I didn't have to hold back." She explains.

"He did, did he?" Melinda asks.

"He did." Tony says, as he enters the room, "Nicely done Little Bird." Tony says, smiling at her, and Melinda gives him a less than impressed look, "No one was around when she didn't hold back, I made sure of it." he explains, having been able to guess what that look meant.

"Good." Melinda says, as Bobbi climbs onto the bed next to her mother.

"Hi Daisy." Bobbi says, and as she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks as every time she sees Daisy Bobbi says hello to her.

"Are you two ready to go home?" Tony asks curious.

"Beyond ready." Melinda says, as she carefully puts Daisy into a carrier, that will be put into the car seat.

"Good." Tony says, as he picks up Melinda's bags.

"Let's go." Melinda says, once she is sure Daisy is strapped in properly, and she picks up the carrier, "Bobbi, stay close." Melinda requests.

"I know." Bobbi answers, "Can I help with anything?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Um." Melinda says, as she looks around, "No I don't think so." Melinda answers, "Just make sure you stay close." She requests, Bobbi nods, and Tony, Bobbi, and Melinda holding Daisy head out of the room a room that Melinda would be very happy to never see again.
A little while after Melinda, Tony, Bobbi and Daisy left the hospital the four of them arrive back at Melinda's house, and as they arrive Melinda notices a few more cars than usually, but as they are all cars that she recognises Melinda doesn't make a comment as she figures it's meant to be a surprise.

So instead Melinda lets Tony park the car, before they both get out and Melinda carries Daisy inside while Bobbi and Tony walk in with her. The second the group of four walk into the house they hear,

"Surprise, welcome home!" being yelled by Coulson, Clint, Richard, Rhodey, Mary, Lian, William, Peggy, Nick Fury, Sharon Carter and her parents, Antoine Triplet and his mother and grandfather, as well as some other people that Melinda trusts.

"Don't look at me this time." Tony says, as Melinda glanced over to him, "This was all Coulson." He reveals.

"Thank you, Phil." Melinda says, smiling at his friend, as she walks over to the table, where she can put the carrier down and pick up Daisy.

"You don't have to thank me." Phil says to his friend, and as he does basically everyone walks over to Melinda and Daisy, or everyone except for Tony who walks over to Bobbi who is standing back

"You okay, Little Bird?" Tony asks her.

"Yeah." Bobbi answers.

"You know loving Daisy doesn't mean any of us love you any less." Tony tells Bobbi, having known that Melinda was worried about how Bobbi was going to react to people showing Daisy so much attention.

"I know, Mom told me." Bobbi explains, "But…" Bobbi says, looking over to where Daisy is being held by Peggy and fussed over by basically everyone.

"But nothing, we love you both, equally." Tony assures her, "You're both special, both your moms girls… both my girls." Tony explains, "Never forget that." He says, and in response Bobbi just hugs her uncle.

"I love you Uncle Tony."

"Love you too, Little Bird." Tony says, as they break apart, "Let's go join the others." He suggests, and the two of them head over to where the others are.

Hours later, after a quiet enjoyable day, everyone who doesn't live at Melinda's house, with the exception of Tony, has left. As it is late-ish, Melinda has checked on Daisy, who is asleep, is walking into Bobbi's room.

"Bobbi, time for bed." Melinda says, walking over to her daughter.

"Okay, Mom." Bobbi responds.

"Have you brushed your teeth?" Melinda asks curious.

"Yep." Bobbi answers, with a nod, as Melinda sits down on the edge of her daughter's bed, "I'm glad your home."
"I'm glad I'm home too." Melinda responds, "Bobbi things are going to be different with Daisy in our lives, but I want you to know that I love you both equally, you are both my daughters, that will never change."

"I know Mom." Bobbi says, "You told me, so did Uncle Tony."

"Good." Melinda says, "You can always talk to me, Bobbi, even if it seems like a stupid thing to talk about." Melinda admits, and Bobbi nods, "Now..." Melinda says, as she tucks her daughter in, "Would you like a story?" Melinda asks curious.

"Yes!" Bobbi says with a grin, "A mission story." She says, as Melinda tells her story of previous missions, but is sure to be vague enough so that Bobbi isn't told too much.

"Okay." Melinda says, "Once Upon A Time Uncle Phil, Aunt Peggy, Nick, and I were on a mission with some other agents." Melinda says before starting to tell Bobbi a mission story for the late eighties, just before Peggy was outed from S.H.I.E.L.D.

About twenty minutes later Melinda, who is feeling pretty tired and carrying a baby monitor, walks downstairs and over to the couch where Tony is sitting.

"Are the girls asleep?" Tony asks curious.

"Yep, it took a story for Bobbi, but she's asleep, and so's Daisy." Melinda explains, as she sits on the couch right next to Tony, who without even thinking just puts his arm around her.

"Good, that's good." Tony says, "You okay?" he asks.

"A little tired... and sore, but okay." Melinda admits, doing so because it is Tony she is talking to.

"What else?" Tony asks curious, being able to tell that there is something Melinda isn't saying.

"I'm worried about Cal, what if he finds out about Daisy?" Melinda asks, feeling worried about what would happen to Daisy if that happens.

"He's been off the grid for almost a year." Tony reminds her, "The second he comes out of hiding S.H.I.E.L.D will find him, or I will, and he'll never get near Daisy, never hurt her." Tony says, trying to reassure himself as much as Melinda.

"I hope you're right." Melinda says, and as she does she knows she has to tell Tony something she's been thinking about, "I don't want Daisy to know what he did, to me or Bobbi, not until she's eighteen." Melinda explains.

"Of course, but you know she might ask questions before then." Tony points out.

"I know, I'm not going to lie to her." Melinda reveals, "I'm just not going to tell her everything until she is older." Melinda explains.

"Okay." Tony say, with a nod, knowing that is Melinda's call, "I won't say anything." He says, and Melinda is glad to hear that.

"You know more science than me, do you think Daisy could have powers too?" Melinda asks Tony.

"Truthfully, I don't know." Tony admits, "It would depend on how he got his powers, whether they are genetic, I just don't know." He admits.
"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, "I guess we'll just have to watch her, see if she shows any signs of powers."

"And if she does you'll handle it." Tony says, knowing that.

"Yeah, we will." Melinda says, knowing that, and she and Tony drift into silence as they sit side by side, and Melinda rests her head on his shoulder.

**September 24th 1996**

Twelve weeks has passed since Daisy was born, eleven since she and Melinda came home, and in the past three months Melinda has felt beyond exhausted, but also beyond happy, as she knows, without a doubt, that both her daughters are the best thing in her life.

It's early morning and Melinda is going back to work for the first time since she gave work. Due to S.H.I.E.L.D protocol Melinda will be on restricted duty for a little while, until she gets used to being back and has met all the standards she needs to meet.

Trying not to show the fact that she is worried about leaving work, and leaving Daisy, Melinda is in the kitchen in her house with her father, Daisy, Bobbi, and Tony, who has been sleeping on the fold out couch in Melinda's office, for weeks.

"Mel, did you hear me?" Tony asks curious.

"Sorry, what?" Melinda asks, looking confused.

"I said I can take Bobbi to school on my way to the airport if you'd like." Tony offers.

"Yeah, that would be good. If that's okay with you, Bobbi." Melinda says, looking at her daughter, "Is it okay if Uncle Tony takes you to school?" she asks curious.

"Yep!" Bobbi says, looking happy.

"Okay, thanks Tony." Melinda says, looking relieved, and as she does she realises something, "Wait, airport, where are you going?" she asks curious.

"L.A. The boards getting annoyed. I've got to handle a couple of things that I can't handle from here, I need an actual Stark Industries office to handle them." Tony explains, not looking very happy as he would much prefer to stay in DC.

"Oh okay, good luck." Melinda says.

"Thanks." Tony says, drawing out the word.

"Uncle Tony we've got to go." Bobbi says, seeing the time, "Time for school!"

"Okay Little Bird." Tony tells her, "I'll see you." Tony says, giving Melinda a hug, being careful of Daisy who she is holding, not kissing her as they still aren't officially giving them a shot yet and William is in the room.

"See you." Melinda says, as they break apart.

"Bye Tiny Toni." Tony says, kissing Daisy's head.

"Are you going to ever stop with that Nickname?" Melinda asks curious as Tony has been calling Daisy that for weeks, and she has been pretending to be annoyed, but they both know she's not
"Never." Tony says, with a grin, causing Bobbi to laugh, "Let's go Little Bird." Tony says, walking over to her, "Have you got your bag?" he asks.

"Yep." Bobbi answers, "And I have my homework, and my lunch, and everything I need."

"That's good Bobbi." Melinda tells her daughter, and once she does Bobbi hurries over to her daughter, "Bye Mom." Bobbi says, "By Daisy." Bobbi says to her little sister, who it is clear she completely loves and has been so happy to get to know over the past three months, "By Grandpa."

"Goodbye Bobbi, see you tonight." William tells his granddaughter.

"Okay, let's get out of here." Tony tells Bobbi, and the two of them head out of the house, Melinda watching her daughter and Tony go.

"When do you have to leave?" William asks his daughter.

"Oh, about now." Melinda admits, flashing back to the first time she had to leave Bobbi after she took her in, as she cuddles Daisy.

"Then you should go." William tells his daughter.

"I will." Melinda says, walking back and forth as she cuddles Daisy and kisses her head.

"Millie, Daisy will be fine, I will be with her all day, and you'll be home before you know it." William assures his daughter, as he walks over to her, "It's time for you to go." William says, sticking out his hands to take Daisy.

"I love you." Melinda tells her daughter, kissing her head before handing her over to William.

"We're gonna have a great day, aren't we Daisy?" William asks his granddaughter, and with one last smile at her father and youngest daughter Melinda heads out of the house, slightly forcing herself to do so.

About half an hour after Melinda left the house she walks into the little office at the Triskelion that Melinda, Clint, and Phil share, and as she walks in she finds both of them waiting.

"Mels!" Clint says, looking glad, "Welcome back." He says, smiling at her.

"Thanks Clint." Melinda says, smiling back at him.

"Glad to be back?" Phil asks curious.

"A little, but it was hard leaving Daisy." Melinda admits, "Tony took Bobbi to school, so I wasn't leaving both of them, but it was hard." Melinda admits.

"I think that's normal." Phil comments.

"Want to kick my ass to distract yourself from missing your girls?" Clint asks, causing Melinda to laugh.

"Yeah, I'd like that." Melinda admits.

"Okay, let's go." Clint says, and both he and Melinda head out of the office. Then, because he
wants to make sure neither Clint or Melinda hurt each other Phil follows behind them.

Hour later Melinda is home, the only one in the house awake, as Bobbi, Daisy and William are all asleep, and having just checked on her girls Melinda is walking downstairs, heading to her office, when she hears a knock on the door.

Wondering who it can be this late Melinda heads to the door and once she checks she sees that it is Tony on the door she opens it to let him in.

"I thought you were in L.A." Melinda comments.

"Never made it." Tony admits.

"Tony, the board is going to be pissed." Melinda comments.

"Not exactly… it's complicated, can I come in?" Tony asks curious.

"Of course, you can." Melinda says, letting Tony into the house, "Tony, what's going on?" Melinda asks curious, as they both subconsciously head to the living room.

"I dropped Bobbi at school this morning, and on the way to the airport I realised I didn't want to go back to LA, I don't want to be across the country from you and the girls." Tony explains as they both sit down on the couch, both sitting cross legged and facing each other.

"That's sweet." Melinda says, smiling slightly, "But you can't run the company from DC, not without time and changes. The board aren't going to like that." Melinda says, having head Tony rant about the board enough times to know that.

"You're right, I can't run the company from DC, not right now, but I can run it from New York." Tony tells Melinda, with a grin.

"You're moving to New York." Melinda realises, with a smile.

"Yep. I've already started the processes, got a penthouse apartment in Manhattan. I'm probably going to put some miles on my jet, and cars, but New York is a hell of a lot closer than LA." Tony explains.

"Yeah, it is." Melinda confirms, honestly feeling very glad that Tony will be closer, and she goes to lean forward to kiss him, but before she can the two of them hear Daisy's cry come through the baby monitor, and so they exchange an amused look before Melinda gets up and heads upstairs, so that she can comfort her daughter.

**November 7th 1996**

Six weeks have passed since Melinda started back at S.H.I.E.L.D and Tony moved to New York, and in that time, Tony has completed moved into his new penthouse apartment in Manhattan and Melinda has brought Daisy and Bobbi to visit his new place once, while Tony is DC often.

As of three days ago Melinda is back on normal duty at S.H.I.E.L.D and has celebrated that by completing a complicated mission with Clint and Phil, a mission that the three of them are on their way back from, but after a call from Fury they have had to land in New York.

"You're okay right, you're not dying, right?" Clint asks, looking at Melinda, who gives him a dirty look, "What? It's a fair question, you let me fly, and you never let me fly." He points out.
"Maybe I thought you needed the practice." Melinda comments.

"No, Clint's right, you are okay right? I mean that blow seemed hard, but you said you're fine." Phil comments, looking worried.

"You two worry too much." Melinda says, rolling her eyes at her friends.

"Like you wouldn't worry if one of us did something completely out of character." Clint comments, "Oh wait a minute, you have." He comments, causing Melinda to once more roll her eyes.

"Because you two clearly aren't going to drop it, I wanted to catch up on some sleep, and for once I decided to let someone else fly, now I'm wishing I didn't." Melinda admits, "When did Fury say he'll call back?" she asks curious.

"Four hours. Said he'd explain more then." Phil explains.

"Okay." Melinda says, before standing up and heading to the other end of the plan, clearly about to leave.

"Where are you going?" Clint asks curious.

"Out, I'll be back in three and a half hours." Melinda explains, before leaving, and the second she leaves Clint and Phil look at each other.

"Stark." Clint realises.

"Stark." Phil confirms.

A little while after Melinda left the airfield that Clint and Phil are at Melinda arrives at Tony's penthouse apartment. Even though she knows she could easily get into the apartment, Melinda just rings the doorbell instead.

"Please don't be blasting ACDC in the lab." Melinda mutters to herself once she has rung the bell, as she knows that if he is then she will have to break in, but to her relief the door opens about a minute after Melinda rang her bell, to reveal Tony in a tank top and pants, which tells Melinda he was in the lab.

"Mel!" Tony says, with a grin, "Did I know you were coming?" he asks curious, as he is usually pretty good about remembering his plans with Melinda, but he wouldn't be surprised if he forgot.

"Nope." Melinda says, as she walks in, "I wasn't planning to, but I've got to stay in New York for the next few hours so I thought I'd come by."

"I'm glad you did." Tony says, with a grin, "I'm assuming you're on a mission?" he asks.

"Between them, technically." Melinda admits "It's complicated, and I can't explain more."

"That's usually the case." Tony responds, as the two of them exchange amused looks, and they arrive at the living area of Tony's apartment, "How long we got until you have to be back at whenever you're supposed to be?"

"Three hours, give or take." Melinda admits, as they both sit down on the couch.

"So, a quickie then." Tony says, with a smirk.
"Absolutely." Melinda says, and Tony goes to lean forward and kiss her, but Melinda sticks out her hand, and stops him, causing him to give her a confused look, "That not yet we talked about… I think that time is now, if it's something you still want to try." Melinda says to Tony.

"Definitely." Tony says, grinning, "You said you're between missions, think you'll be done by Saturday?" he asks curious.

"I honestly don't know." Melinda admits.

"Well, I like to think you will be." Tony admits, knowing it might not happen, but he can at least plan for it to, "So Melinda I-hate-trying-to-pronounce-your-middle-name May, would you like to go on a date with me Saturday night?" he asks, causing Melinda to shake her head with an amused look on her face.

"Yeah, I would." Melinda confirms.

"I'll pick you up Saturday night, say nine?" Tony asks, knowing that Bobbi will be in bed by then as her bedtime is eight thirty.

"Sounds good." Melinda confirms, leaning forward, "But so did that quickie idea." She says, before kissing Tony, and as they kiss Melinda pushes Tony back against the couch, as things heat up.

Two days later Melinda has completed a second mission with Phil and Clint, and as both Bobbi and Daisy are in bed Melinda has gotten changed into black leather pants, a red halter top, and black boots for her date with Tony.

"So, you and Tony are finally going on a date." William says, to his daughter, with a knowing grin.

"Yeah, and I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone, because Tony and I haven't talked about it." Melinda explains.

"I won't." William assures his daughter, "I'm happy for you Millie, I've been waiting for years for you and Tony to finally admit that you're more than just best friends."

"You're not the first person to think that." Melinda says, as she turns around, "So Tony and I will both have phones, and so if something happens…." Melinda starts to say.

"Millie, I've got Daisy and Bobbi. They'll be fine." William assures his daughter, "But If something does happen I promise you I'll call." William says, as both he and Melinda hear the doorbell ring.

"Thanks Dad." Melinda says, before heading out of the room and downstairs.

Less than a minute later Melinda gets to the front door and opens it to reveal Tony holding a bouquet of tulips, already in a vase, wearing nice pants and a good shirt with the top couple of buttons open.

"Tulips." Melinda says, smiling and feeling touched as she knows it means that Tony remembers a conversation they had when they were teenagers, what feels like a lifetime ago, "Thank you, Tony." she says, smelling the flowers, and once she does she walks over and puts them on one of the tables.

"You ready to go?" Tony asks, Melinda nods, and they both head outside where they find one of Tony's cars, that just happens to be Melinda's favourite, waiting.
"You going to tell me where we are going?" Melinda asks curious, as they walk over to the car.

"Nope, you're going to be surprised for once." Tony explains, and Melinda gives him a look, "You're going to enjoy it, trust me."

"I do." Melinda says, as they get to the car, and both get in.

After a while of driving Tony and Melinda arrive at a spot that has an incredible view of the city.

"You always like a good view." Tony says, as he gets out of the car and heads to the trunk, "I thought about flying somewhere, but you don't like it when someone else flies, so you'd be stressed, so then I decided to try to find a place with a good view that you didn't have to fly to."

"You did good. It's incredible." Melinda says, having also gotten out of the car, as Tony gets a picnic basket and blanket out of the trunk.

"I'm glad you like it." Tony admits as he walks over to Melinda, "I know we've been doing things that could be considered dates for years, but I wanted it to be special."

"It's you and me Tony, anything we do would be special." Melinda tells him, before kissing him, and once they break apart Tony and Melinda proceed to have an amazing picnic and date night together, one they both know they will never forget.
December 7th 1996

For exactly a month Tony and Melinda have been dating and so far things are going great, but at the same time things between them aren't different form how they have always been, and there is an unspoken agreement between them that both Bobbi and Daisy will always come first. As them being in an actual relationship is new the only person who knows about the change in their relationship is William.

It's early on a Saturday morning and having had a date the night before Tony and Melinda are in lying in Melinda's bed together.

"I know that look, you're thinking of things you want to build." Melinda says, with an amused look.

"What can I say, you inspire me." Tony says, before leaning forward and kissing Melinda, "But if it helps a lot of the ideas I'm having are ways to be able to help me be able to spend more time with you."

"I like the sound of that." Melinda says, leaning forward and kissing Tony, but before things can go further than that the alarm, which tells them that Tony has to go down to the office before Bobbi wakes, off goes off and so they break apart.

"I'll see you in a little while." Tony says, before getting up picking up a shirt and putting it on so that he is in a shirt and pyjama pants, before heading out of the room.

"Hi Uncle Tony." A voice says as Tony takes a few steps out of the room and he turns to see Bobbi.

"Little Bird, hi." Tony greets, noting how much Bobbi has realised, "You're up early." He notes.

"Yep. I want to watch cartoons." Bobbi explains.

"Ah, I get that." Tony says, grinning at her, "Let's go downstairs." He suggests

"Uncle Tony are you and Mom married?" Bobbi asks, before either she or Tony can take steps, to Tony's complete and utter shock.

"Um, Mel, can you come out here." Tony calls, about thirty seconds later when he is able to form words.

"Tony?" Melinda asks confused, as she walks into the corridor, wearing shorts a one of his shirts, looking at him and so she doesn't see Bobbi, or at least she doesn't until Tony guesses his head to over where Bobbi is standing, "Bobbi." Melinda says, like Tony wondering how much she has realised.
"Why don't you ask your Mom what you asked me." Tony suggests, looking at Bobbi.

"Okay." Bobbi says, not being able to feel the tension in the corridor, "Are you and Uncle Tony married?" Bobbi asks, and as she does Melinda feels just as shocked as Tony did, but she manages to hide it a bit better.

"Why would you ask that?" Melinda asks, her voice shaking slightly.

"Because you and Uncle Tony sleep in the same room, and you kiss just like Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary." Bobbi says, looking very proud of her logic, and as she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks, Tony giving Melinda a look which says how they handle this is up to her.

Knowing what she has to do, and feeling like she has Tony's support Melinda walks over to Bobbi and squats a little so that she is the same height as her daughter,

"No Bobbi, Uncle Tony and I aren't married." Melinda tells her daughter, "But we are dating."

"Oh okay, so does that mean you might get married one day?" Bobbi asks, looking excited about the possibility, and behind her Melinda can hear Tony take in a sharp breath, something which does not surprise her one bit.

"I don't know." Melinda admits, as considering she and Tony have only been giving an actual relationship a try for a month they haven't talked about it, "If Uncle Tony and I were to get married one day is that something you'd be okay with?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"It would mean Uncle Tony would live with us forever, right?" Bobbi asks.

"Yes." Melinda says, knowing that if she explained more about what it would mean then Bobbi may not understand, and so that's a good explanation.

"Then yep." Bobbi says, with a nod, "Can I go watch cartoons?" she asks curious.

"Of course." Melinda responds and so Bobbi grins and goes running downstairs. Once Bobbi is out of hearing range Melinda stands up and faces Tony,

"You can breathe Tony," Melinda says, as she walks over to him, "Bobbi was asking about what may happen one day."

"I know." Tony says, taking a step forward to meet Melinda, "And I also know that the thought, the possibility of one day doesn't actually scare me." He reveals and truthfully Melinda is very glad to hear that fact.

"Really?" Melinda asks, wanting to make sure she heard right.

"Really." Tony confirms, before leaning forward and kissing Melinda. For a few moments Melinda and Tony kiss, before they break apart.

"I should go check on Daisy." Melinda realises.

"I'll go make sure Bobbi is just watching cartoons." Tony says, causing Melinda to nod, and once she does Tony heads downstairs while Melinda heads to Daisy's room.

Even with Bobbi managing to completely shock Tony and Melinda the three of them, as well as Daisy, the four of them had an incredible day together, partly because, Melinda and Tony weren't thinking about how they acted, they were able to be open, without worrying about Bobbi realising
something, which turns out is a great relief to both of them.

"Mom, when will Uncle Phil, Uncle Clint, Uncle Rhodey and Aunt Mary be here?" Bobbi asks curious as her three Uncles and Aunt are coming over for dinner and a games night, that will turn into poker night once Bobbi and Daisy are in bed, while William has gone out.

"Soon." Melinda answers, looking at the clock, as she continues to feed Daisy who is eating early while Phil is bringing food for the rest of them.

"Okay." Bobbi answers, and as she does she decides to walk over to Tony who is sitting on an arm chair with a notebook, which he is writing and drawing in, "What you doing, Uncle Tony?" Bobbi asks curious, as Bobbi sits on the armrest of the chair.

"Bobbi, don't sit on the armrest." Melinda tells her daughter, and once she does Tony, helps Daisy move so that she is sitting on his leg rather than the armrest.

"Those are weird pictures." Bobbi notes, looking at what Tony is doing.

"They're not pictures, not really." Tony explains, and Bobbi gives him a confused look, "There plans for what I'm going to build next." He reveals.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, looking excited.

"Yep." Tony confirms, "Soon I'm going to build a more efficient aircraft engine and it all started because of these plans." He explains.

"That's cool." Bobbi says, with a grin.

"Yeah, it is." Tony confirms as the doorbell rings, "We got it." Tony says, before Melinda can say anything, and he closes his notebook, "Come on, Little Bird, let's go see whose here." He suggests, and Bobbi stands up and they both head to the door.

When Tony and Bobbi get to the door Tony checks through the peep whole to see who it is, something which he does when at Melinda's house but not his apartment, and as he recognizes who it is he opens the door.

"Hi Uncle Richard." Bobbi says, looking glad to see him.

"Hey Bobbi." Richard says to his niece, as he walks into the house.

"Hi Aunt Mary, Uncle Rhodey, Uncle Clint, Uncle Phil." Bobbi says, greeting each of her uncles and aunt as they walk in.

"Hi Bobbi." Rhodey, Mary, Clint, and Phil all respond.

"Aunt Mary, guess what?" Bobbi asks, looking excited as she walks beside her Aunt.

"I don't know, Bobbi, what?" Mary asks curious, as she and Bobbi link arms while they walk.

"Mom and Uncle Tony are dating and they might get married one day, just like you and Uncle Richard." Bobbi says, looking happy, before Tony or Melinda can stop her.

"Um, what?" Clint asks, looking confused as everyone else looks between Tony and Melinda, who are looking at each other, it being clear that neither were expecting Bobbi to say that.

"Guess that cat's out of the bag now." Tony says.
"Was that a secret?" Bobbi asks, looking between her mother, who has picked up Daisy and walking towards the group, and Tony, "Was I...." Bobbi starts to say.

"It's okay, Bobbi." Melinda assures her daughter.

"You two want to tell us something?" Richard asks, looking between his two oldest friends.

"Mel and I are together. We're actually giving being in a real relationship a go." Tony explains.

"We're admitting that we're more than just best friends." Melinda adds.

"It's about damn time." Richard and Rhodey say together, both looking completely thrilled.

"It really is." Phil confirms.

"You two had me worried, I thought you were never going to admit what the rest of us have known for a while." Clint comments.

"I'm happy for you both." Mary says.

"Thanks guys." Melinda says.

"Yeah, thanks." Tony says, both him and Melinda knowing that Rhodey and Richard, at least, are going to give them so much crap once Bobbi and Daisy are in bed, "Did you bring food Phil? Coz you're meant to be cooking."

"Of course, I did." Phil says, heading to the kitchen and as he does everyone starts to enjoy their night together.

**December 25th 1996**

Just over two weeks has passed since Bobbi, Coulson, Clint, Rhodey, Richard and Mary found out about Melinda and Tony and since then Tony has had to be in New York basically the entire time, so he hasn't had much of a chance to see Melinda and the girls, though he has been talking to them frequently.

As Tony arrived back in DC the day before he and Melinda are lying in bed together, both knowing they don't have long before Bobbi hurries into the room to get them to wake up so that she can open Christmas presents.

"What time do we have to be at Aunt Peggy's?" Tony asks curious, as he runs his hand through Melinda's hair.

"Eleven. I talked to her yesterday." Melinda admits, "She wanted to make sure we were actually coming and was very glad when I said both of us and the girls were." Melinda admits, as while Tony tries to put on a façade for Bobbi, so that he doesn't ruin Christmas for her, he doesn't try much more than that, which everyone who knows him well knows.

"Well after she spend eight months trying to convince me, I didn't really feel like I could say no, not to Aunt Peg." Tony admits, being pretty sure that with the exception of Melinda, if it was anyone else trying to convince him to do something for Christmas they wouldn't have succeeded.

"Yeah. It amuses me that she invited Coulson, Clint and Rhodey too." Melinda says, as while Peggy does know them she isn't sure she would describe the relationships as close, though she does know Rhodey better than Clint and Coulson.
"Same, but it's not surprising." Tony admits, "You know Aunt Peg if someone's family to her family then they're family to her." Tony points out.

"So true." Melinda confirms.

"How long do you think we have before Bobbi comes running in here wanting us to get up?" Tony asks curious.

"Ten minutes, at most." Melinda answers.

"Just enough time then." Tony says, before moving away from Melinda and leaning down to the floor, clearly searching for something while trying not to fall off the bed.

"What on earth are you doing?" Melinda asks, looking amused, as Tony looks pretty stupid right now.

"Just grabbing something." Tony admits, "All your other Christmas presents are downstairs, but I want to give one away from everyone else." Tony explains, as he finally finds what he is looking for.

"Oaky." Melinda says, drawing out the word, wondering what is going on.

"Here." Tony says, handing Melinda a nicely wrapped box.

Wondering what is inside, and while Tony wouldn't want to give it to her around anyone else, Melinda takes the box and starts to open it. Once the wrapping paper is off Melinda finds a box that is clearly a jewellery box, though one on a larger side which tells Melinda it isn't a ring.

"Open it." Tony encourages, Melinda being able to hear the nervousness in his voice, and so she does and the second she sees what's inside the box Melinda recognizes what is inside and knows why Tony ins nervous.

"Tony…." Melinda says, sounding amazed, as inside the jewellery box there are a pair of earing and a necklace that Melinda recognizing as once belonging to Maria Stark.

"I found them when I moved, and I knew I wanted you to have them." Tony explains.

"Are you sure?" Melinda asks as she knows how much things that belonged to Tony's mother means to him.

"Positive." Tony says, before leaning forward and kissing Melinda, "Merry Christmas, Mel." He says, once they break apart.

"Merry Christmas, Tony." Melinda says, in response, and once she does both she and Tony hear the sound of hurried footsteps and so they look to the door and seconds later Bobbi comes running into the room.

"Mom, Uncle Tony, it's Christmas!" Bobbi yells, sounding excited as she hurries over to the bed.

"Yeah, it is Sweetheart." Melinda says, smiling at her daughter.

"Can we go open presents now?" Bobbi asks curious, and as she does Daisy's cries come through the baby monitor.

"I'll get Daisy and see you both downstairs." Tony says, to Melinda and Bobbi.
"Yes! Come on Mom!" Bobbi says, sounding excited.

"Okay, okay." Melinda says, standing up and she, Tony, and Bobbi head out of the room.

Once they are out of the room Bobbi and Melinda head downstairs while Tony heads straight to Daisy's room.

"Hey there Tiny Toni, it's okay Sweetheart." Tony says, picking her up, "I've got you." He says, as he holds Daisy close, and she stops crying once she realises that Tony is holding her, "There's going to be a lot of people around today, it's going to be tiring." He admits, "But we're going to stick together, okay and we'll get through it." he reveals, and Daisy just looks at him, "Let's go see your Mom and sister." He says, before heading downstairs, carrying Daisy as he goes.

**January 24th 1996**

About a month has passed since Christmas day, which was pretty great for everyone, including Tony who struggles with Christmas.

It's reasonably late at night and Melinda, who has been hurt on her latest mission, is returning home. As she walks inside Melinda sees that there is a light on in the lounge room and assuming it's her father she heads there, but she is surprised to find Tony rather than her dad.

"Tony?" Melinda asks.

"Mel." Tony says, looking up from a file he is looking at, "What happened, are you okay?" He asks worried, as Melinda seems to be covered in cuts and bruises.

"Yeah, it's not serious." Melinda answers, "I need to check on Daisy and Bobbi, then I'll explain what happened." She says, before heading upstairs, and even though Tony knows he could just simply tell Melinda that Daisy and Bobbi are sound asleep, he also knows that Melinda needs to check on them herself.

For a few minutes Tony just waits downstairs, waiting for Melinda to return, wondering what could have possibly happened to her, until he finally hears Melinda's footsteps, and seconds later Melinda walks into the room wearing a tank top and sweat pants that Tony recognizes as his, the second Melinda walks into the room Tony stands up and he has to fight not to react as Melinda's injuries are even more obvious, including a brace on her arm.

"Mel… are you sure you're okay?" Tony asks worried.

"I'm better than Phil and Clint, they're still in medical." Melinda explains.

"What happened?" Tony asks worried.

"A mission went sideways," Melinda says as she and Tony sit down on the couch, "There was an explosion, we were caught off guard, but it's no big deal." Melinda says, though she does feel guilty for not realising it was a trap sooner.

"Mel that is the definition of a big deal." Tony says, looking surprised, "Shouldn't you still be in medical? Are Clint and Coulson going to be okay?" He asks.

"Medical cleared me." Melinda says, being pretty sure that the doctor did so because they didn't want to deal with her. "And Coulson and Clint are okay. Medical just wants to keep an eye on them." Melinda explains.
"Then how can you say that it's no big deal?" Tony asks, feeling confused.

"Because this job is dangerous, Tony, I accepted that the day I signed on."
"Every time I walk into S.H.I.E.L.D I know I could be facing anything, I know it's likely to be
dangerous, and I accepted that a long time ago." She reveals.

"I know we've talked about this before, I just can't bare the thought of losing you." Tony admits,
looking upset.

"Hey." Melinda says, reaching out and taking his hands, "I can't say you won't lose me, but what I
can say is that every time I'm on a dangerous mission I think about coming home to you and my
girls, and that thought makes me fight harder, I'll always fight to come home to you." Melinda
explains, "I love you Tony."

"I love you too, Mel, so much." Tony says, before leaning forward and kissing her, and for a few
moments the two of them kiss before finally breaking apart.

Once Melinda and Tony break apart Melinda sees what's on the table,

"What's with the files?" Melinda asks curious.

"Oh, it doesn't matter." Tony responds, feeling like with everything else going on what's in the files
is bottom of his priority less.

"Tony… what's going on?" Melinda asks, looking interested.

"The board is being annoying." Tony reveals, "They want me to have a bodyguard." He explains.

"You hate bodyguards." Melinda says, knowing that for a fact, "And since when do you do
anything the board wants you to do?" she asks curious.

"They're being particularly annoying." Tony explains, "So I figured you know a lot about the kind
of people who do this kind of job, so you could help me find someone who would make the board
happy and who wouldn't annoy me too much." Tony admits, "But it can wait."

"I need to stay awake for a few more hours." Melinda reveals, "So, how about we order pizza and
go through these files."

"Right, and I'm assuming that you not being allowed to sleep for a few more hours is something
else I shouldn't worry about?" Tony asks curious.

"Exactly." Melinda says, with a slight grin, as she leans over and picks up a folder, and after giving
her a concerned look Tony does the same thing.

February 23rd 1997

About a month has passed since Melinda and Tony went through potential bodyguard files for
Tony and found one by the name of Harold 'Happy' Hogan, and in that time Melinda's injuries from
the mission that went south have pretty much healed; Bobbi's horror at what happened to her
mother on the other hand is still an ongoing issue.

It's late at night and as she hears Daisy's cries coming though the Baby monitor Melinda gets out of
bed and heads straight to her youngest daughter's room.

"It's okay, Daisy, Mommy's here." Melinda says, as she walks towards her daughter's crib.
"Mama." Daisy says, and Melinda stops dead in her steps for a second, "Mama." Daisy repeats, and this time Melinda walks over to her daughter and picks her up.

"Shh Daisy, it's okay." Melinda says, as she picks her up.

"Mama." Daisy once more says, sounding happy and Melinda starts to pace back and forth with her daughter, being able to tell that Daisy is just feeling fussy.

After about five minutes Daisy has fallen back asleep, and so after making sure Bobbi was sleeping soundly Melinda head back to her room, and instead of going back asleep Melinda picks up her phone and calls her first speed dial.

"Mel? What's wrong? It's late." Tony asks, clearly worried, having picked up the phone after only a couple of rings.

"Daisy said her first word." Melinda says, sounding excited, "She said Mama."

"That's great Honey." Tony says, with a grin, though while Melinda can't see it she can hear it in his voice, "You must be so happy."

"I am, I really am." Melinda confirms, and as she does she actually notices the time, "Did I wake you up?"

"Nah, I'm the lab." Tony answers, "And it wouldn't have mattered if you had." He reveals, "How's Bobbi's nightmares going?" Tony asks, as he hasn't been in DC for a little while, though Melinda, Daisy, and Bobbi have made a trip to New York.

"She hasn't had them the last couple of nights, which is good, but I don't think she's completely okay." Melinda answers.

"Bobbi's getting older, and she's smart, it's not surprising that she's starting to understand more about what's going on." Tony points out.

"I know, I just want to protect her." Melinda reveals, "But at the same time I know I can't protect her from everything."

"Mel you're an amazing Mom, and you do protect your girls, but you're right, you can't protect them from everything, so you've just go to keep doing what you're doing, because you're doing great." Toy reveals.

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, feeling touched.

"You don't have to thank me, it's the truth." Tony says.

"I should go to sleep. I'll talk to you tomorrow." Melinda says.

"Talk to you tomorrow, Love you Mel."

"Love you too." Melinda says, before hanging up, and once she hangs up she puts her phone back and starts to try to fall asleep once more.

**June 29th 1997**

Four months have passed since Daisy said her first word, and in that time she has learnt to say several more words, including saying Bobbi's name or her version of it, 'Obbie' on Bobbi's 10th
birthday.

It's a Saturday afternoon, a few days before Daisy's first birthday where Melinda and Tony will be throwing a family party for her, and the three of them, and Bobbi are in the living room of Melinda's house. While Melinda and Bobbi are playing board games together Daisy is sitting next to her mother playing with toys, as Melinda watches her carefully, and Tony is working on something in his notebook.

"Ony." Daisy says, saying how she says Tony, but Tony is so focused on what he is doing that he doesn't hear her, "Ony!" Daisy once more repeats.

"Tony." Melinda says, looking over to Tony, but whatever he is doing clearly has his entire attention, and as she looks over Daisy pulls herself up and for the first time she starts to walk towards Tony, taking shaky steps, "Tony look up now." Melinda says, her voice full of force, as well as pride, which is enough to get through to Tony.

"What?" Tony asks and as he does he sees Daisy, "Oh my god, Daisy you're walking!" he says, sounding so proud.

"To you apparently." Melinda says, smiling slightly.

"Ony!" Daisy says, as she gets to Tony, who picks her up and hugs her.

"I'm so proud of you, Tiny Toni." Tony says to her, as he hugs her, causing Melinda to roll her eyes in an amused way.

"That's great, Daisy has never walked before." Bobbi says, with a proud look on her face.

"It really is." Melinda confirms, as she stands up and walks over to Tony and Daisy. The second Melinda gets to him Tony hands Daisy to her and walks over to Bobbi.

"Hey, Little Bird, how about some ice cream?" Tony asks curious.

"Yes Please!" Bobbi says as Melinda hugs her daughter and places a kiss on her head.

"Mel, want to go for ice cream?" Tony asks curious.

"Definitely." Melinda confirms "I think the perfect time for it." she says, "I'm so proud of you." She says to Daisy, and once she does the family of four grab everything they need and head out of the house so that they can go get ice cream together.
Chapter 12

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the amazing support. It means so much to me. Honestly, I wish I had the video making skills to make an edit/trailer for this universe as I am loving writing it and getting more intrenched as I plan and continue to write. I hope you're loving reading this series as much as I am enjoying writing it. PLEASE, LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

September 15th 1997

About two and a half months have passed since Daisy walked for the first time, walking toward Tony, and with every single day that passes Daisy seems to be learning more, seems to be able to do more.

It's about one am and Melinda and Tony are fast asleep, or they are until they are woken up by Melinda's house phone ringing,

"Why would someone be calling at this time?" Tony asks, clearly half asleep.

"No good reason." Melinda admits, "May." Melinda says, as she answers the phone.

"Hey Mels." Clint's voice says.

"Clint? What's going on?" Melinda asks, sitting up as she figures Clint would be calling her in the middle of the night for a good reason.

"I kind of did something, and I kind of could use your help." Clint explains, his voice sounding more like that of the lost twenty-one-year-old kid she and Phil found than that of the agent he's become.

"What did you do?" Melinda asks, with a sign.

"It's probably better that I don't explain over the phone." Clint admits, "Can you come into headquarters?"

"You owe me." Melinda tells Clint.

"I know, more than you know." Clint says, and Melinda hangs up.

"What's going on?" Tony asks curious, sitting up too and kissing Melinda's shoulder.

"By sound of it, Clint's screwed up, majority." Melinda reveals, "I've got to go help him."

"Okay." Tony says, knowing better than questioning these things, "I'll see you when you get back."

"Yep." Melinda says, before leaning forward and kissing Tony, "Get some sleep. I'll be back when I can." Melinda says, before getting up and heading to get dressed as quickly as possible.

After getting dressed Melinda manages to get to the Triskelion fast, even by her standards, though
when she is informed that Agent Barton is in the detention level she wishes she drove even faster.

"Clint!" Melinda yells as she walks into the detention corridor and sees Clint pacing back and forth, "What the hell is going on?" Melinda asks

"Fury sent me on a mission." Clint reveals.

"I know." Melinda responds, "What happened?"

"I was supposed to take out a target, but I brought her in instead." Clint explains.

"Why?" Melinda asks, knowing that Clint wouldn't have done that without a very good reason, but if she is going to help him then she needs to know what that reason is.

"There was something in her eyes, I think she wants to be different, but she just needs to be given a chance." Clint explains.

"That's why you called me, you want me to talk to her." Melinda realises.

"Yeah, her names Natasha Romanoff, she's a Russian spy, kind of a legend, and has been for a very long time." Clint explains, taking a step towards Melinda, "And if anyone can see what I saw it's you." He reveals, "So, I was hoping that if you agree that she deserves a chance you'd talk to Fury with me. He won't listen to me, but he tends to listen to you, and respects your opinion, so if you go to bat for her….."

"I'm not making any promises." Melinda informs Clint, "I'll talk to her, decide where to go from there."

"Thank you, Mels, really." Clint says, looking grateful.

"I'm your SO dealing with your screwups is my job." Melinda says, before heading into the detention room where this Natasha Romanoff is, and as he watches Melinda go Clint wonders if he has made a big mistake, but at the same time he has faith that Melinda will see what he saw.

A little while after Melinda left Tony is once more woken up, this time by the door to the bedroom opening.

"Mom." A quiet voice asks, and Tony quickly realises who it is so he turns on one of the lamps.

"Bobbi? What's wrong?" Tony asks concerned, as Bobbi is standing just inside the doorway clutching the mockingbird toy made her all those years ago.

"Uncle Tony? Where's Mommy?" Bobbi asks, and the fact that she called Melinda 'mommy' tells Tony that Bobbi had a nightmare.

"Your Mom had to go help Uncle Clint, but she'll be back soon." Tony explains.

"Oh." Bobbi responds, clearly looking disappointed.

"Why don't you come talk to me, Little Bird, tell me what's going on." Tony suggests, and once he does Bobbi looks hesitant, "It's okay." He assures her.

Hearing Tony say it's okay is all the encouragement Bobbi needs and so she walks across the room and climbs up onto the bed, where she sits next to Tony. Once Bobbi is sitting next to her Tony moves the blanket and puts it over Bobbi as well, as it is quite chilly.
"What's going on, Little Bird?" Tony asks curious.

"I had a nightmare again." Bobbi explains.

"What about?" Tony asks, though he can guess.

"Mom was hurt again, really hurt." Bobbi says, looking upset.

"You know I have nightmares too." Tony reveals, as he puts his arm around Bobbi.

"You do?" Bobbi asks, looking at him in surprised.

"Yep, about the same thing too." Tony says, telling the complete truth, "I worry about something happening to your mom, or you, or Daisy." He explains.

"Mom keeps getting hurt…. I don't like it." Bobbi reveals.

"I don't like it either." Tony assures her, "But your Mom is the strongest person I know, and one of the best agents there is, I remind myself of that, and the fact that Uncle Clint and Uncle Coulson are watching her back." Tony explains, "It helps."

"Yeah?" Bobbi asks.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "Bobbi it's okay to worry about your mom, in fact considering everything it's normal, but try not to worry too much, okay? Your Mom's tough, and as long as she has a say in the matter she's going to come home to you and your sister." Tony explains to Bobbi, having no idea if what he is saying will help, but he needs to try.

"You too." Bobbi tells Tony, who smiles slightly.

"Yeah, me too." Tony confirms, "Do you want to go back to your room or stay in here tonight?" Tony asks curious, as he knows that Bobbi tends to sleep in Melinda's bed, even if both he and Melinda are in it, after she has a nightmare.

"Can I stay?" Bobbi asks, sounding nervous.

"Of course, lay down." Tony tells Bobbi and once he is sure that Bobbi is lying down, and comfortable, he turns off the light, and before long both Tony and Bobbi are fast asleep.

Back at the Triskelion, it has been a little while since Melinda went into the room to talk to Natasha, and ever since Clint has just been pacing back and forth. As he paces back and forth Clint sees someone walking towards him, someone he recognizes.

"Phil? What are you doing here?" Clint asks, as while he called Melinda he didn't call Phil, so he has no idea why Phil would be at S.H.I.E.L.D in the middle of the night.

"Fury called me. What the hell did you do?" Phil asks, looking less than happy.

"It's a long story." Clint explains.

"Well you better get in a talking mood, Fury's pissed, and he wants to see you." Phil explains, and before Clint can respond the door to the room Natasha is in opens and Melinda walks out, "May?" he asks, sounding shocked.

"So, what did you think?" Clint asks Melinda.
"You were right." Melinda confirms, "Let's talk to Fury."

"Um, I'm confused, but that's a good idea, because Fury's made it clear that he wants to talk to Clint, now." Phil explains.

"Then let's go." Melinda says, and once she does she, Clint, and Phil start to walk together, heading towards Fury's office.

A couple of minutes after Melinda, Clint, and Phil walked left the detention level the three of them walk into Fury's office, and for the second they walk in they can tell that he is angry.

"Agent Barton, what were you thinking?" Fury asks, taking notice of Melinda, but not commenting on her presence.

"I made a call… Sir." Clint explains.

"And it was the right one." Melinda says, causing both Fury and Phil to look at her.

"Why would you say that, Agent May?" Fury asks.

"Clint called me to come in so that I could talk to Ms Romanoff, and I did." Melinda reveals.

"What's your assessment?" Fury asks, truly looking curious.

"Clint made the right call." Melinda answers, "She has an interesting past, no doubt about that, and she has had to make truly difficult decisions, but she also has potential." Melinda reveals, and as she does Clint feels confused as he never told Melinda what Natasha has done, "With time, and the right support, I believe she can be a great asset to S.H.I.E.L.D, a great Agent, she just needs a chance." Melinda explains, "Clint made the right call, we should give her that chance."

"Would you be prepared to take full responsibility for Ms Romanoff, Agent Barton, and their actions?" Fury asks, looking directly at Melinda.

"Without hesitation." Melinda admits.

"Okay." Fury says, being satisfied with that, "Agent Coulson, do you have anything you would like to add?" Fury asks, looking at the Agent in the room who has been pretty quiet.

"I do not know enough about the current situation at the moment to make any comments, Sir." Phil says, being able to tell that Clint, and quiet possibly Melinda are in serious trouble, "But that being said Agents Barton and May have my full support and I trust both their judgements." Phil says.

"Understood." Fury says, with a nod at Phil, "Agent Barton, you are on probation, to be supervised by Agent May." He instructs, "Agent May you are to submit weekly reports on both Agent Barton, and Ms Romanoff." He says, "However, until I say otherwise Ms Romanoff will stay in the detention level. If she agrees she will undergo tests and once they are completed I will make my assessment.

"Yes Sir." Clint, Melinda, and Phil say together.

"You're dismissed." Fury says, and as all three of them know better than testing him Melinda, Clint, and Phil head out of the room, rather quickly.

"Okay, can one of you fill me in on what the hell just happened?" Phil asks curious, looking between Melinda and Clint.
"Clint can, I'm going home." Melinda says, before walking away.

"I'll buy the coffee." Clint says, and once he does he and Phil head towards the closest place, that is open, where they can buy coffee.

A little while after Melinda left Phil and Clint she arrives back home and because she is trying not to wake up Tony she gets changed back into her pyjamas in the dark, but as she goes to climb back in bed she finds Bobbi lying in the bed too.

"Tony." Melinda says, knowing that her tone will likely wait Tony, but not Bobbi.

"Me?" Tony asks, opening his eyes, as Melinda carefully moves Bobbi towards more of the middle of the bed.

"What happened?" Melinda asks, as she lies down in the bed too.

"She had a nightmare again." Tony explains, "We talked, and she wanted to sleep in here."

"Oh." Melinda says, looking sad as she pushes Bobbi's hair back, out of her face, "Is she okay?"

"I think so, she was able to fall back asleep pretty easily." Tony explains.

"Good, that's good." Melinda says, looking relieved.

"What happened with Clint?" Tony asks curious.

"He made a call on a mission, one that had a lot of consequences, and that's made Fury very angry." Melinda explains.

"Was it a call you would have made?" Tony asks curious.

"No." Melinda admits, "But it was the right one." She reveals, and once she does she and Tony drift into silence, and before long they are both fast asleep.

A couple of hours after Melinda got home she wakes up at five am, just like she always does, and after she sees that both Bobbi and Tony are fast asleep, she gets up and heads downstairs, knowing that she has time before Daisy wakes up.

Once she gets down stairs Melinda heads straight to the kitchen to put on the coffee before she starts Tai-Chi as while she hates coffee both her father and Tony love it.

"If you're making coffee I'll have a cup." A voice says, as Melinda turns on the coffee machine, and as she recognizes the voice Melinda doesn't do more than just turn around.

"Good morning to you too, Nick." Melinda says, as she looks at him, "Glad you could make yourself at home." Melinda says, a level of sarcasm to her voice, "What's up?"

"I watched the video of you and Romanoff from this morning." Fury reveals, "You were in that room for forty-five minutes and only said a dozen words, she said less." He says, "How'd that make you decide to go bat for her?" Fury asks.

"I didn't need her to talk. In fact, sitting in silence with her said more than words ever could." Melinda explains, "I stand by everything I said, everything I did."
"Of course, you do." Fury says, standing up, "Read this, it's what we know about her so far." He says, dropping a file on the table.

"Yes Director." Melinda responds.

"Report to my office when you get to Headquarters, alone, there are a few things I want to go over with you." Fury explains.

"Yes Sir." Melinda says, and once she does Fury heads out of the kitchen,

"Morning, Stark." Fury says as he walks past Tony who is walking into the kitchen.

"Nick… what?" Tony asks, looking confused, but Fury doesn't stop walking, instead he just keeps walking and heads out the front door, "Okay, what's going on?" Tony asks curious.

"The fall out from last night, or this morning, technically." Melinda says, as she walks over and picks up the file that Fury left it.

"What's with the file?" Tony asks curious.

"That call Clint made was bringing someone in." Melinda explains, as Melinda opens the file and starts to flick through it, "This is her file."

"Okay, what's the big deal with Clint bringing someone in S.H.I.E.L.D?" Tony asks curious, still feeling confused.

"Her past." Melinda answers, "It's complicated, and raises some doubt about whether she can be trusted." Melinda reveals.

"But you think she can." Tony realises, being able to tell that.

"I do." Melinda confirms, "Just because she's done horrible things in her past doesn't mean she can't change, doesn't mean she's a horrible person. I think she could be an amazing S.H.I.E.L.D agent, she just needs support and time." Melinda explains.

"So, you and Clint are going to bat for her because you both can see what she could be." Tony realises.

"Exactly." Melinda confirms, with a nod, "Are you going back to New York today?" Melinda asks curious as Tony tends not to have a regular schedule for when he's in New York and when he's in DC.

"Nah, but I do have a meeting there tomorrow, so I'll go back in the morning." Tony explains.

"Okay." Melinda says with a nod, "I'm going to try to get some Tai-Chi done before Daisy and Bobbi get up."

"Then I'll go get breakfast, so your Dad doesn't have to make it." Tony offers.

"That would be great." Melinda says, with a nod, and once she does she goes one way while Tony goes another.

A few hours later, after a rather hectic morning at home Melinda is arriving back at the Triskelion, and once she is there she heads straight to Fury's office, where she is shown right in.
"Did you read the file?" Fury asks, the second Melinda walks in.

"Yeah, are the date time stamps, right?" Melinda asks, as she walks over and stands across from him.

"There's no reason to suggest otherwise." Fury admits, from where he is standing.

"Then how?" Melinda asks.

"You have a superpowered daughter, do you really need to ask that question?" Fury asks, giving Melinda a look.

"Someone experimented on her, made it so she ages slower." Melinda realises.

"Yes." Fury says, with a nod, "Whether she has other abilities remain to be seen."

"Do you know who did this to her?" Melinda asks, and it is clear to Fury that she would like to deal with whoever was behind it, something which doesn't surprise Fury as human experimentation to give people abilities is something Melinda truly hates.

"In the forties Peggy discovered a Soviet Organisation that would train, and brainwash, girls, turn them into the best spies, and assassins, in the word, everything we know so far indicates Ms Romanoff was apart of that organisation." Fury explains.

"And now they've graduated to human experimentation." Melinda says, with a frown, "The file was vague, do you have any idea how old she really is?"

"Not for sure, but evidence suggests she was born in 1950, and her aging was slowed when she was fourteen." Fury explains, "That means she has been a spy and an assassin for a very long time."

"Doesn't mean she's a lost cause." Melinda reveals, "Nick, Clint was able to bring her in, he trusts her, and this morning I didn't get the impression that she's here to infiltrate us. In fact, I think she's starting to realise what she's done all these years and is horrified by it."

"You really believe in her, in what she can be." Fury realises, still not completely understanding that.

"I really do." Melinda says, taking a step closer, "Nick, give Clint and I, and even Phil, a chance. We can help her, we can get through to her, we just need some time."

"I already said I would. I just hope you don't make me regret it." Fury comments, giving Melinda a look.

"A little regret not a bad thing, Nick. After all I'm pretty sure there are times when you regret allowing Clint and I to meet." Melinda comments, as she knows that there are times where she and Clint are pains to Fury because of pranks they pull, or stunts they pull on missions.

"You really don't want to bring that up now." Fury reveals, "You're dismissed, Melinda."

"Yes Sir." Melinda says, before heading out the room.

A while after Melinda left Fury's office she is walking into the detention room that Natasha is in.

"With me." Melinda says simply, and with a interested look Natasha gets up and follows Melinda out of the room.
Once Melinda and Natasha are out of the detention room Melinda walks down the corridor, and Natasha jogs a little to catch up,

"No guards, or restraints?" Natasha asks, not being able to help herself as she is a little surprised by both those facts.

"Don't need them." Melinda answers, as they continue to walk, and truthfully Natasha is very interested in what is going on, though that doesn't stop Natasha from noticing every single thing around them.

After about a minute after Melinda and Natasha left Natasha's room the two of them arrive at the elevators, and once they are in the elevators Melinda activates the elevators so that they can head to one of the gyms.

Once they are in the gym Melinda walks to the centre of the room, to where the work out mats are,

"We're going to spar, I'm going to assess your abilities." Melinda tells Natasha.

"Okay." Natasha says, with a nod.

"Whenever you're ready." Melinda says, and quiet quickly she and Natasha start to spar together.

October 31st 1997

Over six weeks have passed since Clint brought Natasha into S.H.I. . and while she is still living in a detention room she has been given more freedom than she did have, and Clint is still on probation.

It is Halloween and Melinda is waiting in her living room with Bobbi who is dressed up the female scientist from Jurassic Park, and Daisy who is dressed as a dinosaur.

"Where is he?" Bobbi asks, looking upset, as she looks between her mother and the clock.

"He should be here soon." Melinda assures her daughter.

"He has to be, he promised!" Bobbi exclaims.

"He did." Melinda assures her, "Bobbi has your Uncle Tony ever broken a promise to you?"

Melinda asks.

"No." Bobbi answers, after thinking for a moment.

"He's not going to start now." Melinda says, completely believing that, and once she finishes speaking the front door opens and Tony walks in.

"Uncle Tony!" Bobbi yells happily as she runs towards him and almost tackles him to the ground as she hugs him, due to the force.

"Wow, I'm happy to see you too, Little Bird." Tony says, as he returns the hug, forcing himself not to wince, and Melinda, who is holding Daisy stands up.

"I was worried you weren't going to show up." Bobbi admits, and as she does Melinda tenses at that, as she knows Tony could take that one of two ways because of what Howard was like.

"You never had to worry." Tony says, as he squats down in front of Bobbi, "Little Bird when I make a promise to you or your sister, I will always do everything in my power to keep them."
"Promise?" Bobbi asks.

"Promise." Tony assures her, and once he does Bobbi hugs him.

"Well, now that's sorted I think we have candy to go collect." Melinda comments, having given Bobbi and Tony a few moments to hug.

"That we do." Tony confirms, as he and Bobbi break apart, "Let's go Little Bird." He says, and once he does the two of them, Melinda and Daisy head out of the house to go trick or treating together.

December 5th 1997

Ever since Halloween Tony has been in DC more, to the annoyance of the Stark Industries board, and the joy of Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy.

It's a Friday night and Melinda, and Phil, are in their office completing their reports on Natasha who has been given more freedom, but who is still somewhat restricted in what she can do.

"You're really making recommendation for Natasha's restrictions to be left and for her to become a probationary S.H.I.E.L.D agent?" Phil asks.

"Yeah, I am." Melinda confirms, "And I don't see why you're not."

"I like Romanoff, and I do think she has potential, but I think we need to be careful." Phil admits.

"You do realise we're swapped positions." Melinda comments, "Usually you'd be arguing to give her a chance, and I'd be arguing that we have to be more careful." Melinda realises.

"Yeah, we would." Phil says, "You really trust her, even with everything that happened?"

"I really do, and Clint does too." Melinda points out, "Why don't you?"

"I want to trust her, but one of us need to be objective." Phil comments, as truthfully he would very much like for his fears to be unfounded, but only time will tell.

"Well I guess it's up to Fury then. He'll make a decision once he reads all the reports." Melinda comments.

"Yeah, he will." Phil says, as he and Melinda drift into silence as they continue to type their reports, both knowing that they don't have long before they have to report to Fury's office.
Almost three months have passed since Melinda and Phil talked about Natasha in the office that the two of them and Clint share, an office that now belongs to Natasha as well as Fury decided to lift her restrictions and made her a probationary S.H.I.E.L.D agent.

Just like what has occurred many times since Natasha's restrictions were lifted she, Melinda, Clint and Phil are on a mission together, even with Clint still being on probation. Due to the fact that, the four of them have proven to work incredible well together Fury has been assigning them more complicated and dangerous missions, one of which has brought them to Kosovo.

As they were forced to separate due to the dangers of the mission Melinda and Natasha have gone one way while Clint and Phil have gone another, with all four of them planning on meeting at the jet they flew in on.

"You know we've only got minutes before everything is levelled." Natasha comments, as she and Melinda make their way through a village, while trying to avoid gun fire and bombs.

"I'm aware." Melinda says, through grinded teeth, "We've just go to get to the plane."

"I know." Natasha says, as they continue to run.

For the next couple of minutes Melinda and Natasha make their way through the village, managing to successfully avoid getting hit by bullets or guns, or at least they do until a bomb hits a nearby building and the debris rains down on them.

When the dust settles about a minute later Melinda, who was thrown forward in the blast, realises that she is okay, and so she looks around for Natasha, who she realises is slightly pined under a piece of debris.

"Natasha." Melinda says, hurrying over to her.

"May. You should go, get to safety." Natasha tells her, as she tries to push the piece of debris off herself but doesn't really succeed.

"No, I'm not leaving you." Melinda tells her, without even needing to think about it.

"May...." Natasha starts to say.

"Hey, look at me." Melinda tells her friend, "I know you haven't had people you can count on, but you can count on me, and Clint, and Phil, we trust you, we're a team, and we don't leave a member of our team behind." She reveals, as she looks around for something to help get the piece of debris of Natasha, and as she does she spots something to use a crowbar and so she walks over and grabs
it, before hurrying back over to Natasha, "Okay, on the count of three I'm going to try to lift the debris off, try and move from under it when I do." Melinda requests.

"Okay." Natasha says, with a nod, still feeling amazed that Melinda isn't leaving her to die, as that's what she used to.

"Okay, 1, 2, 3." Melinda says, and she lifts the debris enough for Natasha to roll out from under it, and once Natasha is clear Melinda drops the metal rod she used as a crowbar and hurries over to Natasha, "Do you think you can stand?" Melinda asks.

"I think so, not sure about being able to walk though." Natasha admits, hating the fact that she is admitting to weakness, but she doesn't have much of a choice.

"Okay, let's get you up and go from there." Melinda says, sticking out her hand for Natasha to take, which she does, and Melinda helps to pull her up.

"You should leave me." Natasha once again says.

"I told you, that's not going to happen." Melinda responds, "Lean on me." Melinda say, as she puts her arm around Natasha, who against her better judgement, leans against Melinda, "Let's go, if you need to rest let me know."

"Okay." Natasha says, knowing that she will not rest, not willingly.

"Okay." Melinda repeats, and once she does she and Natasha continue to walk, Natasha leaning on Melinda while trying not to make it seem like that's what she is doing.

After a while, luckily managing not to get hit by any more bullets or bombs, Natasha and Melinda arrive back at the plane, where Clint and Phil are waiting for them.

"Finally." Clint says, running forward, "What happened?" he asks, looking between Natasha and Melinda.

"Natasha's hurt." Melinda explains, as Phil hurries forward too, "You and Phil need to do what medical care you can, I'll get us in the air." She says, knowing they have to get out of Kosovo as quickly as possible.

"Okay." Phil says, as he and Clint take over helping Natasha and Melinda goes running into the plane, planning on getting them in the air as soon as Clint and Phil get Natasha inside the plane.

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Hours late Melinda, Natasha, Clint, and Phil have arrived back at the Triskelion and Natasha has been treated by medical. Waiting to check on her Melinda has headed into the medical area where Natasha is sitting on the bed.

"Hey, how do you feel?" Melinda asks curious.

"Fine, it's just a bit of bruising." Natasha explains, as she puts on her jacket, "The medics said I could go."

"That's good." Melinda says, looking relieved.

"May….. thank you." Natasha says, looking grateful, "You could have easily left me, you probably should have, but you didn't…. I've never that before, never had a real team before." She admits.

"Get used to it." Melinda responds, "You might not trust Phil, Clint and I yet but we trust you.
We're a team, we're not going to turn our backs." Melinda assures her.

"It might take me a while to believe that." Natasha admits, not sure if she ever will.

"That's okay." Melinda says, and as she does she gets an idea off how to show Natasha that she does trust her, "You got plans tonight?" Melinda asks curious.

"Um, no." Natasha says, looking confused.

"Then come on, there's some people I want you to meet." Melinda explains, and with an interested look Natasha gets up and follows Melinda out of medical.

After leaving medical with Natasha Melinda collected Phil and Clint, and also made a phone call. Once she did that the four of them left the Triskelion in two vehicles and headed to Melinda's house.

"Is this your house?" Natasha asks, looking at Melinda as that's what she assumes.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, as they walk inside, "I'm home." Melinda calls, and seconds later Bobbi comes running into view.

"UNCLE PHIL, UNCLE CLINT!" Bobbi yells as she runs towards them and hugs her uncles, as Tony, who is carrying Daisy, walks behind, and towards Melinda.

"You're Dad's gone to get dinner, he should be back soon." Tony says as he gets To Melinda, who kisses him, and once they break apart Melinda takes Daisy, and looks to over to where Bobbi is hugging Clint and Phil, and Natasha is watching, clearly trying to hide the fact that she is surprised.

"Nat, I would like to introduce you to my daughters, Bobbi and Daisy, and my boyfriend Tony." Melinda says, not bothering to say Tony's last name as she knows that Natasha knows who he is.

"Good to meet you, I've heard great things." Tony comments, looking at Natasha, he having been the one that Melinda called before leaving S.H.I.E.L.D so he knows a lot about what is going on.

"Right." Natasha says, not sure if she believes that.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, and her daughter looks up, "This is Natasha Romanoff, she works with Uncle Phil, Uncle Clint and I." Melinda explains.

"Hi Natasha." Bobbi says, with a grin.

"Hi Bobbi." Natasha responds, a level of nervousness to her voice as she isn't completely sure how to act.

"Hi. Mom, can I show Natasha my room?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Sure." Melinda says, with a slight smile.

"Come on Natasha." Bobbi says, reaching out and taking Natasha's hand, which Natasha doesn't react to as she was watching Bobbi, and hurrying upstairs.

"That went well." Clint says, with a grin, it being more than clear that Clint is very happy about that.

"Yeah, it did." Melinda says, also sounding happy as she, Phil, Clint, Tony, and Daisy head into
the living room, knowing that Bobbi is going to keep Natasha upstairs for a while.

June 26th 1998

About four months have passed since Melinda introduced Natasha to her family and since then she has also met Rhody, Mary, and Richard, who she met at Bobbi's 11th birthday and seen other times since then. While it is clear that Natasha doesn't want to get too used to having people she can count on both Melinda and Clint, who is now off probation, suspect that she is slowly warming up to the idea.

It's a Friday afternoon and after the email Melinda has just gotten she is walking up to Fury's office, looking less than happy.

"Is he in?" Melinda asks, looking at Fury's assistant.

"Of course, go right in Agent May." Fury's assistant responds, as she was warned that Melinda will likely show up wanting to see Fury and looking less than happy.

"You cannot be serious." Melinda says, sounding less than happy.

"Hello to you too, Agent May." Fury says, it being clear that he is enjoying himself.

"Cut the crap Nick, what the hell?" Melinda asks.

"It's your new assignment." Fury reveals.

"Please tell me you're joking." Melinda requests.

"You know the answer to that." Fury responds.

"Which brings me back to my previous question, what the hell, Nick?" Melinda asks, "Why would you want me to supervise a cadet? Have her work with Phil, Clint, Nat and I, while she trains, considering the missions we do."

"The missions you do is exactly why I want her to work with you." Fury explains, taking a step towards her, "May this cadet has more potential than I've seen in years, but she's getting bored at the academy, she might end up washing out."

"All that tells me is that she lacks discipline." Melinda responds, "Which is another reason why I shouldn't supervise her."

"A young female cadet who shows more potential than anyone else, who has more raw talent than anyone else in her class, who gets bored with her lessons because she already learnt what they're being taught, who does that sound like to you?" Fury asks Melinda, wanting her to see what he sees.

"You're really playing that card?" Melinda asks, giving him a look.

"I am, Melinda she has the potential to be great, to be a leader, but she needs a teacher, and there's no better teacher than you." Fury explains.

"Fine." Melinda says, with a sigh, "Two days a week while she is at the academy, once she passes the requirements of the academy I'll supervise her full time, if I think she can handle it." Melinda explains, stressing the If.

"Deal." Fury responds, grabbing something off his desk, "You'll need this, it's everything you need
to know about Maria Hill, she'll be here Monday." Fury says, handing Melinda the file, "You're dismissed Agent May." Fury responds and without another word Melinda heads out of the office, planning on doing research into Maria Hill so that she can get a better idea of what she is like and the best way to teach her.

August 14th 1998

Less than two months have passed since Melinda agreed to supervise a cadet by the name of Maria Hill and in that time, Melinda has started to see what Fury saw and now agrees that training her is the right thing to do. Since Melinda has started training Maria she has met Bobbi, Daisy, Tony, Rhodey, Richard and Mary, and she gets along well with them.

It's a late Friday night and Melinda and Tony are having a date night out the back of Melinda's house while Bobbi and recently turned two-year-old Daisy, sleep inside, with William who is in his room.

"Do I want to know how much the wine cost?" Melinda asks curious.

"Probably not." Tony admits, causing Melinda to just shake her head with an amused look on her face, as she drinks some of the wine, that admittedly tastes very good.

"What's going on, Tony?" Melinda asks, being able to tell that there is something he isn't saying.

"Stark Industries has a new contract, one that's going to require me to spend more time in New York, and even make frequent trips to LA." Tony explains, sounding less than happy.

"Which means you can't be here as much." Melinda realises, looking disappointed.

"Yeah, I hate this Mel. I'd much rather be with you and the girls, but this is a great opportunity for Stark and if I turn it down the board's going to find a way to get rid of me." Tony says, as he already tried to figure out if he could turn down the contract, and that's what he realised.

"It's okay, I get it." Melinda realises, and as she does she gets an idea, "What if the girls and I move to New York with you?" Melinda asks.

"What?" Tony asks, sounding surprised, but his other emotions are hard to determine.

"We could move to New York. If I use your jet I can get from there to the Triskelion in an hour, and Bobbi doesn't start school again for a couple of weeks, which means less of a disruption, and Richard and Mary, and Rhodey, are stationed there." Melinda explains, seeing all good reasons, "But the question is if you'd be okay with us moving in with you." Melinda comments, as she knows it's a big step for both of them, but she also knows it's a step she's ready to take, the question is whether Tony is.

"I'm beyond okay with that." Tony says, leaning forward, "I love you Mel, and I love Daisy and Bobbi, so the four of us living together, isn't something I'm just okay with, it's something I want, something that I know will be amazing." Tony explains, sounding completely confident, not at all afraid of the idea of moving in with Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy, and because Melinda knows Tony so well she knows that he isn't just putting on a façade, rather he is truly happy.

"Yeah, it will be." Melinda says, leaning forward and kissing Tony, and for the next couple of minutes they continue to kiss before they break apart.

"I'm going to build a faster jet for us." Tony reveals, "I already have a few ideas how I can do it." Tony admits, getting a look on his face which tells Melinda he wants to start working already.
"Tomorrow." Melinda says, "I got a better idea of what we can do tonight." Melinda says, as she gives Tony a look.

"Oh…. I like the sound of that." Tony says, realising what Melinda means, as she stands up and sticks out her hand, which Tony takes and the two of them once more begin to kiss, but this time, as they kiss, they start to walk inside, and head upstairs.

The following morning both Melinda and Tony get up early on purpose so that they can tell William what they decided the night before, and once she is awake, Bobbi.

"Dad." Melinda says, as she and Tony walk into the kitchen where William is making breakfast, "Tony and I have to talk to you."

"Of course." William says, and as he does he glances down at Melinda's hand, it being clear what he is looking for, and even though both Melinda and Tony realise that neither of them comment.

"Tony and I have decided to move in together." Melinda reveals, "The girls and I are going to move to New York." She explains.

"Millie, that's great." William says, with a grin, and he walks over to Melinda and hugs her, and kisses her check.

"I'm happy for you both." William says, when he and Melinda break apart, and once they do he hugs Tony too, "To me you're already family." He says in a quiet voice and honestly that makes Tony feel beyond amazing.

"Thank you, William." Tony says, as his voice portrays how touched he feels.

"We plan to move to New York before school starts, so that Bobbi doesn't miss any, but feel free to stay here as long as you want." Melinda assures her father.

"It won't be long." William admits, "I've been assuming that something like this was going to happen for a while, so I've been looking into Sun City." He reveals.

"Really?" Melinda asks, sounding slightly surprised by that.

"Really, I've been wanting more sun." William admits, and as he does he, Melinda, and Tony hear the sound of Bobbi running down the stairs, "I'll give you three sometime." He says, before leaving.

"Together?" Tony asks, looking at Melinda.

"Together." Melinda confirms, as she reaches out and takes Tony's hand, which she squeezes.

"Hi Mom, Hi Uncle Tony," Bobbi says, with a grin.

"Hey Little Bird." Tony greets.

"Bobbi can you sit down, Uncle Tony and I have to talk to you." Melinda explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, as she sits down at the kitchen table, "Is everything okay?" Bobbi asks, as she looks between her mother and Tony, who walk over and sit down across from her.

"Yeah, everything's good, really good actually." Melinda corrects, looking over at Tony to have him say the next part.
"Little Bird your Mom and I have decided to move in together." Tony explains to Bobbi.

"You're moving here?" Bobbi asks, looking excited, as she looks at Tony.

"Actually, Bobbi we were thinking that me, you and Daisy would move to New York." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Is that something you could be okay with?" Tony asks as he knows that Bobbi's, and Daisy if she was old enough, opinion matters to both him and Melinda and that as much as they want something if Bobbi hates the idea then they wouldn't go through with it.

For a little while Bobbi is quiet, like she is pondering what she is going to say, and while she thinks both Melinda and Tony feel tense, both of them being extremely worried about what she is going to say.

"Can the big spare room be mine? Not the one I usually sleep in?" Bobbi asks curious, finally breaking the silence.

"I think that can be arranged." Tony says, after exchanging a look with Melinda, with an amused look on his face.

"Then yep! I'm okay with it." Bobbi reveals, to the complete relief of Melinda and Tony, "When are we going to move?" she asks curious.

"Soon, we want you to be able to start school in New York." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"That's in a couple of weeks." Bobbi realises.

"Yep, with help we're going to be able to move in a couple of days." Tony reveals.

"Cool." Bobbi says, looking relieved, and as they can see that Bobbi really likes the idea Melinda and Tony are very happy about that fact.

**August 18th, 1998**

For the four days that follow Melinda and Tony deciding to move in together the two of them, William, Phil, Clint, Natasha, Maria, and even Tony's bodyguard Happy, Richard, Mary and Rhodey all work together to move everything of Melinda and Tony's that they are bringing to New York, the two of them having decided that they are going to keep the DC house in case they ever need it.

Finally, after several long days the group are finally bringing the last of the boxes into the New York apartment that will now be home to Tony, Melinda, Bobbi and Daisy.

"This place is huge." Maria comments, as she looks around, "You sure you're not going to get lost?" she asks Melinda, who is holding Daisy.

"It's not that big." Tony argues.

"And I'm not going to get lost." Melinda reveals.

"Okay, not big? Seriously?" Clint who knows Tony pretty well, but still can't believe he made that comment, "There are six large bedrooms, two living rooms, a huge kitchen, a lab, a workshop, a study, and a gym, all spread over two huge levels. This place is huge." Clint points out.

"It's awesome." Bobbi says, with a grin, as she hurries into the room.
"And has some security weaknesses." Natasha comments.

"I know, I'm going to cover them." Melinda says, as she is determined to cover all the security weakness within a few days, and as she does she realises something and so she walks over to Bobbi, "Bobbi, if you ever feel like something's not right, or unsafe for any reason, and you can't find Uncle Tony or I, you can always talk to Happy." Melinda explains, as she and Tony talked to Happy and they all agreed that under the circumstances part of Happy's job now includes looking out for Bobbi and Daisy.

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod.

"I'll always be around to help if needed." Happy assures Bobbi, who nods and smiles.

"What do we want to do for Dinner?" Mary asks, as she's starting to feel hungry, so she assumes everyone else is.

"Pizza." Richard suggests, knowing that it is easiest meal to get with so many people.

"Sounds good." Melinda confirms, and everyone else around the room nod in agreement.

"Phil and I will go get it." Rhodey says, "We'll pick up drinks too." he says.

"Here." Tony says, as he hands over his credit card, and because he knows better than objecting Rhodey doesn't say anything, he just takes it.

"We'll be back soon." Phil says, before he and Rhodey leave the apartment.

"Let's make some room." Tony suggests, realising that there are boxes around the apartment, which are going to make it a little difficult to eat, and so that's exactly they do.

Before long Rhodey and Phil return and once they do the two of them, Richard, May, Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, Natasha, Clint, Maria, and Happy all enjoy dinner together in Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy's new home.

**August 21st 1998**

A few days have passed since Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy moved to New York, and since then the three of them have been getting used to living with Tony full time, Tony has been getting used to living with them, and Melinda has closed all the security gaps that exist.

It is currently very early morning and Melinda has been called to New York, and so she is getting ready, while Tony is lying in bed half awake.

"I don't know when I'll be back." Melinda tells Tony as she puts her flight suit on.

"It's okay. I'll look after Daisy and Bobbi." Tony assures her.

"I know you will." Melinda says, completely believing that, "Tell Bobbi that I will do my best to be back before Monday, but if not…." Melinda starts to say.

"I will take her to school and make sure she has her lunch and everything else she needs." Tony says, having seen what Melinda does on Bobbi's first day of school to know what he'll have to do if Melinda doesn't get home in time.

"Thank you." Melinda says, walking over to Tony, leaning forward and kissing him, "I love you." She says once they break apart.
"Love you too." Tony responds.

"Get some sleep, it will be a couple of hours before the girls are awake." Melinda says, before she leaves.

A couple of hours later Tony is now wide awake and as Daisy's cries have just been heard throughout the towers monitoring system, he has headed to her room to get her.

"Hey Tiny Toni." Tony says as he turns on the light.

"Unca Ony." Daisy says, sounding happy to see him.

"Today you've just got me, not your Mom." He says, as he picks her up, and the second he picks her up she stops crying, "Lets get you ready for the day before your sister wakes up." Tony says.

"Okay." Daisy says, as Tony carries her over to the changing table.

A little while later Tony has gotten Daisy ready for the day and is in the kitchen, walking back and forth as he checks his watch.

"Come on Happy, where are you?" Tony mutters to himself.

"Happy?" Daisy asks, sounding confused.

"He should be here soon." Tony tells Daisy, as he hears footsteps and Bobbi hurries into the room.

"Where's Mom?" Bobbi asks curious.

"She got called on a mission, so you're stuck with me." Tony explains.

"That's not a bad thing, Uncle Tony." Bobbi assures her Uncle.

"Thanks, Little Bird." Tony responds.

"Food!" Daisy suddenly says, causing Tony to laugh.

"It should be here soon, Tiny Toni." Tony assures her.

"Where is breakfast coming from?" Bobbi asks curious, as she knows for sure that Tony won't be cooking it.

"Happy's getting it, he should be here soon." Tony explains, thinking that maybe he should learn to cook at least basic breakfast for the girls sake.

"Here now, Boss." Happy says, walking into kitchen with a bag.

"Great." Tony says, sounding relieved, once Happy hands him the food the two of them, Bobbi, and Daisy start to enjoy breakfast together.

(line break)

Hours later Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy have spent the entire day together, and had a great day at that. It's now night time and as he has put Daisy down to sleep Tony is walking into Bobbi's room.

"Time for bed Little Bird." Tony says, as he walks in.
"Can I finish this chapter first Uncle Tony?" Bobbi asks curious, looking up from what she is reading.

"What are you reading?" Tony asks curious, as he walks over to Bobbi, and realises that what she is reading looks more than a text book than a novel.

"A book on human biology, I found it in the study, it's really interesting." Bobbi says.

"You really think so?" Tony asks curious, feeling excited about the possibility that Bobbi loves science.

"Yep." Bobbi says, with a grin. "So, can I keep reading?" she asks curious, and Tony flashes back to all the times he stayed up late reading.

"Sure." Tony answers, as he sits down next to Bobbi, "But how about you read the rest of the chapter to me? And we can talk about it." he suggests.

"Sure." Bobbi says, and once she does she continue to read the book, this time reading to Tony as well and as she reads the two of them talk about what is being read, both of them very much enjoying themselves.
December 9th 1998

Three months have passed since Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy moved in with Tony and since then the four of them have gotten completely used to living together, and Bobbi has gotten used to her new school, which she loves.

It's early morning and Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Tony are all having breakfast together, breakfast which they brought from a nearby diner.

"What's going on at school today?" Melinda asks her older daughter.

"I have a test in science." Bobbi answers.

"You ready for it?" Tony asks curious.

"Yep." Bobbi answers with a grin, "I love science." Bobbi admits, "I don't have to hold back, pretend I'm not as good as I am, like I have to in PE." She explains, and as she dose Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"Bobbi…." Melinda starts to say.

"You don't have to say anything, Mom, I know why I have to hold back in PE, I get it." Bobbi assures her mother, but before Melinda, or Tony, can say anything Melinda's phone rings.

"May." Melinda answers.

"Hey, you need to get to the Triskelion, as fast as you can." Phil's voice says, through the phone, and the fact that he doesn't great Melinda tells her that whatever is going is serious.

"Okay, I'll be right there." Melinda says, before hanging up.

"Work?" Tony asks, once Melinda hangs up, as that's what he assumes.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "Can you…." She starts to say.

"Take Bobbi to school, of course." Tony answers.

"Thanks." Melinda says, before kissing Tony and standing up, once she stands up she walks over to Bobbi, "Good luck with your test, have a good day." Melinda says, as she hugs her daughter.

"Thanks Mom." Bobbi says.

"I love you."
"Love you too." Bobbi responds, and once she does Melinda walks over to Daisy who she kisses on her head.

"Bye Bye, Daisy." Melinda says to her daughter before she leaves the kitchen and the apartment, leaving Bobbi, Tony and Daisy to enjoy their breakfast together.

Just under an hour after Melinda left the apartment, thanks to a very fast plane, she arrives at the Triskelion, and as she sees Clint, Phil, Natasha, and Maria waiting in the lobby Melinda realises that whatever is going on must be big.

"What's going on?" Melinda asks, as she looks between the members of her team.

"We'll explain on the way." Phil explains, "You up for flying to South America?" he asks.

"Sure." Melinda responds, "Let's go." Melinda says, and the five of them start to walk together, heading towards the hangers.

After a few hours of flying Melinda lands the jet that she, Clint, Phil, Natasha, and Maria are flying in an empty field in Bolivia.

"What's the plan?" Maria asks, looking between the others, "How are we going to handle this one?" She asks and as she does Melinda glances at Phil, knowing that this is his department.

"May and Natasha are going to go to the building, you're going to clear it, and then destroy the weapons and tech." Phil explains, "We aren't worried about being subtle on this one." He reveals.

"Got it." Melinda and Natasha respond, both knowing what that means.

"What about me and Hill?" Clint asks curious.

"You're going to cover Melinda and Natasha's backs, help them clear the building. I'll be running back end from here." Phil explains, "We want to be in and out as quickly as possible."

"So, no one realises what we've done until we're gone." Melinda comments.

"Exactly." Phil says, with a nod, "Move out." He says, and once he does Melinda, Natasha, Clint, and Maria all grab their gear, and various weapons, before leaving.

About fifteen minutes later Melinda, Natasha, Clint, and Maria have split into two groups and Melinda, and Natasha, both of whom have small bags, are on a rooftop near the building they have to clear, just observing, both very well aware of the fact that Clint and Maria are nearby doing the same thing.

"We've got to clear that building before we do anything, any ideas?" Melinda asks, looking at Natasha as she has a few ideas, but she would love to know what Natasha thinks.

"Fire alarm." Natasha answers and Melinda gives her a look, "It's simple, will clear the building, and in the chaos we're not likely to be noticed."

"We'll only have a couple of minutes." Melinda points out.

"It's me and you, do you really think we need more time?" Natasha asks curious.
"Nope. But we're going to give ourselves a little longer." Melinda realises, giving Natasha look, and thanks to the look Natasha realises what Melinda is thinking.

"I like the way you think." Natasha admits, telling the complete truth.

"Come on, we've got to get in and out as quickly as possible." Melinda tells Natasha and the two of them head back down the building.

Over the next few minutes Melinda and Natasha set a small fire in a bin, which sets off the fire alarm, and watch as the building is evacuated.

"That's twelve, let's go." Melinda tells Natasha, and once she does the two of them slip into the building, and both start running up the stairs, getting to the second floor where they find a reinforced locked door.

"They locked a door in the middle of a fire, that says a lot." Natasha comments.

"Really does." Melinda confirms, and once she does she pull out a small device which she sticks to the door, "Step back." Melinda says, and the two them step back, and seconds later the door blows open and the two of them hurry into what looks like a lab with advanced tech and weapons, "We've got to be quick." Melinda says to Natasha.

"I'd say we've got twenty seconds… max." Natasha reveals.

"Then let's get to work." Melinda says, and the two of them both take off their bags and start to place explosives around the lab, setting times, both being very well aware that they have very little time. "Window, now." Melinda finally says.

"Hang on, I can't get this." Natasha says, as something isn't connecting the way it should.

"Go, I got it." Melinda says, getting to Natasha's side and pushing her towards the window, "Come on, come on, come on." Melinda says, as she works to connect what she needs to connect.

"May! Come on!" Natasha yells, from the window.

"I'm right behind you, go." Melinda says, as she finishes connecting what she needs to connect and starts to run towards the window, which Natasha shots out and jumps out of. Just as Melinda gets to the window the bombs explode and Melinda is thrown out of the window, causing her not to be able to land like she usually would.

"MAY!" Natasha yells, having seen how her friend landed and knowing that she's going to be injured the question is how badly, as she runs towards where Melinda is.

"I'm good." Melinda answers, as Natasha gets to her, and the second she does Natasha knows how Melinda has been injured.

"With a broken ankle?" Natasha asks, as Melinda's left ankle is at a very odd angle, as they both hear both Police and Fire sirens.

"You need to go." Melinda tells Natasha.

"We need to go." Natasha corrects.

"I'm not moving anywhere fast, we just blew up a building, we can't be caught if we are we'll be putting S.H.I.E.L.D, every single agent, at risk you've got to go, that's an order Agent Romanoff."
Melinda says, playing a card she never plays, knowing that if it's just her she has a better chance of getting out of the situation, especially if she knows Natasha is safe.

"Yes Ma'am." Natasha says, bitterness clear in her voice, before hurrying away.

Once Natasha hurries away Melinda starts to look around trying to figure out what to do, tries to figure out a way to secure her ankle so that she can get moving. Looking around Melinda sees a plank of wood which she reaches over and grabs, and puts against her ankle.

"This is going to hurt." Melinda mutters, as she knows that if she is going to get her ankle into a position so that it can be splint it is going to hurt, but before she can make a start on doing that a car drives down the alley and stops right in front of her, and so Melinda starts to run through any way to fight considering the circumstances, but seconds later Natasha gets out of the front, "Nat? What are you doing? You had your orders."

"S.H.I.E.L.D doesn't leave their own before, team members have each other's backs, you taught me that." Natasha tells Melinda as she hurries over to her, "I'm not leaving you Linda, come on." Natasha says, as she sticks out her hand for Melinda to grab.

"I'm proud of you." Melinda admits, as she takes Natasha's hand and allows her to pull her up, and making sure not to put her weight on her injured ankle Melinda, with Natasha's help, hobbles to the car, and once at the car Melinda gets in the back, while Natasha gets in the front and speeds toward where the plane is.

A little while after Natasha and Melinda speed away from the building that Natasha and Melinda blew up the two of them arrive back at the plane, where they find Clint, Maria, and Phil waiting.

"Cutting it a bit close? Aren't you?" Clint asks, as Natasha gets out of the front seat.

"Where's May?" Phil asks, his stomach dropping.

"Back here." Natasha explains, as she hurries the back seat.

Due to the fact that they know it must be bad for Melinda to be in the back seat, and clearly in need of Natasha's help, Phil, Clint and Maria hurry to the car just as Natasha helps Melinda out of the car, and the second they see her they realise what's wrong.

"Clint, get us in the air." Phil says, as he walks over so that he can help Natasha help Melinda.

"I can fly." Melinda tells Phil.

"You're not going to though." Phil informs Melinda, "You're resting, Clint is flying." He says, it being clear that what he is saying isn't a question.

"Yes Phil." Clint says, as he hurries to the cockpit.

"I've flown in worst shape." Melinda points out, saying what Phil already knows.

"Doesn't mean you're going to now." Phil says.

"Coulson's right May isn't it better that you rest?" Maria asks, and Melinda just gives her a dirty look.

"May, don't terrify the rookie." Natasha says, sounding completely amused, as she, Melinda, Phil, and Maria get back to plane Melinda sits down in one of the seats, and within minutes Clint has
flown them into the air.

Hours later Melinda, with a plaster on her leg, and using crutches, walks into hers and Tony's apartment; Natasha having flown the Stark jet back to New York for her, before heading back to DC by train.

Checking the time Melinda sneaks into Bobbi's room, then Daisy's, and after making sure both her girls are okay she heads to the lab, knowing that this time of night she is more likely to find Tony there than in their bedroom.

Getting to the lab Melinda's suspicion is confirmed when she finds Tony working hard at his workbench, and as she sees that Melinda has to pause for a moment, as she loves watching Tony work, especially when he is as focused as he clearly is.

"Tony." Melinda says, walking towards him, and it doesn't surprise her when Tony doesn't even look up, "Tony." Melinda once more repeats, but this time she is close enough that she can put her hand on his shoulder, and that causes him to jump, and turn around.

"Mel! You're home." Tony says, sounding happy before he leans up and kisses her, and once they break apart he realises what is on Melinda's leg, "What happened?" he asks worried.

"Side effect of a successful mission." Melinda explains, as Tony moves off his seat so she can sit down.

"Mel…" Tony says, giving her a look, as Melinda sits down.

"I'm okay, it's a broken ankle, it will be healed in six weeks." Melinda explains, knowing that because of the break it would have required surgery and longer healing time if it wasn't for S.H.I.E.L.D medical tech and medication.

"Going to be a long six weeks." Tony comments, trying to hide how worried he is about the woman he loves.

"Really is." Melinda confirms, "How were the girls today?" Melinda asks curious.

"Good, they're both good." Tony assures Melinda, "Bobbi got 100% on her science quiz." Tony reveals, it being more than clear that he is proud.

"That's great." Melinda says, looking happy, and proud.

"Yep." Tony confirms, "I Put it on the fridge and we went for ice cream after dinner." He reveals.

"Of course, you did." Melinda says, looking amused, "So I guess we're going to give Bobbi, and Daisy, ice cream every time they do well."

"Sounds good to me, achievements need to be recognized in a way that matters," Tony says, and Melinda knows exactly why Tony thinks that and so she reaches out and takes his hand, which she squeezes.

For a few minutes Melinda and Tony sit together, neither talking, just enjoying each other's company.

"I should go to bed." Melinda finally says, breaking the silence, "Are you going to keep working or join me?" Melinda asks curious.
"I'm going to keep working, I'm close to a breakthrough." Tony admits.

"You don't have to explain yourself." Melinda assures him, "Night." Melinda says, before leaning forward and kissing him.

"Night." Tony responds, and once they break apart Melinda heads to bed while Tony continues with his work.

January 23rd 1999

A little over six weeks has passed since Melinda broke her ankle and in that time Melinda's ankle has healed and she is back to full duty, though she hasn't been back on a mission since.

It is a Saturday afternoon and while Tony is in LA on Stark business Melinda is home with the girls. While Daisy is napping Melinda is in the living room of the apartment working on some of her S.H.I.E.L.D paperwork.

"Mom." Bobbi says, walking into the room.

"Yeah?" Melinda asks, looking up from what she is doing in time to see Bobbi climb over the furniture, "Bobbi...." Melinda starts to say.

"I know, I know, I won't climb over furniture." Bobbi tells her mother.

"You could at least try to be convincing." Melinda tells her daughter.

"I'll remember that." Bobbi comments, "Mom, there was something I was wondering."

"Sure, what is it?" Melinda asks curious.

"I was wondering if you could teach me martial arts." Bobbi admits, looking a little nervous.

"Why would you like me to?" Melinda asks her daughter, wanting to know her reasons.

"I have my powers, and they're great, and can be helpful" Bobbi admits, clearly showing that she isn't scared of her powers like she once was, "But if I ever need to protect myself, or Daisy, or Uncle Tony I want to be able to do it properly." Bobbi explains, and as she does it is clear to Melinda that this is something that is important to her.

"Protecting your sister and Tony isn't your responsibility." Melinda informs her daughter.

"I know, but It's something I can do, something which, let's face it, I may have to do, so I would like to be able to do it practically." Bobbi admits, sounding a lot older than she is, something which does actually hurt Melinda as she realises that as as much as she's tried to protect her daughter she hasn't been able to protect her from everything.

"There are going to be rules, and you have to follow them." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"I will." Bobbi says, with a nod.

"Okay, let's go to the gym." Melinda says, closing her paperwork and as she does Bobbi looks excited and Melinda knows that while she will not teach Bobbi in the same way she taught Clint, Natasha, and Maria, she will take their extremely seriously as she knows how dangerous it could be.

March 20th 1999
About two months have passed since Melinda started to teach Bobbi Martial arts and every since then Bobbi has continued to learn and is improving at an amazing rate.

It is a Saturday evening and Melinda and Tony are getting ready to go to an event which is honouring Peggy, and event that Phil, Rhodoy, Richard, Mary, Fury, and other members of the Carter family or who have relation to Howling Commandoes, are also attending.

"So, you're really giving a speech?" Melinda asks Tony curious as he does his bow tie, knowing that it's unusual for him.

"One I've actually written." Tony says, showing Melinda the cue cards.

"Are you actually going to read the cards?" Melinda asks curious, as he walks towards Tony wearing a long black dress with a sweetheart neckline and her hair down.

"For Aunt Peg I am." Tony confirms, as Peggy asked him to give this speech so he would never screw it up, and Melinda smiles softly, "You ready to go?"

"Yep." Melinda confirms.

"And you're sure about these baby sitters?" Tony asks his voice joking, "You sure they're up to it?" he asks, his voice slightly more serious.

"Yeah, it's going to teach them a few things, plus Bobbi and Daisy are really excited." Melinda explains, "So are Sharon and Antoine." Melinda adds.

"Of course, they are." Tony says, looking amused, "My lady." He says, sticking out his arm for Melinda to take, and she just rolls her eyes, but takes it and both head out of their room.

About a minute later Melinda and Tony walk into the living room where Bobbi, Daisy, Sharon and Trip and their baby sitters Natasha, Clint, and Maria are.

"Wow you clean up nice." Clint comments.

"Eloquent as ever Barton." Tony says, looking amused.

"Pretty." Daisy says, looking between Melinda and Tony, from where she is sitting watching her sister, Sharon, and Trip play.

"Thanks Daisy." Melinda says, walking over to her daughter, "Be good for Uncle Clint, Natasha, and Maria." She tells Daisy, kissing the top of her head, "That goes for you three too." Melinda tells Bobbi, Sharon and Trip.

"Yes, Aunt Melinda." Trip says, in a polite voice, as Sharon nods.

"Of course." Bobbi says, with a smirk, which makes Bobbi look a lot like Tony, and the man himself laughs at that, "Say Hi to Aunt Peggy for me." She requests.

"Oh, me too!" Sharon adds.

"Of course, we will Little Bird, Sharon." Tony says, even though he knows that Peggy is going to pay a surprise visit to Daisy and Bobbi, and likely Sharon and Trip, tomorrow, and Bobbi walks over to give Tony a hug.

"Have fun." Bobbi says to Tony as he hugs her.
"You too." Tony tells Bobbi as he returns the hug and places a kiss on the top of her head.

"You have…." Melinda starts to say.

"Your number, Tony's number, Peggy's number, Coulson's number, and even Happy's number, yep." Maria confirms, knowing what Melinda was going to say.

"We'll look after Bobbi, Daisy, Sharon, and Antoine; you and Tony have fun." Clint says, knowing better than telling Melinda not to worry about her daughters, or Sharon and Trip.

"If you don't want to be late you should go." Natasha says, glancing at the clock.

"Right we should." Melinda says, walking over to Bobbi, "I'll see you later, I love you." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Love you too." Bobbi responds.

"Bye Uncle Tony, Aunt Melinda." Sharon says, with a wave as Melinda and Tony walk to the elevators and take them down to the garage.

A while later Melinda and Tony are at the event that is honouring Peggy and they have both had a drink while they mingle with the other guests.

"Tony, Melinda." A very familiar voice says and they both turn to see Peggy walking towards them.

"Aunt Peggy." Melinda and Tony say together, both sounding happy.

"it's so good to see you both." Peggy says, as she hugs both of them at the same time.

"It's good to see you too." Melinda assures her.

"Really good." Tony confirms, as the three of them break apart.

"I know how much you hate these things, so thank you for doing this for me." Peggy says, as she straightens her godson's bow tie.

"You really don't have to thank me, Aunt Peg, not after everything you've done for me." Tony assures her, and Peggy just smiles back at her godson.

"Are we still on for tomorrow?" Melinda asks, breaking the silence.

"Of course. I wouldn't miss it." Peggy assures her.

"Great." Melinda says, looking happy.

"If everyone would take their seats we can begin." A presentation says and as she does everyone starts to take their seats, Peggy, Melinda, Tony all sitting at the table with Peggy's son, Daughter, nephew, Richard, and Mary. Richard and Mary sitting at the table as Richard is representing his grandfather, the Howling Commando Pinky Pinkerton who died a couple of months earlier, outliving his daughter, Richard's mother, who died when Richard was a child.

After Richard's mother died when he was young Pinky reconnected with his grandson, who he didn't know as Pinky had a falling out with his daughter, and because he never got the chance to make things right with her he became a huge part of Richard's life, going so far as practically
raising him, and not long after they connected Richard met Peggy for the first time; and when he did she insisted he call her 'Aunt Peggy' which he has been doing ever since, and so it means a lot to him to be with Peggy when she receives her award.

Over the next half an hour or so everyone at the event enjoy their meals and talks from various people, including Fury, all of whom talk about how incredible Peggy is, the amazing things she has done, and how she completely deserves the Lifetime Service Award she is being awarded with.

"Now I would like to welcome Director Carter's Godson Tony Stark up to say a few words." The presenter says.

"You've got this." Melinda says, supportively, as she squeezes Tony's hand before he gets up, and heads to the stage.

"Good evening." Tony greats, when he gets to the stage, being glad that there is no press in the room, and that the people who are in it aren't likely to talk about things that are said or done as that way he can be a bit more open. "You may know Peggy Carter as Director Carter, or Agent Carter, but to me she's Aunt Peggy, who has influenced my life more than I can put into words, who's presence is my life is one of the things I'm most thankful for." Tony says, looking around the room, but he focuses at the table where his family is sitting. "You don't need me to tell you everything Aunt Peggy's achieved, you already know, you wouldn't be here if you didn't." Tony says, "But what I can say is this, Peggy Carter is one of the most amazing people I've ever met, she constantly inspires me and no matter what has always been there for me, loved me, shown me kindness and has been someone I could always count on, no matter what." Tony says, "So, if you'd raise your glasses I would like to propose a toast, to Peggy Carter, a hero, an inspiration, and completely deserving of a lifetime service award." Tony says, "To Peggy." He says, toasting and everyone around the room does the same, before heading back to the table where he sits back with his family, Melinda once more taking his hand as he sits down.

Hours later Melinda and Tony have returned home, checked on Bobbi, Daisy, Sharon, and Trip who are all asleep, Trip and Sharon staying for the night in two of the spare rooms, and said goodbye to Natasha, Clint, and Maria.

It's late at night but rather than sleeping Melinda and Tony, both of whom have changed into more comfortable clothes, are sitting on one of their balcony's drinking whiskey.

"What's going on in that head of yours?" Melinda asks curious, as she can tell that Tony is thinking deeply about something.

"Nothing, I'm just thinking." Tony admits.

"About?" Melinda asks.

"It was Mom and Aunt Peg and Jarvis, they saved me, and I didn't even realise." Tony says, looking sad, "Dad sucked, but they were always there, Ana too."

"Yeah, they were." Melinda confirms, as she knows that.

"I miss my Mom." Tony admits, doing what he basically never does and admits that.

"I know." Melinda says, reaching over and taking Tony's hand.

"I want to be that for Bobbi and Daisy, someone they can always count on." Tony reveals.
"Tony, you already are." Melinda assures him, "They love you, they look up to you, Bobbi wants to be like you, and Daisy smiles whenever you walk into a room." Melinda explains, as she leans forward, "I know you worry about being like your father, but as far as I'm concerned you have nothing to worry about because I know you're too much like your mother for that to ever happen, no matter what anyone else thinks" Melinda reveals.

"How do you have so much faith in me?" Tony asks, as he feels like he doesn't deserve it.

"Because I love you, and I know you better than anyone else." Melinda reveals, and having no idea how to respond to that Tony just leans forward and kisses her.

"I love you too." Tony responds.

"How about we head inside." Melinda suggests.

"I'm not tired." Tony reveals.

"Neither am I." Melinda says, with a smirk, and a she does Tony smirks back and they both head inside, heading straight to the bedroom with thoughts of something other than sleep on their minds.

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**AN2:** So I know Richard's family is probably something I should have mentioned earlier, but the truth is I was trying to figure out other stuff and I realised that I never mentioned it, so sorry about that. Also, the connection that Melinda and Richard have, why they have known each other longer than Tony, will be explained in a future chapter.
Chapter 15

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: IMPORTANT: So, I have four exams in four days over the next few days. If I miss an update during that time I apologise, and I will do everything in my power to make it up to you. PLEASE LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

SORRY THAT THIS IS LATER THAN USUAL, I LOST TRACK OF TIME.

June 7th 1999

Over two months have passed since Peggy receive her lifetime service award and in that time, Bobbi has celebrated her twelfth birthday while Maria has started to work with Melinda, Clint, Natasha, and Phil full time.

It's a Monday evening and like she tries to do during the summer Melinda has spent all day with Bobbi and Daisy, having fun with her daughters, and as it is a lovely evening the three of them are having dinner on the balcony.

"We can go back again, can't we mom?" Bobbi asks, looking excited, "I'm sure Daisy would love too try when she's a bit older." She admits.

"I'm sure we can." Melinda assures her daughter Tony walks through one of the balcony doors.

"Unca Tony!" Daisy says, sounding happy.

"Hey Tiny Toni." Tony greats, as he kisses Bobbi’s head, "Little Bird." He greats, as he walks over to Daisy and does the same with her, before he sits down next to Melinda, "What did you three get up to today?" he asks curious.

"We went to the park, I went horse riding!" Bobbi says, looking excited.

"Horses." Daisy says, with a grin.

"Did you have fun?" Tony asks curious.

"Yep." Bobbi confirms, "I want to ride more." Bobbi reveals, and as she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"We'll see what we can arrange." Tony answers, and once he does he, Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy continue to have an enjoyable dinner together.

A while later Daisy and Bobbi are both asleep and Melinda and Tony are both in Tony's workshop, while Tony is working on something Melinda is sitting on one of the benches, drinking whiskey as she watches him work.

"So, something happened at work today." Tony reveals.

"Oh?" Melinda asks, sounding curious as she gives Tony a look.
Yeah, I now have an assistant." Tony says, an assistant being something he's always refused in the past.

"How'd that happen?" Melinda asks curious.

"Well, I was in my office when someone from the secretary pool barged in, she apparently pepper sprayed the members of staff that wouldn't let her in and pointed out a huge mistake I made." Tony explains.

"And you offered her a job as your assistant?" Melinda asks, looking amused.

"Yep." Tony says, with a nod, "Mel I didn't realise the mistake I made, she did, and if I have someone I can trust who can take on some of the load of the company then I can spend less time at the company and more time with you and the girls." Tony explains.

"Do you trust her?" Melinda asks, knowing that is a big deal for Tony.

"I'm not the path to." Tony admits.

"What's her name?" Melinda asks curious.

"Virginia Potts, I've started calling her Pepper." Tony reveals, knowing exactly why Melinda would want her name.

"Of course, you have." Melinda says, with an amused look on her face, and the two of them drift into silence as Tony continues to work and Melinda continues to drink whiskey as she watches him work.

**June 14th 1999**

A week has passed since Tony hired an assistant and, in that time, Melinda has run a background check on Virginia 'Pepper' Potts, and found nothing suspicious.

It's mid-morning on a Monday and Tony, Melinda, Daisy and Bobbi are having a late breakfast together, both Melinda and Tony being home from work for the day as Melinda worked all weekend, and Tony has to go to LA at the end of the week.

As the family of four eat and enjoy their breakfast together the elevator doors open and a woman that both Melinda and Tony recognize as Pepper Potts walk into the apartment.

"I'm sorry to disturb you Mr Stark, but I have forms that require your signature." Pepper reveals, trying to hide her surprise at the fact that Tony is having breakfast with two children and a woman.

"Of course." Tony says, standing up, "Pepper I would like you to meet my girlfriend Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy." Tony explains as he walks over to her, pointing to each of his girls as he introduces them.

"It's nice to meet you." Melinda says, meaning that as while people who didn't know Tony would assume she would be jealous of a new women in Tony's life she's not, because she knows him, because she trusts him.

"Hi Miss Potts." Bobbi greats, as Daisy waves.

"Um Hi." Pepper responds, as Tony takes the papers and starts to sign them.

"You should learn to forge my signature, it will save time." Tony comments.
"I'm not going to do that, I take my job seriously." Pepper responds, revealing a lot about her character.

"That's the right answer, even if Tony won't admit it." Melinda reveals, with an amused look on her face.

"Good to know." Pepper says, looking amused.

"Really Mel?" Tony asks, and Melinda just gives him an amused look back and so he turns to Pepper, "Is there anything else you need Ms Potts?" Tony asks curious.

"No, Mr Stark, enjoy your day." Pepper says, "I'm really sorry for interrupting, Melinda." Pepper says, looking at her

"It's fine, believe me it's not the worse interrupting we've had." Melinda reveals.

"Okay, goodbye." Pepper says, before leaving via the elevators, and once she leaves Tony walks back over to his girls and continues to enjoy his day with them.

10 th of July

A little over a month has passed since Tony hired Pepper as his assistant, and ever since she has been handling some of his work, and his schedule, which has allowed Tony to spend more time with Daisy, Melinda, and Bobbi, something which makes him truly happy.

It's a Saturday afternoon and Bobbi is in her bedroom lying on her bed and throwing three year old Daisy up in the air, throwing her pretty high because of her powers, and it is clear that Daisy is enjoying every second.

"Higher!" Daisy calls.

"I've got to be careful Daisy, I can't throw you too high." Bobbi responds, as she doesn't want to risk her sister hitting the roof, as she catches her sister and throws her up higher.

"What do you think you're doing?" Melinda's voice asks, and it is clear to Bobbi that her mother is less than happy.

"Having fun." Bobbi answers, as she catches Daisy, "And Daisy loves it, don't you?"

"Yep." Daisy answers, "It fun." Daisy tells her mother.

"Mom, I'm being careful promise." Bobbi assures her mother, "I would never do anything to hurt Daisy."

"Okay, just don't throw her as high as you just did, that was too high." Melinda informs her daughter as she can tell that Daisy is really happy, but that doesn't mean that she completely likes what Bobbi is doing.

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod, and she goes back to throwing her sister up into the air.

After leaving Bobbi's room Melinda heads straight to the workshop where Tony is as she wants his opinion, and his company.

As Melinda walks in Tony notices, because he isn't too focused on what he is doing, and because of that he can tell right away that something is up.
"Mel, what's up?" Tony asks, walking over to Melinda as she sits down on one of the benches.

"Bobbi and Daisy have a new game," Melinda explains, "Bobbi throws Daisy up in the air using her powers and then catches her…. They both love it."

"And you don't like it." Tony realises, as he sits down next to Melinda, "You know Bobbi would never hurt Daisy."

"I know." Melinda quickly says, "But a split second of mis-calculation, or of distraction and Daisy could accidently get hurt, and Bobbi would never forgive herself if that happened." Melinda explains.

"You right, she wouldn't." Tony says, also knowing that, "Mel, since the day you took Bobbi in you have taught her not to be ashamed of her powers, not to be scared of them, and if you stop something which they are both enjoying because you're worried about what is going to happen then Bobbi's going to start worrying again, she's going to think you don't trust her, she's going be scared of her powers again." Tony points out.

"I want to protect them both." Melinda tells Tony.

"I know." Tony says, reaching out and taking Melinda's hand, "But this isn't something they need your protection from, they're just having fun." He reveals, and the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side, Melinda knowing that Tony is right, but at the same time she wants to protect her daughters from what might happen.

**August 13th 1999**

About a month after Bobbi started to play a new game with her sister, something the two of them have done several times since. It's a Friday night and Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria are over at Tony and Melinda's apartment. While all six of them are eating Chinese food in the living room, Tony is sitting on one of the couches working on designs while Melinda, Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria are all sitting on the floor working on paper work, though Melinda is right in front of the chair Tony is sitting on.

"How do we have so much paperwork?" Melinda asks, sounding shocked, and a little annoyed.

"We've been avoiding it for about a month." Clint comments.

"Try three." Phil corrects.

"Wow, I think you have me beat for procrastination." Tony comments, looking at Melinda.

"Not quiet." Melinda tells him.

"Actually, maybe I'm pretty sure it's been even longer than three months since we've done paperwork." Maria comments, "Which is why Fury gave us the ultimatum."

"True, it was unfair of him." Clint comments.

"What was the ultimatum?" Tony asks curious.

"Either we do the paperwork or each of us will be given assignments which are personally chosen for each of us based on things we hate to do." Melinda explains, and as she does Tony laughs, which causes Melinda to give him a dirty look.
"Come on, Mel, if it wasn't you given the ultimatum you would find it funny too." Tony admits, but before Melinda has a chance to say anything Natasha speaks,

"Linda, Stark, Daisy." Natasha says, gesturing to where Daisy is standing, clearly watching what is going on.

"Tiny Toni?" Tony asks.

"What's wrong?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Nothink, I heard talking." Daisy admits, as she walks over to her mother and Tony, "Hi!" she says, to Phil, Clint, Natasha and Maria, the ladder two having smiled back at her while the former waved.

"And that was exciting, but Daisy you should be in bed." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Don't want to." Daisy objects, and because of the look of her face Clint is resisting the urge to laugh, and honestly so is Tony but he has a bit more experience and so he is better at trying not to laugh.

"How about a story first Tiny Toni, then will you go to bed?" Tony offers, looking at her, and as soon as he does Daisy grins looking excited.

"Unca Phil, Cap Merica?" Daisy asks, looking at her uncle, as he has recently been telling her the story of Captain America.

"Excuse me." Tony says, before quickly leaving the room and as he does Melinda's heart sinks.

"Um." Phil says, looking at Melinda, not sure how to answer Daisy's question after Tony's reaction.

"It's fine." Melinda says, standing up, "Daisy listen to Uncle Phil's story then you have to go to bed."

"Okay." Daisy answer, with a nod, and Melinda heads out of the room, clearly following Tony.

"Okay, come on, Daisy." Phil says, walking over to Daisy, and once he is close enough he picks her up and carriers her back to her room, where he tells her the story of Steve Rogers until she falls asleep.

"Um, what's the deal with Stark and Captain America?" Maria asks confused, "Wasn't Cap and his dad Friends?" she asks, looking between Natasha and Clint.

"Don't ask." Natasha and Clint respond, and they both continue to do their work.

After leaving the living room Melinda has followed Tony to the workshop where he is leaning against the work bench just staring at things while not working.

"Tony." Melinda says, putting her hand on his back, "Talk to me." Melinda requests.

"I wasn't expecting Daisy to ask about him." Tony admits, "It just reminded me of all the times Dad would talk about him." Tony explains, Melinda hearing a level of bitterness to his voice.

"You've been in the room when Aunt Peggy told Bobbi, and Daisy, stories of Captain America and you didn't react like this." Melinda points out.
"It's different when Aunt Peggy's the one telling the stories." Tony reveals.

"Why?" Melinda asks curious as she wants to understand more, as even between her and Tony Captain America is a subject they usually avoid.

"Because Aunt Peg used to tell me stories about him, and when she would tell them they would be different than when Dad would obsessively talk about nothing else." Tony explains, and as he does he looks up at Melinda.

"Tony, I love you, and I know your issues with Captain America, I understand them, but Bobbi and Daisy don't, and Daisy at least isn't going to understand, she just wants to hear an amazing story about a hero." Melinda explains, "If you want to take that away form her....." Melinda starts to say

"No." Tony quickly says, "I don't want to do that." He admits, "I'll try to control my reaction better."

"If you ever want to talk about this, you can talk to me." Melinda assures him, even though she knows Tony isn't likely to take her up on that offer.

"I know." Tony says, before leaning forward and kissing Melinda.

**November 20th 1999**

Ever since Daisy asked for the story of Captain America three months earlier she has asked several times and Tony has been controlling his reaction better, though it is clear to Melinda at least that it is hard for Tony every time she asks.

It's early morning on a Saturday and Melinda is fast asleep, or at least she is until she hears the door to the bedroom open and hears,

"Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear, Mom/Mel." Being sung and as she opens her eyes she sees Daisy, Bobbi and Tony walk into the room Tony carrying a large birthday cake.

"Wow." Melinda says, looking amazed as she sits up while Bobbi and Daisy climb onto the bed, and Tony walks over and puts the cake, which is on a tray, on Melinda's lap.

"Happy Thirtieth birthday, Mel." Tony says, leaning forward to kiss her.

"You got to blow out the candles." Bobbi says, as Melinda and Tony break apart.

"How about you and Daisy help me with that." Melinda suggests, looking between her daughters.

"Yes!" Daisy says, sounding happy and she, Bobbi, and Daisy blow out the candles that are on the cake.

"It's triple chocolate cake from the bakery you like." Tony explain, having gotten that name from Natasha, as he hands Daisy, Bobbi, and Melinda forks, "There are also a lot of presents out in the living room for you to open when you want, which may include keys to a new motorbike I've built from scratch." Tony explains.

"Thank you, Tony." Melinda says, knowing that she can't wait to give that bike a test drive, "I take it you have a plan for today?"

"Just you, Me, Bobbi, Daisy spending all day together with no phones, no interruptions." Tony
explains, as he knows that that is what Melinda would want most for birthday.

"That sounds like a perfect day." Melinda answers, with a smile, and once she does she, Bobbi, Daisy, and Tony start to eat the cake.

December 31st 1999

Over a month has passed since Melinda, Tony, Daisy, and Bobbi spent Melinda's birthday together and in that time the family of four have also celebrated Christmas together, and to his annoyance Tony has had to go to Bern Switzerland for a conference, to give a speech.

With only half an hour until Mid-night on New Years eve, at least in Switzerland, Tony is very drunk and walking through a party with Happy and a female scientist he has been talking to.

"Tony Stark, great speech, man!" A random party guest, who gets moved away by Happy, says.

"I gave a speech? How was it?" Tony asks curious.

"Edifying." Happy answers.

"Unintelligible." The female scientist, Maya Hanson says.

"Really?" Tony asks.

"Mm-hmm." Maya comments.

"It's my favourite kind, a winning combo." Tony says, as he and Maya continue to walk together, with Happy, Tony slightly leading her.

"Where are we going?" Maya asks curious.

"I wanna see your research... so your room." Tony explains.

"Okay, I can show you my research." Maya says, knowing Tony's reputation so she assumes a lot more than just looking at research is going to happen.

"Mr Stark, Ho Yinsen." A man who is clearly at the conference says, stopping Tony and Maya to talk to them.

"Oh, I finally met a man called Ho." Tony says, as he shakes Yinsen's hand, and turns back to Maya, "Come here."

"I would like to introduce you to our guest, Dr Wu." Yinsen says, as he leads Tony and Maya over to the man who Yinsen wants to introduce Tony to.

"Oh, this guy." Tony says, to Wu.

"Mr Stark." Doctor Wu greets.

"Hey." Tony says as he shakes Doctor Wu's hand, and once he does he starts to blow into a party horn as he walks away with Maya

"Bye." Maya says, to Yinsen and Doctor Wu.

"Perhaps another time." Yinsen says, as Tony walks away.
As Tony and Maya walk away with Happy they don't get far before someone else approaches them, this time a man with long hair and a clearly injured leg.

"Mr Stark! Oh wow, Hey, Tony! Aldrich Killian." Kilian introduces, "I'm a big fan of your work!" he says, to Maya

"My work?' Maya asks, sounding surprised.

"Who isn't? He means me." Tony comments.

"Well, of course. But, Miss Hansen, my organization has been tracking your research since year two of MIT." Kilian explains, as Tony, Maya and Happy get into the elevator.

"Yeah, we're full." Happy says, trying to stop Killian from coming inside, but he ducks under Happy's arm and manages to get into the elevator.

"Oh, wow, he made it. he made the cut." Tony comments.

"What floor are you going to, Pal?" Happy asks.

"Oh, now, that is an appropriate question. The ground floor, actually. I've got a proposal I'm putting together with myself. It's a privately funded think thank called, Advance Idea Mechanics." Killian says, as he holds out two business cards towards Tony and Maya.

"Okay." Maya says, taking the cards.

"Um, she'll take both, one to throw away and one not to call." Tony says.

"Advance Idea Mechanics, or AIM for short." Killian says, as he puts to the logo on his shirt, "Do you get it?"

"I can see that, cause it's on your t-shirt." Tony comments.

"Oh." Killian says as the elevator doors open and people start to walk out.

"Ladies, follow the mullet." Tony comments.

"Thank you, I'll call you." Maya says, as they walk out the elevator, and once she has walked out Tony allows everyone to walk out before he stops Killian from following.

"I'm titillated by the nation of working with you." Tony says, completely lying but he wants to get rid of Killian,

"Yeah?" Killian asks.

"Yeah. I'm going to ditch these clowns; I'll see you up on the roof in five minutes." Tony says, as he steps out of the elevator, "I'm just going to try to get my beak wet real quick. You know what I'm talkin' about?" Tony asks, once more lying, but it's a lie that anyone except for those who know him, will believe.

"Okay. I'll see you up there." Killian says, as the elevator doors close and Tony goes to meet Maya.

About five minutes later Tony is sitting on the couch in Maya's room looking at her research on a computer, while Happy just watches on.
"Damn, betcha. Come on! I thought that was just a theory." Tony says, looking excited.

"Well, it was. If I'm right, we can access the area of the brain that governs repair." Maya explains.

"Wow." Tony says, sounding impressed, which is something that doesn't happen often.

"And chemically recode it." Maya explains.

"That's incredible. Essentially, you're hacking into the…” Tony says.

"Genetic operating system." Maya and Tony say together.

"Of an organism." Tony realises.

"Exactly, yes." Maya confirms.

"Wow." Tony once more says as Happy touches Maya's plant.

"Can you…” Maya starts to say.

"What?" Happy asks.

"Can you not touch my pant. It's not… she doesn't like it." Maya explains, "she prefers, she's not like the others." Maya explains.

"So, you're starting with plants?" Tony asks curious.

"For now, yeah, I'm calling it Extremis." Maya explains.

"Huh, you thinking eventual human application?" Tony asks.

"Yeah, it's dentra-degree vitalization." Maya explains, "Disease prevention, even limb regrowth."

"It's revolutionary, could change the world." Tony realises, and because he and Maya are so focused they don't notice as Happy rip of a leaf and stem of the plant, which starts to regenerate, "You're the most gifted women I've ever met."

"Wow." Maya says, with an amused look on her face.

"Uh, in Switzerland." Tony corrects.

"Mn, that's better." Maya realise, "Wow, you're seeing things." She says, as she takes off Tony's glasses, and he laughs.

"You almost brought it, didn't you." Tony says, looking amused as he takes back his glasses, and as he does the plant explodes, causing both Maya and Tony to face the computers.

"This is what I'm talking about, the glitch." Maya explains.

"Have you checked the telmerized algorithm?" Tony asks,

"The what?" Maya asks confused, as Happy runs forward.

"What was that, what was that?" Happy asks confused.

"it's a glitch in my work." Maya explains as Tony picks up a pen and starts writing on the back of his nametag.
"She was just talking about glitches happening." Tony explains, as he writes.

"It's not Y2K?" Happy asks.

"No." Maya answers, as everyone hears people starting to celebrate outside.

"Hey! Happy New Year." Tony says.

"Happy New Year." Maya and Happy both say.

"This should help." Tony says, handing Maya the partly written formula on the back of his nametag, being so drunk that he doesn't realise that it's only partly written, before he stands up.

"You're leaving?" Maya asks, sounding surprised.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, walking to the door.

"What happened to the Playboy Tony Stark?" Maya asks curious.

"He started to date the love of his life." Tony responds, before leaving the room with Happy.

A few minutes later Tony is in his room and once he is there he pulls out his phone and calls his most frequently called number.

"Hi." Melinda's voice says, answering after a couple of rings.

"Happy New Year Mel." Tony says.

"Not quiet, we're six hours behind, remember." Melinda points out.

"Right, I knew that." Tony comments.

"You're drunk, aren't you?" Melinda asks, sounding amused.

"Yep." Tony confirms.

"How'd your speech go?" Melinda asks curious.

"I don't know, I've heard different opinions." Tony admits, causing Melinda to laugh, "How are the girls?"

"Good, really good. Bobbi's insisting that she's going to stay up to midnight." Melinda explains.

"Do you think she's going to?" Tony asks curious.

"With how stubborn she's being about it I think so." Melinda confirms, "Do you want to talk to her, and Daisy?" Melinda asks curious, being pretty sure she knows the answer, but wanting to confirm.

"Definity." Tony answers.

"Okay, hold on." Melinda says, as she goes to get them so that Tony can talk to Daisy and Bobbi and as he waits for Melinda and the girls to return Tony knows that as interesting as Maya's work is he would much rather be talking to his family.

January 30th 2000
About a month has passed since New Year's Eve and ever since both Melinda and Tony have been working so much so that while they have both spent time with their girls, their time with each other have been limited.

Due to that fact Melinda, and Tony have both arranged to spend Sunday with their girls and each other, doing whatever the girls wanted to do, which turned out to be going to central park, which is what they have done.

As they walk through the park Bobbi picks up some snow and throws it at her mother and Tony.

"Really Bobbi Bird?" Tony asks, as Melinda gives her daughter a look.

"Come on, it's fun." Bobbi says, with a grin, throwing a little bit of snow at Daisy, "Isn't it?"

"Yep!" Daisy says, as he throws some snow at her mother and Tony and within minutes an all out snow fight between Melinda, Tony, Bobbi and Daisy break out, it being clear that Bobbi is making sure that she isn't using her powers to throw snow as hard as she could.

July 31st 2000

About six months have passed since the Stark/May snowball fight and in that time, Tony has celebrated his 30th birthday both with a family celebration and a public one to keep up his reputation. Something else that has happened only recently is Mary Parker revealing that she is pregnant.

It's the early hours of the morning and both Melinda and Tony are asleep until Melinda is woken by Daisy's footsteps, and so she turns on the light which wakes up Tony.

"Daisy, what's wrong?" Melinda asks

"I had a scary dream." Daisy says, looking upset as she holds her teddy bear tightly.

"Oh, Tiny Toni, come here." Tony says, and that is enough for Daisy and so she runs over to the bed, and once she is close enough Melinda picks her up and sits her on the bed between Melinda and Tony, as Melinda covers her with the blanket.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"No." Daisy says, shaking her head, as she moves closer to her mother.

"It's okay, Daisy." Tony says as he puts an arm around Daisy and hugs her.

"Uncle Tony's right, dreams, nightmares, can be scary, but they can't hurt you." Melinda explains.

"Really?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and Tony.

"Really." Melinda confirms, as she starts to play with her daughters' hair, trying to make her feel better, "You're safe Daisy, dreams can't hurt you, and even if they could I'd protect you, so will Uncle Tony." Melinda informs her daughter.

"From Monsters too?" Daisy asks.

"I'll tell you a secret Daisy, your Mom fights monsters, she'll make sure they can't hurt you." Tony explains.

"Wow." Daisy says, looking impressed.
"Close your eyes Daisy, try to get some more sleep. Uncle Tony and I'll be right here, we'll keep you safe." Melinda promises.

"Okay." Daisy says, snuggling in closer to her mother before closing her eyes, and before long she is fast asleep, feeling safe in her mother's arms, as Tony holds her too.

November 9th 2000

About four months have passed since Daisy slept with Melinda and Tony because of nightmares and since then things have been going pretty well for Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy, except Melinda has had to go on several missions that were longer than her usual mission.

One of those missions is a ten day mission that Melinda is only just returning home from on a Thursday night. As she rides up in the elevator Melinda has every intention of finding her girls before finding Tony, but the second she steps out of the elevator those plans are put on hold as there are tulips, and daisies covering the floor, creating a path to the balcony.

"What the?" Melinda asks, confused, but figuring there is one way to get the answer Melinda drops her bag on the couch and follows the path out to the balcony where Tony is standing, wearing not a full suit, but nice clothes.

"Welcome Home, Mel." Tony says, with a smile, as he walks towards Melinda.

"What's going on, Tony?" Melinda asks curious.

"I love you Mel." Tony answers, "I've love you since before I even knew what love was, and long before I was willing to admit it." Tony reveals, walking closer to Melinda, "You and the girls are the best thing in my life." Tony says, as he gets down on one knee.

"Tony...." Melinda starts to say.

"Melinda Qiaolian May, will you marry me?" Tony asks, pronouncing Melinda's middle name right for the first time, as he shows a ring, a ring that Melinda recognizes as the ring Edwin Jarvis gave Ana when he asked her to marry him.
"You finally pronounced my middle name right, only took you twenty-one years." Melinda says, smirking slightly.

"Is that a yes?" Tony asks, feeling terrified that Melinda is going to say no.

"Of course, it's a yes you idiot." Melinda says, pulling Tony up and into a kiss. For the next couple of minutes Tony and Melinda practically make out on the balcony before breaking apart.

"Bobbi." Tony calls, as he puts the ring on Melinda's finger, and seconds later Bobbi, who is carrying Daisy walk out from around the corner, where the two of them have been watching everything going on, and she hurries up to her mother and step father to be and hugs them both.

"Congratulations Mom, Uncle Tony." Bobbi says.

"Thanks Bobbi." Melinda and Tony both say.

"Congratulations." Daisy says, managing to say the word right as Bobbi was helping her practice.

"Thanks, Tiny Toni." Tony says, as he takes Daisy from Bobbi and hugs her, "Are you hungry? We have food in the kitchen." Tony reveals, looking at Melinda.

"Yeah, I really am." Melinda confirms, and once she does she, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy head to the kitchen to enjoy dinner together.

Hours later Bobbi and Daisy are both asleep and Melinda and Tony, both of whom are completely naked, are in bed together. As they lay together Melinda is fiddling with the new ring on her finger as Tony kisses her shoulder and plays with her hair.

"So, what happened on the mission?" Tony asks curious.

"It was a lot of being stuck in a small room with Phil, Nat, Clint, and Maria, wanting for small opportunities to do what we had to do." Melinda admits, "It was boring."

"I doubt that." Tony says, as he knows enough about what Melinda does to know that.

"How'd you know I'd be back tonight?" Melinda asks, as she hasn't been able to contact Tony while she was gone, and clearly changing the subject which makes Tony realise he is right.

"Fury told me." Tony explains, "He knew what I was going to do, so he sent me a message when you left the Triskelion." Tony explains.

"You told Fury you were going to propose?" Melinda asks, sounding surprised, "Who else knew?"
Melinda asks curious.

"Your parents of course." Tony answers, "I know you don't like that kind of thing, but they would have killed me if I didn't do it."

"Yeah, they would have." Melinda confirms, "Anyone else? Not counting the girls?" Melinda asks curious, so she knows who already knows.

"Aunt Peg." Tony answers, "I wasn't sure about the ring, I wanted her opinion." Tony admits, both he and Melinda knowing that Peggy would be basically the only person whose opinion on something like this he values enough to ask.

"You made the right choice I think it's perfect." Melinda says, knowing perfectly well whose ring it used to be and loving it even more because of that fact, before leaning up and kissing Tony and as they kiss it becomes more heated and it quickly become clear that they're going to do a hell of a lot more than kiss.

**Two days later**

Ever since Melinda and Tony got engaged the two of them have just been spending time with their girls, and neither have been to work, and so the only people who know about the engagement are those who already knew.

It's a Saturday night and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy are waiting at the apartment for their guests to arrive.

"Remember Bobbi, Daisy, Uncle Tony and I want to tell everyone the news ourselves, so no telling anyone." Melinda explains, looking between her daughters, not wanting a repeat of when they told their friends that they had started to date.

"Yes Mom." Bobbi and Daisy say together.

"Just a question, how you going to hide a ring from a bunch of spies?" Tony asks curious.

"That's what pockets are for." Melinda tells Tony, causing him to laugh, as the elevator doors open and Mary, who is heavily pregnant, and Richard walk out, as they do Melinda puts her left hand in her jacket pocket, "Hey Parkers." Melinda greets as she walks over to each of them and hugs them.

"Uncle Richard!" Bobbi says, sounding happy.

"Aunt Mary!"

"How you doing?" Melinda asks her friend, as she and Mary break apart.

"Sore, tired, you know how it feels." Mary says, as Tony and the girls both great Richard and Mary with hugs too.

"Yeah, I do, but it's all worth it in the end." Melinda assures Mary, and over the next few minutes Coulson, Clint, Natasha, Maria, Rhodey, Pepper, and Happy all arrive.

"What's with the last-minute diner invite?" Clint asks curious.

"You seriously questioning a free meal?" Rhodey asks, as that doesn't seem like Clint.

"You've got news." Natasha realises, as she looks between Melinda and Tony, trying to figure out what is going on.
"Unsurprisingly Romanoff is right, yeah, we do have news." Tony says, as he walks over to Melinda and puts his arm around her.

"As of two days ago Tony and I are engaged." Melinda says, taking her hand out of her pocket to show the ring, and the second she does yells of 'congratulations' and 'it's about time' are head throughout the room as Melinda and Tony are congratulated by their closes friends, their family.

**December 4th 2000**

Almost a month has passed since Melinda and Tony got engaged and because they have both been busy they haven't really talked wedding plans.

It is a Monday morning and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi and Daisy are having breakfast together, something they try to do as much as possible.

"We were losing, and I knew that if I used my powers I could get that basket." Bobbi says, as she walks around the kitchen, telling her parents and sister a story about what she did the day before.

"Did you use them?" Melinda asks her daughter, walking right over to her.

"Nope, even though I really, really, wanted to, because that would be cheating." Bobbi says to her mother.

"That would have been hard, but I'm proud of you." Melinda says, putting an arm around her daughter, as Tony smiles at them.

"Oh my god." Tony suddenly says, realising something.

"What?" Bobbi, Melinda, and even Daisy say together.

"Your taller than your Mom, Little Bird." Tony reveals.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, looking excited.

"No." Melinda answers.

"Sorry Mel, but it's true. At thirteen years old Little Bird is taller than you." Tony says, looking amused.

"This is great." Bobbi says, with a grin.

"I'm not sure about that one." Melinda admits, not sure how she feels about her oldest daughter already being taller than her.

"Be happy Mom, it's a good thing." Bobbi tells her mother.

"It is." Tony confirms.

"I'll remember you said that when Bobbi's taller than you too." Melinda tells Tony, who gets a look of horror on his face, to Melinda's great amusement, as he didn't think about that.

"Will I be tall too?" Daisy asks curious.

"I'm not sure, maybe." Melinda tells her daughter, as while she is short Cal was tall, so Daisy could be tall too.
"Cool." Daisy says, with a grin, and the family of four go back to enjoying their breakfast together.

December 15th 2000

Since it was discovered that Bobbi is taller than Melinda, Melinda has been working and because of that hasn't been with her girls as much as she would like. Because of that fact Melinda is in her home office, on a Friday afternoon, trying to get a mission report done so that she can spend all weekend with her daughters and fiancé, knowing that this weekend is going to be tough for Tony.

"Mom." A voice asks, and Melinda looks up to see Daisy standing in the doorway.

"Are you okay, Daisy?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yep, can we talk?" Daisy asks, as there is something she wants to ask her mother.

"Sure." Melinda says, getting up and walking over to the couch in the room and sitting down on it, as Daisy sits down next to her, "What did you want to talk about?"

"When you and Uncle Tony get married he'll be my Dad… right?" Daisy asks, sounding uncertain.

"Right." Melinda confirms, knowing that Tony plans to legally adopt both Bobbi and Daisy on the day of their wedding, but only the two of them and the girls know that.

"Does that mean I can call him Dad?" Daisy asks curious, and honestly that question surprises Melinda a little, but she doesn't let that show.

"Is that something you want to do?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yes!" Daisy says, with a nod, "Uncle Tony loves me, he looks after me, he helps me when I'm scared or sad, he's already my Dad." Daisy explains, sounding very mature for a four-year-old, "Can I call him, Dad?"

"Of course, if that's what you would like." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Do you think Uncle Tony would be okay with if I did?" Daisy asks curious, looking nervous.

"I think so." Melinda confirms, "How about we go talk to him?" Melinda asks, as while she thinks she knows how Tony will react she also knows that with what the next day is his reaction may not be what she is expecting, plus she wants to support her daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod, as she stands up, "Don't you have work?"

"It can wait." Melinda reveals, and once she does she and Daisy head out of the office both heading to the lab where Tony is.

About a minute after Melinda and Daisy leave the office the two of them walk into the lab where Tony is working on something.

"Tony." Melinda says, getting his attention, and Tony turns around.

"Mel, Tiny Toni, what's up?" Tony asks curious.

"Daisy has something she would like to ask you." Melinda reveals.

"Okay, what's up?" Tony asks, looking at Daisy.
"I want to call you, Dad, can I?" Daisy asks curious, looking at Tony, and it being clear that this is something she wants.

After Daisy makes her request Tony is shocked, and beyond touched, as even though he plans on adopting Bobbi and Daisy he wasn't going to push either of them to calling him Dad if they didn't want to and so Daisy wanting to call him Dad, and bringing the idea up on her own, means everything to him.

"Yes, of course you can." Tony answers, and as he does Melinda smiles.

"Yay, I love you, Dad." Daisy says, before hugging him, and as Tony hears those four words Tony feels beyond happy and that this is one of the best moments of his life, and so he just continues to hug his daughter, kissing her head as he does.

A while later dinner is ready and as Bobbi is doing school work in her room Tony has gone to get her. Getting to Bobbi's room Tony knocks on the open door,

"Little Bird?" Tony asks.

"Come in." Bobbi responds, and Tony walks in and finds Bobbi at the desk and so he walks over to her.

"Dinner's ready." Tony explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, but she isn't looking away from what she is doing.

"Something up, Little Bird?" Tony asks curious, and as he does Bobbi looks up.

"We're doing basic Physics in science, and it's not clicking, I'm not getting it." Bobbi says, sounding frustrated.

"That's okay, it happens." Tony says, squatting a little so that he isn't standing over Bobbi, "Come have dinner, take a break, and if you want after dinner we could go to the lab and I'll show you some practical applications of what you have to learn, that can help with understanding." Tony explains.

"I'd like that." Bobbi reveals.

"Good." Tony says, and as he does he realises something, "Little Bird, Daisy's decided that she wants to start to call me Dad." Tony reveals, "But I don't want you to feel pressured, if that's not something you want to do, now or ever, then that's okay. The choice is yours." He explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod, "I'll remember that." She says, as she has been thinking about calling Tony Dad, but she isn't sure if it's something she wants to do.

"Okay, let's go have dinner." Tony says, standing up.

"What are we having?" Bobbi asks curious, as she stands up too.

"Italian, but not pizza." Tony explains, as they head out of Bobbi's room heading to the kitchen to join Daisy, and Melinda.

January 7th 2001

It has been less than a month since Daisy asked if she could call Tony Dad and since then she has
taken to calling him that all the time, and while Tony is starting to get used to it he is still completely amazed by it and the feeling he got. Bobbi on the other hand is still calling him Uncle Tony, but Tony doesn't mind as he knows it is something she has to be comfortable with, and she may never be.

"We heard you wanted to see us." Tony says as he and Melinda walk into the hospital room where Mary, Richard, and their newborn son is, while Bobbi and Daisy sit with Rhodey in the waiting room, waiting for other members of their extended family to arrive.

"Yeah, we did." Mary confirms.

"We wanted the first people our son to meet to be his Uncle Tony and Aunt May." Richard explains, looking between his two oldest friends.

"Smart choice there." Tony says, with a smirk.

"He's beautiful you guys." Melinda says, looking between her friends, "What's his name?"

"Peter." Mary answers, "Peter Benjamin Parker."

"Well hi Peter, I'm your Uncle Tony and this is your Aunt May." Tony says, smiling down at Peter and playing with his hand.

"Melinda, Tony." Richard says, and because he actually used their first names both Melinda and Tony look up at their friend, "Mary and I have something we'd like to ask you." He explains.

"Okay." Melinda says.

"What is it?" Tony asks curious.

"We want you both to be Peter's godparents." Mary explains.

"And if anything were to happen to us will you to raise Peter?" Richard asks, knowing that at least Melinda will understand why they need to make this request on the same day their son is born, and as he does Tony, and Melinda exchange looks, and have a conversation without really speaking,

"Of course." Melinda answers.

"You don't even have to ask." Tony adds.

"Thank you." Mary, and Richard say together.

"You really don't have to say it." Melinda assures them.

"Do you guys want to hold him?" Mary asks curious, and both Melinda and Tony nod, and so Mary and Richard had Peter over to Melinda and Tony.

"Hey Little Guy." Melinda says, smiling down at Peter, as Tony smiles down at him too, both glad to meet their godson.

March 10th 2001

Two months have passed since Peter Parker was born and ever since he has spent quiet a bit of time with his extended family especially Tony, Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy.

It's Saturday afternoon and Tony is in his lab, working on his computer, with Daisy sitting on his
lap watching what he is doing. "Wow." Daisy says, looking at the monitors in awe, "This is cool."

"Yeah, it really is." Tony confirms.

"Is it ready?" Daisy asks curious.

"Almost Tiny Toni, almost." Tony answers as he continues to type, knowing that he is close to finally achieving something he has been working on for a long time.

For the next five minutes Tony continues to type as Daisy watches on with complete fascination.

"Okay done." Tony says, with a grin.

"What is it?" Daisy asks confirms

"This." Tony says, pressing the enter button.

"Hello Mr Stark." A voice coming through the computer, and speakers through out the apartment, though in this case just the ones in the lab, says.

"Cool." Daisy says, with a grin.

"Yep, it is." Tony says, grinning even more, "Daisy meet JARVIS, if you ever need anything around the apartment he's going to be able to help you, you just have to ask."

"Awesome." Daisy says, thinking JARVIS is the coolest thing ever, "Hi JARVIS."

"Hello Miss Daisy." Jarvis responds.

"Cool, he can really help with anything?" Daisy asks Tony curious.

"Yep." Tony says, knowing that that is the plan, "Give it a try."

"Um, okay." Daisy says, looking interested, "JARVIS, where are Mom and Bobbi?" she asks curious.

"Miss Bobbi and Ms May are in the gym." JARVIS answers.

"Cool."

While Tony and Daisy are in the lab Melinda and Bobbi, just like JARVIS said, are in the gym together, training.

"Okay, this time we're going to do what we just did, but you're going to use your powers." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"I don't want to hurt you!" Bobbi quickly says.

"You won't." Melinda assures her daughter, "You've got great control Bobbi, but if you ever have to use what you're learning then you may use your powers too, with or without meaning to, and so you need to practice using them so you know how much force to use." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay." Bobbi says, realising that that makes sense, "But if I do hurt you please tell me." She
requests.

"I will." Melinda assures her daughter, "Let's go again, remember, use your powers." Melinda says, and once she does Mother and daughter start to spar again, but this time Bobbi uses her powers to enhance her fighting abilities.

**June 23rd 2001**

Four months have passed since Bobbi and Melinda started to spare with her powers, and since Tony got JARVIS to work and in that time Bobbi has finished Junior High.

It's about eight am on a Saturday and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy are in the apartment, all four of them having suitcases.

"Okay, is that everything?" Melinda asks, looking between her fiancé and daughters.

"I think so." Tony says, looking uncertain, "JARVIS run through the list I asked you to remember." He requests.

"Of course. Tickets, dresses, suits, rings, marriage certificate, adoption papers, cash." JARVIS lists.

"We have all that." Melinda realises.

"Yep." Tony confirms, "Everyone else is meeting us at the airfield, right?" he asks.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "Clint flew everyone who was in DC here and then we'll all fly together." She explains.

"Okay, you two ready to go? Got everything you want to bring?" Tony asks, looking between Daisy and Bobbi.

"Yes, Dad." Daisy says.

"Yes, Uncle Tony." Bobbi says.

"Then let's go." Melinda says, and she, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy all collect their suitcases, and head to the elevators to head down to the garage.

A little while after Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy left their apartment, thanks to Tony's driving, the four of them arrive at the airfield where they find Mary, Richard, Peter, Rhodey, Peggy, Sharon and her parents, Trip and his mother, Natasha, Clint, Coulson, Maria, Pepper, Happy, William, Lian and Fury waiting.

"You're late." Clint comments as Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy get out of the car.

"By like two minutes." Melinda says, rolling her eyes, as Happy goes to collect the bags out of the boot.

"Pretty sure the bride and groom can't be considered late on their own wedding day." Phil comments.

"Yeah, they can, people just don't usually mention it." Pepper says, to the amusement of the others.

"Don't worry, I'll make time up by flying." Melinda comments.
"Of course, you will." Peggy says, with a proud smile, knowing what Melinda's flying was like when she was younger so she can't help but wonder what Melinda's flying is like now, though if she had to guess she would assume it has gotten even more reckless due to Melinda being more confident and comfortable with her flying abilities.

"Let's go people." Tony says, as he heads into the plane and everyone else follows behind him.

About six hours later Melinda has landed the plane in Las Vegas, and everyone has travelled to a hotel, where they have all proceeded to get ready.

"You nervous?" Richard asks Tony, who is getting ready in a room with him, Rhodey, Coulson, and Clint.

"No." Tony answers, actually telling the truth, "It's like this is what I've been waiting for."

"So, have we." Rhodey admits, as there is a knock on the door and so Coulson walks over to check who it is.

"Director Carter." Phil greats.

"How many times do I have to tell you, Phil, it's Peggy." Peggy says, with an amused look on her face.

"Right. Peggy." Phil corrects, "Do you need something? Can I help you?" he asks.

"I just want to talk to my godson." Peggy reveals.

"Right, of course." Phil says,

"We'll leave you to it." Clint says, and he, Phil, Rhodey, and Richard head out of the hotel room leaving Peggy and Tony alone.

"You look lovely, Tony." Peggy says, as she walks towards Tony.

"Thanks Aunt Peg." Tony says, turning to face her, "And thank you for being here, for agreeing to officiate." Tony says, to his godmother.

"You don't have to thank me for that, it's my pleasure, my Dear." Peggy says to her godson, "Your Mom, Mr Jarvis, and Ana would be so proud of you." Peggy says, with a smile, and while she also knows that Howard would be proud, even if he didn't show it, she also knows that Tony won't believe her, which she completely hates, and she doesn't want to fight with him today, and so she doesn't say it.

"Thanks Aunt Peg." Tony says, looking touched, "I wish they were here." He says, admitting what he would only admit to Peggy or Melinda, "But you being here means everything to me, I love you Aunt Peg."

"Oh, my Darling, I love you too." Peggy says, hugging her godson and kissing his cheek, "I'm proud of you too," Peggy assures him as they break apart.

"Thanks Aunt Peggy." Tony says.

"So, are you ready to get married?" Peggy asks her godson curious.

"Beyond ready." Tony answers, and once he does the two of them head out of the hotel room.
A few doors down from the room that Tony and Peggy are walking out of Melinda, who is dressed in a simple white dress, is with Bobbi, Daisy, Mary, and Natasha.

"You both look so beautiful." Melinda says, looking between her daughter, both of whom are dressed in nice light purple dresses.

"So, do you Mom." Bobbi says, smiling at her mother.

"Thank you, Bobbi." Melinda responds.

"If you've had a change of heart, I have a car standing by." Natasha informs her friend.

"No! Mom and Dad are getting married!" Daisy says, looking upset.

"Daisy, it's okay. Aunt Nat is just teasing," Melinda assures her daughter, as while Daisy calls Natasha Aunt, Bobbi doesn't, "I'm good, Nat, I don't need an escape plan."

"You sure?" Natasha asks, wanting to be sure that she is.

"Yep." Melinda confirms.

"Good." Nat says, with a slight smile, "It's time."

"So, it is." Melinda says, seeing the clock, "Bobbi, Daisy, Nat's going to take you upstairs. I'll be up there soon." She explains, "I love you both." Melinda tells her daughters as she hugs them.

"Love you too, Mom." Bobbi and Daisy both say, and once they break apart Bobbi and Daisy leave with Natasha, leaving Melinda and Mary alone.

"Even with your training, and how you usually are, I'm surprised with how calm you are." Mary tells her friend.

"I'm not nervous." Melinda reveals, "I'm excited, I've been waiting for this." Melinda reveals.

"You know, before I met you and Tony Richard would tell me stories about you two, about all three of you really." Mary admits, "But he would always talk about how in love you and Tony were and the fact that you were too stubborn to admit it, so I'm glad you finally did."

"So am I." Melinda admits.

"We should go, your Dad's going to meet us by the elevator." Mary realises, seeing the clock.

"Yeah, we should." Melinda says, picking up the bouquet of tulips and daisies and heading out of the hotel room.

Up on the roof of the hotel Peggy is standing at the end of the aisle, with Tony and Rhodey on one side of her, Rhodey being the one who is standing with Tony as his best man, while everyone else, with the exception of Melinda, Mary and William are standing around, it being clear that no one is standing on specific sides like a normal wedding rather they are all just grouped together watching.

Finally, after what feels like a really long time to Tony, music starts to play, and Mary starts to walk, walking down the aisle, as she is acting as Melinda’s maid of honour. Once Mary walks all the way down the isle there are a couple of seconds of pause and then Melinda and William start to
walk down the aisle,

"Wow." Tony mutters to himself, thinking that Melinda looks so beautiful. After less than a minute Melinda and William get to the end of the aisle and once there William kisses Melinda's cheek and then he walks over and stands with Lian.

"Hi." Tony greets, smiling at Melinda, as they turn and face each other.

"Hi." Melinda responds, smiling slightly.

"Welcome." Peggy says, "I can honestly say that I've been waiting for this day for a long time, and so when Tony and Melinda asked me to officiate I wasn't going to say anything other than yes." Peggy reveals, "As Tony's godmother, and Melinda's honouree Aunt I have known these two for Tony's entire life and most of Melinda's and I've had the great privilege of watching them grow up, but more than that watching them fall in love." Peggy explains, "I watched them meet as lonely kids, watched them become best friends along with Richard, and cling to each other when they felt like they were alone." Peggy says, not looking at William and Lian as she speaks but feeling like she has to tell the truth, "And I had the joy of watching as they fell in love, which as anyone here can attest to happened long before either of them wanted to admit" Peggy says, and several laughs are head around the roof at that, "I watched as you became parents, as you raise your amazing girls, and as your love grew." Peggy says, looking between Melinda and Tony, "I am so proud of both of you, of the people you have become, and I love you both." Peggy says, looking between Melinda and Tony.

"Love you too Aunt Peggy." Melinda says.

"Ditto." Tony confirms, smiling at her.

"My darlings, I am so happy for you both." Peggy says, "You are the loves of each other's lives, and I am so glad I get to share this special day with the two of you, and the rest of our family." Peggy says, looking around at everyone, "True marriage begins well before the wedding day, and the efforts of marriage continue well beyond the ceremony's end." Peggy says, "A brief moment in time and the stroke of the pen are all that is required to create the legal bond of marriage, but it takes a lifetime of love, commitment, and compromise to make marriage durable and everlasting, which is something you both already demonstrated your willingness to do over the years." Peggy says, "Today you declare your commitment to each other before our family. Your yesterdays were the path to this moment, and your journey to a future of togetherness, with your girls, becomes a little clearer with each new day." Peggy explains, looking between Melinda and Tony, "Now, I know you two have written your own vows, Tony." Peggy says, looking at her godson.

"Mel, I love you; you're my best friend, the love of my life, and whether or not I wanted to admit that I've known that since the day we met." Tony reveals, "I know I'm not best man but you, Bobbi, and Daisy make me want to be my best, you're the best part of me, my everything and why I can't promise that our road ahead will be easy, I do promise that I will always do my best to be the husband and father you and our girls deserve." Tony says.

"Melinda." Peggy says, looking at her.

"I love you too, Tony." Melinda says, "I'm not the most open person, or the most talkative, but being open with you, talking with you has always been easy." Melinda reveals, "I run head first into danger, I always have, it's who I am, but I can do that because of you, and Bobbi, and Daisy, you're my strength, you give me courage." Melinda reveals, "We don't know what the future will bring, but I know that together, with our girls, we can face whatever is to come."
"Do you Anthony Edward Stark, accept Melinda Qiaolian May as your lifemate and one true love, promising to share in all that life offers and suffers, to be there for her, in times of plenty, as well as times of need, to soothe her, in times of pain, and to support her in all endeavours, big and small, for as long as you both shall live?" Peggy, who has a huge smile on her face asks.

"I do." Tony confirms.

"Do you Melinda Qiaolian May, accept Anthony Edward Stark as your lifemate and one true love, promising to share in all that life offers and suffers, to be there for him in times of plenty, as well as times of need, to soothe him in times of pain, and to support him in all endeavors, big and small, for as long as you both shall live?" Peggy asks.

"I do." Melinda confirms.

"Rings." Peggy says, and once she does Tony turns to Rhodey and gets a simple gold ring while Melinda turns to Mary to get the same thing.

"Mel, I give you this ring, a symbol of my love, and I give to you, all that I am, and accept from you, all that you are." Tony says, as he puts the ring on Melinda's finger.

"Tony, I give you this ring, a symbol of my love, as I give to you, all that I am, and accept from you, all that you are." Melinda says, as she puts the ring on Tony's finger.

"And now, by the power vested in me by the Federal Government of the United States of America, and the State of Nevada, I hereby pronounce you husband and wife." Peggy says, grinning "You may kiss your bride." She says, and as she does Tony and Melinda kiss, while everyone else cheer.

"And now it is my pleasure to present to you Tony and Melinda Stark-May." Peggy says, with a grin, as Tony and Melinda break apart, Peggy knowing what they are planning on doing about their last name.

"Bobbi, Daisy." Melinda says, and the girls walk up to them, and they hug Melinda and Tony.

"One more thing." Tony reveals, once he, Melinda and the girls break apart, to the confusion of everyone else, "Mel and I aren't just getting married today, I'm also legally adopting Bobbi and Daisy." He explains, "Aunt Peg, Nick, Lian, we were hoping you'd witness those documents, while Rhodey and Mary sign the wedding certificate." He says, looking between them.

"Of course." Lian says,

"Yes." Fury confirms.

"You don't have to ask." Peggy says, and over the next few minutes forms are signed including ones that legally make Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy's last names Stark-May, but because of security concerns they will all continue to use their old last names for the most part, and Bobbi will continue to use the name Bobbi May Susan Morse when it's not safe, or appropriate, to use Stark-May.

"Congratulations." Fury says, looking between the four, "You're legally a family, even though you've been one for a long time."

"Yeah, we have be." Bobbi says, "I love you Mom." Bobbi says, looking at her mother, "I love you, Dad." She says, to Tony calling Tony Dad for the first time, and the family of four once more embrace each other, both Melinda and Tony feeling that this is the best moment of their lives.
After Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy break apart the four of them celebrate both the marriage of Melinda and Tony, and the new adoption with the people they consider to be family, a celebration which involves a lot more pictures being taken than one would usually expect to happen with a group of spies, including several very nice group shots of everyone.
Chapter 17

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Sorry about not posting yesterday, I was celebrating the end of my exams. Now that I am done I should be able to update more frequently in a few days.

September 6th 2001

It has been a little over two months since Melinda and Tony got married since the two of them, Bobbi, and Daisy legally became a family and since then they four of them have enjoyed spending the summer as a family. Something else that has happened since Melinda and Tony got married is the worlds media finding out that Tony Stark has gotten married, but, thanks to S.H.I.E.L.D, Peggy's connections, and Lian's no one has been able to find out the identity of his wife, or the fact that he has two daughters as both Melinda and Tony want to keep as much about their family private as possible.

It's early on a Thursday morning, a day what is going to be Daisy's first day at kindergarten and Bobbi's first day at high school, and the family of four are having breakfast together.

"We've got to eat quicker, we've got to go!" Daisy says, looking excited as she looks between her parents and sister.

"You're such a nerd, it's way to early to go to school." Bobbi tells her sister, clearly teasing her.

"Shut up!" Daisy says, sounding annoyed.

"Bobbi don't tease your sister, Daisy don't tell your sister to shut up." Melinda tells her girls.

"Little Bird can you honestly say you're not excited?" Tony asks his older daughter, "According to JARVIS you were asking him what you were going to learn in Biology."

"Does JARVIS tell you everything we ask?" Bobbi asks, looking concerned.

"No." Melinda and Tony say together, as they talked about that fact, "You Mom and I asked when we realised you were still awake late last night." Tony explains.

"Huh! You're a nerd to!" Daisy tells her big sister.

"Don't spread it around." Bobbi requests as she wants to make a good impression at school, before turning to her parents, "And I know we have a computer system monitoring the entire apartment, but I need privacy." Bobbi tells her parents, "Please give it to me." She requests, and Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"We won't use JARVIS to monitor what you're doing." Melinda says, and Bobbi looks glad, "But we're trusting you, if you breach that trust things will change."

"Deal." Bobbi says, looking between her parents.

"Good." Tony says, and Melinda nods.
"Can we go now?" Daisy asks

"Not yet Tiny Toni, the rest of us are still eating breakfast." Tony tells his younger daughter.

"And I want to get a picture of both you girls before you go." Melinda explains.

"Moom!" Bobbi objects.

"No arguments about this one Bobbi." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Fine." Bobbi says, rolling her eyes, and once she does the family of four continue to eat breakfast together.

Hours later, to his annoyance, Tony couldn't join Melinda in picking up the girls from school because of a meeting, and so he is waiting in the apartment for the girls and Melinda to get home. Finally, a little while after Tony has been waiting, the door to the elevators open and Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy walk out.

"DAD." Daisy yells, running towards Tony and once she is close enough Tony picks her up.

"Hey Tiny Toni." Tony greats, "How was school?" he asks, looking between Daisy and Bobbi.

"Awesome." Daisy says with a grin, "It was really fun." She admits.

"That's great." Tony says to her, "Little Bird?" he asks curious.

"It was mostly intro stuff, but some of it was interesting." Bobbi admits, "I'm going to get started on my homework, I want to try to get ahead." Bobbi admits, "If I have physics questions…." She starts to say, looking at Tony.

"I'll be in the lab." Tony assures Bobbi.

"Thank Dad." Bobbi says, looking relieved, "Mom, can we train after dinner?" Bobbi asks, hoping the answer is yes as she knows she'll need a break about then.

"As long as I don't get called, of course." Melinda assures her daughter.

"Cool, I'll be in my room." Bobbi says, before heading there.

"Dad, can I see what you're working on?" Daisy asks her father curious.

"Of course." Tony tells her.

"I'll be in my office." Melinda tells Tony, who nods, and while Tony and Daisy head to the lab Melinda heads to her office.

**November 13th 2001**

A little over two months has passed since Bobbi started High School, and Daisy started kindergarten, and since then, mainly because of the events of September 11th, Melinda has been working even more than usual, and so Tony has been spending more time with the girls, as they always make sure that one of them is always there when they are home.

It's late on a Tuesday night and Tony is in his lab working, something which he has also been doing more lately, but he has been managing to do most of it from his personal lab.
"Sir." JARVIS says.

"Yeah, J?" Tony asks curious, as he continues to work on designs.

"Mrs May-Stark is home. She is sitting out on the balcony." JARVIS reveals.

"Thanks J." Tony says, thinking there is something strange going on as usually Melinda comes to tell him she is home when she gets home, and so he puts down what he is working on and heads out of the lab.

About a minute after Tony left the lab he works out onto the balcony where he finds Melinda sitting and drinking, and from the second he sees her it is clear that something is wrong.

"Mel?" Tony asks, walking over to her.

"Tony, hi." Melinda greets, and Tony walks over, pulls up a chair, and sits down across from her.

"When'd you get home?" Tony asks curious.

"A little while ago." Melinda admits, taking a drink, and putting down her glass.

Once Melinda puts down her glass Tony leans forward, and takes both her hands,

"Mel, talk to me, what's going on?" Tony asks concerned.

"We agreed you wouldn't ask about missions." Melinda says, partly because she doesn't want to burden Tony with what happened.

"I'm not asking for classified details, I'm asking because you're clearly not okay, and I love you and want to help." Tony explains, as he squeezes Melinda's hands.

"I love you too." Melinda responds.

"Then talk to me." Tony requests, as he knows that Melinda doesn't like talking, but like Melinda said on their wedding day she usually talks to him.

"It was a tough mission." Melinda admits, "It wasn't just Nat, Clint, Maria, Coulson and I, we had a tactical team with us." She reveals.

"Must have been big." Tony comments, as he knows enough to know that there isn't much that the five of them can't handle.

"It was." Melinda confirms, "We were ambushed." Melinda reveals, and Tony just squeezes Melinda's hands, not sure what to say, "We fought back, and we dealt with people who ambushed us, and there were mostly minor injuries on our side except…." Melinda starts to say, before trailing off.

"Except?" Tony asks, gently prodding, trying to get Melinda to tell him more.

"One of the tactical team, a kid on his first mission, was hit." Melinda says, sadness to her voice, "I got to him, and I could tell how bad he was the second I did." Melinda says sadly, "I started to do what I could, and Coulson called for a medivac, but I knew it wasn't going to get to us in time."

"He died." Tony realises.
"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "Asking me to tell his father that he did good."

"Oh Mel." Tony says, sounding sad, not sure what to say.

"S.H.I.E.L.D agents protect people, but lately we can't, and now it seems we can't even protect each other." Melinda says tears coming to her eyes, as while she has lost fellow agents in the past, it seems to be hitting her harder now.

Having no idea what the right thing to say is Tony just leans forward, and hugs his wife, and kisses the top of her head, and as soon as he does he gets an idea.

"You're an amazing agent, Mel, and you've been protecting people since you were seventeen." Tony assures Melinda.

"Doesn't seem like enough lately." Melinda admits, as she looks out to the city, Tony realising exactly what she is thinking about.

"It is." Tony assures her, as he pushes Melinda's hair back, "You know we have that giant bath that we barely use in our bathroom, how about a relaxing bath?" Tony suggests.

"That sounds nice." Melinda admits, and once she does both she and Tony head back instead, taking the bottle of scotch with them.

Hours later Tony and Melinda have spent a while in their bath before heading to bed. While Melinda is fast asleep Tony is wide awake, and thinking about everything, realising what he has to do Tony carefully, so he doesn't wake Melinda, climbs out of bed, puts some clothes on, and heads to his bed.

"Look alive, J." Tony says, as he walks into his lab, and all the lights and monitors turn on as he does, "We're starting a new project."

"Of course, Sir." JARVIS says, "What is it?" he asks curious.

"New weapons, better weapons, and other things, to protect the people who protect us." Tony says, before getting to work, knowing that this is what he has to do.

January 5th 2002

A couple of months have passed since Tony got started on a new line of weapons and since then he has sold these new designs to the US Government and other agencies that protect people, including S.H.I.E.L.D.

It is a Saturday night and Melinda and Tony are both in Tony's lab, while Melinda is sitting on one of the benches working on paperwork Tony is at another bench working on new designs.

"What time is Peter's party tomorrow?" Tony asks curious as while Peter Parker's first birthday is Monday Richard and Mary are having a party on Sunday so that more of their family can be there.

"Eleven." Melinda reveals, "We'll leave here a little after ten. I told the kids." Melinda explains, as it's not just Bobbi and Daisy she had to tell as Sharon Carter and Antoine Triplet have been staying at Melinda and Tony's since Boxing Day.

"And Little Bird, Sharon and Antoine agreed?" Tony asks, as he would expect that the three teenagers would want to do more interesting things, on their last day together before Sharon and
Trip have to go home, than be at one year old's birthday party.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, honestly having been a little surprised by that, "When I talked to them about it they actually sounded like they were looking forward to it…. I'm deciding not to question it." Melinda admits, though if she had to guess she would say they are looking forward to spending time with family.

"Probably a smart idea." Tony admits, as he tries to connect something and gets an electric shock in return, "Ouch."

"You okay?" Melinda asks concerned, looking over at him.

"Yeah." Tony admits, "Just a little shock." He admits, as Melinda jumps down from where she is sitting and walks over to him.

"Let me see." Melinda requests, and Tony shows Melinda his hand, which has a small burn on it, "I'm going to go get you some ice, and check to make sure all the kids are in bed, try not to kill yourself before I get back." Melinda requests.

"I'll do my best." Tony responds, before Melinda heads out of the lab and Tony continues to work, knowing that he will never hear the end of it from Melinda if he gets hurt again.

March 11th 2002

A couple of months have passed since Peter Parker's first birthday and since then Bobbi and Daisy have continued with their school year and both have been doing extremely well, and while Bobbi is doing well at school it is clear that she misses Sharon and Trip who are her best friends.

It's about lunch time on a Monday and Tony is working on boring work at his office in Stark when his personal cell phone rings.

"Hello." Tony answers.

"Mr Stark-May?" The voice on the other end asks.

"Yes." Tony confirms.

"This is Rachel Kendell from Midtown School of Science and Technology there has been an incident involving your daughter Barbra." Rachel explains.

"Is she okay?" Tony asks worried, so worried that he doesn't correct Rachel on the use of Bobbi's full name, which she hates.

"She's fine, but we need you to come down to the school to talk to the principle." Rachel explains.

"I'll be right there." Tony says, before hanging up, "Pepper, I need to talk to you." Tony says, through the intercom on his desk while dialling Melinda on his cell, which goes straight to voicemail, "Mel, it's me. I just called down to Bobbi's school, they say she's okay, but I don't know more than that. I'll let you know when I do." Tony says, before hanging up, and just as he does Pepper walks into the room.

"What do you need?" Pepper asks Tony curious.

"I'm just got called down to Bobbi's school, I don't know how long I'm going to be, so I need you to cancel the rest of my day." Tony explains.
"Is Bobbi okay?" Pepper asks concerned.

"They said she is, but I don't know why I'm being called down there." Tony explains.

"Okay, I'll cancel everything, hope everything's okay." Pepper says.

"Me to." Tony says, before leaving.

Having spent the entire time wondering what is going on with his daughter Tony finally arrives at Midtown School of Science and Technology and heads straight to the front office where he is shown into the principles office where Bobbi, the Principle, and a teacher that Tony recognizes, and so after he checks to make sure that Bobbi seems okay he turns to the teacher.

"Morita, it's been a while." Tony greets, "You keep missing the family get togethers."

"I know Tony, I'm trying to do better." Morita, the grandson of The Howling Commando Jim Morita, responds.

"You should, people miss you." Tony inform Morita.

"I figured." Morita responds.

"Mr Stark, if we can talk." The principle says.

"It's Stark-May." Tony corrects, as he sits down next to Bobbi, "Are you okay?" He asks her.

"Yeah." Bobbi confirms.

"What happened?" Tony asks, looking between Morita and the principle.

"Barbra was involved in an incident with another student." The principle explains.

"It's Bobbi." Bobbi corrects, looking just as annoyed as Tony when he was called by the wrong name.

"What kind of incident?" Tony asks, trying to hide his amusement at Bobbi's comment.

"Bobbi was arguing with another student and then she hit him with her locker door." Morita explains.

"It was an accident!" Bobbi exclaims.

"It didn't look like it." Morita explains.

"It was." Bobbi explains, looking at her father.

"Was the other student hurt?" Tony asks, as that will tell him how much force Bobbi used.

"A blood nose, but not broken." The Principle answers, and that tells Tony that Bobbi may have used force, but it still has been an accident.

"It was an accident, I swear." Bobbi says, looking around at the people in the room.

"And it seems like there is nothing to indicate otherwise, if Bobbi says it's an accident I believe her." Tony says, knowing that he, and Melinda, will talk to Bobbi when they get home, but he does believe her.
"It was!" Bobbi once more says.

"Accidents happen, I don't see why Bobbi should get in trouble for an accident." Tony comments, and once he does Morita and The Principle exchange looks.

"Nothing will be put in Bobbi's record, nor will she be punished in any other way, but she does have to go home for the rest of the day." The Principle explains.

"Okay." Tony says, "Let's go, Little Bird."

"Dad…" Bobbi says, sounding annoyed as while she doesn't mind the nickname she feels a little embarrassed about her principle hearing it.

"Morita remember what I said." Tony requests.

"I will." Morita says, and once he does Bobbi picks up her bag and they head out of the office, Bobbi being pretty sure that she is going to have to talk to both her parents when she gets home.

A little while after they left Midtown Tony and Bobbi arrive back home and as they walk out of the elevator in their apartment they find Melinda waiting.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, walking towards her daughter, and once she is close enough she hugs her, "Are you okay?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"I'm fine, Mom." Bobbi assures her mother, as they break apart.

"What happened? Why was your Dad called down to the school?" Melinda asks.

"Bobbi hit someone with her locker door." Tony explains.

"It was an accident!" Bobbi exclaims.

"You're lying." Melinda realises.

"Is your Mom right, Little Bird?" Tony asks, giving his daughter a look.

"Okay yes, it wasn't a mistake." Bobbi admits, realising that she has no chance of lying to her mother, "But he deserved it." Bobbi explains, in her defence, "And I could have used my powers to slam it harder, but I didn't." Bobbi explains.

"Why? Why do you say he deserved it?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"He's a junior, and for weeks he's been harassing girls in my year, but of course he's a great student and is smart enough not to do it around teachers," Bobbi explains, sounding annoyed, "I was trying to get him to stop, but of course he wasn't listening, so I saw the opportunity and took it, figured that maybe it will get him to stop." Bobbi explains, "Someone needed to make it clear that what he was doing wasn't okay, so I figured it might as well be me, it's not like he could hurt me." Bobbi explains, looking between her parents, "I don't regret what I did, so if I'm in trouble then fine." Bobbi admits, deciding that it would be pushing it to say that her mother would have done the same thing.

"Your Dad and I need to talk, we'll tell JARVIS to get you when we have." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Okay." Bobbi says, before heading to her room.
"What do we do about this one Mel?" Tony asks, once Bobbi is out of normal hearing range, "She did it for the right reason, but she did hurt another student."

"I know." Melinda admits, "What are the school doing?"

"Nothing just sent her home for the rest of the day." Tony explains.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, "If it was me I would have done worse, but I don't have Bobbi's powers, if someone found out…" Melinda starts to say.

"It would be bad." Tony finishes, "Mel you've, we've, always taught Bobbi not to be ashamed of her powers, and if we punish her for that it might seem like we want her to be." He admits.

"I know, I never want that, but she does have to be more careful than others." Melinda admits, "But we're right back we're we started, she had a good reason…. But she hurt someone." Melinda says.

"I know I pointed it out in the first place, but like Little Bird said, it does seem like he deserved it." Tony points out.

"True." Melinda admits, "No punishment, we'll talk to her about what happened and talk about other things she could have done."

"Sounds good." Tony says, with a nod, "JARVIS, can you tell Bobbi to come here." He requests.

"Yes, Mr Stark-May." JARVIS responds, and about a minute Bobbi walks back into the living room.

"Take a seat, Bobbi." Melinda requests, and once Bobbi is sitting down both Melinda and Tony sit down across form her.

"So, what's my punishment?" Bobbi asks.

"None." Melinda answers, and Bobbi grins, "But we still need to talk about what happened."

"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod.

"Your mom and I both understand what you did, and we think you did the right thing." Tony explains.

"But, you did hurt someone, and you did risk exposing yourself." Melinda tells her daughter, "I know I've always taught you not to be ashamed of your powers, but if the wrong…"

"Person or group found out I could be in serious danger, I know." Bobbi says, with a nod, "That's why I only used the smallest amount of my strength, so it wouldn't be noticeable." Bobbi explains, "He deserves it, and if I get him to stop harassing girls it's worth it." she explains, and Tony and Melinda exchange a look.

"She has a point." Melinda realises.

"Yeah." Tony confirm, causing Bobbi to grin.

"Okay, that was a great talk, I'm going back to my homework." Bobbi says, before leaving.

"That went well." Tony comments, once Bobbi goes.

"Yeah, it did." Melinda confirms, and the two of them drift into an amused silence.
28 th June 2002

Three months have passed since Bobbi got in trouble at school and since then Melinda and Tony a have celebrated their first anniversary together, which they celebrated by having date night while their girls stayed with Richard and Mary, and Bobbi has turned fifteen.

It's a Friday afternoon and Melinda and Tony are in the kitchen putting their groceries away while Daisy and Bobbi are in the living room of the apartment.

"You know, considering neither of us can cook we get a lot of groceries," Tony comments.

"That's because of friends, our family, insist on cooking for us so we need groceries." Melinda says as Coulson, and Rhodey, especially comes over to cook for them and the girls a lot.

"True." Tony says, and as he does Bobbi walks in.

"Um, Mom, Dad?" Bobbi asks, walking into the kitchen.

"What's up Little Bird?" Tony asks curious.

"I was wondering if Sharon and Antoine could come stay for a while." Bobbi requests, "They really want to, and we haven't seen each other in a while." Bobbi explains, and as she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"Sure." Tony answers.

"I'll have to talk to their parents and organise everything, make sure it's okay with them, but I'd be happy for them to come and stay." Melinda answers.

"Yes!" Bobbi yells, looking excited, "Thanks Mom." She says, hurrying over to Melinda and hugging her, "Thanks Dad." Bobbi says, hugging him, and as she does Melinda realises something.

"Huh, Bobbi you're now taller than your Dad now too." Melinda comments.

"No…" Tony says, looking shocked.

"JARVIS? Is Bobbi now taller than Tony?" Melinda asks curious, knowing Jarvis will know.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers, "Miss Bobbi is currently two centimetres taller than Mr Stark-May."

"Awesome." Bobbi says, with a grin, "This is the greatest day, I've got to go tell Daisy." Bobbi says, before hurrying out of the kitchen.

"Little Bird being taller than me…. I don't like it." Tony admits, "She's our little girl."

"Who's growing up, fast." Melinda points out, "Next summer we'll be teaching her to drive." Melinda points out.

"I think I should do that. The last thing the roads need is someone else that drives like you." Tony teases.

"Really?" Melinda asks, giving him a look.

"What it's true, you drive insanely." Tony points out, "Especially on a motorbike."
"You're not much better, and you did build me a bike that goes faster than any other." Melinda points out.

"Yeah, I did, but I also added safety features to protect you." Tony reveals, there being a note of seriousness to his voice and Melinda knows he is thinking about not being able to protect his mother from her car accident, and so she gets an idea to lighten the mood,

"JARVIS, cold tap, full power." Melinda says, and before Tony can react, the cold tap, which, is a pull-out tap with a facet like a shower head, is pointed right at Tony, goes full power and drenches him.

"Really Mel?" Tony asks, before grabbing the tap, pulling it out and pointing it right at Melinda, drenching her.

"This is war." Melinda tells her husband, "JARVIS, tell Bobbi and Daisy to get the water pistols." Melinda says, before going running out of the kitchen and quiet quickly an all-out Water fight between the four Stark-May's breaks out.
Chapter 18

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: So, I am way ahead with chapters, so I'll be updating basically everyday, sometimes I may miss a day, but it will mainly be every day. PLEASE LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

August 5th 2002

About a month has passed since the Stark-May family water war and in that time Daisy has turned six, and Sharon Carter and Antoine Triplet came to New York and stayed for over two weeks before they had to go home, which was an experience that everyone loved.

It's late on a Monday night and Melinda is just returning home from work, and as she steps out of the elevator she finds Tony sitting in the living room working on stuff that he usually works on in his lab.

"Hey." Melinda says walking over to him, sounding surprised, as it is rare for Tony to be working on stuff in the living room.

"Hey." Tony responds, and Melinda kisses him before sitting down next to him, being careful not to sit on anything, "Peter's here." He reveals.

"He is?" Melinda asks, sounding surprised.

"Yeah, The Parkers dropped him by a few hours ago, Bobbi and Daisy were thrilled to see them." Tony explains, "They didn't say much but it seems like they got an emergency mission and their nanny was sick. They asked if we would be okay with him staying here until they got back." Tony explains, "I said we are… we are right?"

"Of course." Melinda answers, without hesitation, "Did they say they had a mission or are you assuming?" she asks curious.

"Well I do know the signs of being called on an mission with late notice well, but they did say they had to work, I assume that meant mission." Tony explains.

"Probably… but last I knew they we're both avoiding doing missions together." Melinda reveals, knowing that because she has talked to them about it and knows they wanted to try and make sure if something did happen then Peter wouldn't lose both his parents in one go.

"Maybe it was big mission, or there wasn't any other choice." Tony guesses.

"Yeah, that would make sense." Melinda admits, but she does have a bad feeling, "Why are you out here and not in the lab?" she asks curious.

"Closer to the kids, so I can hear if somethings wrong." Tony admits.

"Did you forget about JARVIS?" Melinda asks curious.

"Of course not." Tony answers, "I just wanted to work out here tonight."
"Okay." Melinda says, deciding not to push, "I'm going to check on the kids, and then have a shower." Melinda says, before standing up, and walking part of the way towards the bedrooms, "I'll be happy for some company." She says, giving Tony a look.

"I'll pack up and meet you there." Tony says, before hurriedly packing up his stuff, as Melinda goes to check on the kids.

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Hours later Melinda and Tony are both fast asleep, or they are until they are woken up by JARVIS.

"It's three am J? What's with the wake-up call?" Tony asks confused, as Melinda is thinking, not for the first time, that she would like an off button for JARVIS.

"Deputy Director May and Director Tenet of the CIA are here to see you both, Sir." JARVIS explains, and as he does Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"This can't be good." Melinda says, as she throws off the blanket.

"No, it can't." Tony confirms, throwing off the blanket too, and they both hurry out of their room, neither caring about the fact that they are still wearing pyjamas.

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About a minute or so after JARVIS woke Melinda and Tony up the two of them walk into their living room where they find Lian, and a man in a suit.

"Mom, what's going on?" Melinda asks, doing her best to ignore the feeling which is telling her exactly why.

"Melinda, this is Director George Tenet, George, this is my daughter Melinda and her husband Anthony." Lian introduces.

"Good to meet you. Mom, what the hell is going on?" Melinda asks, being in no mood to beat around the bush.

"Mel." Tony says, putting his hand on Melinda's shoulder, trying to help Melinda calm down a little, as he is pretty sure that Melinda and Lian fighting would not be a good thing right now, "Something's happened to Richard and Mary, hasn't it?" Tony asks, as that's what he is assuming.

"Yes." Director Tenet confirms, "Agent Richard Parker, and Agent Mary Parker where on their way to a mission when we lost contact with their plane." He explains, "We have since confirmed that it was sabotaged, and neither Agent survived the crash." He explains, to Melinda and Tony's horror.

"Richard and Mary are dead?" Melinda asks, her voice breaking.

"Yes." Lian confirms, "You and Anthony are their next of kin, that's why we're here to notify you." Lian explains, as Richard has no biological family alive, though he does have his big extended not biological family that he considers family, and Mary isn't that close to hers and so they both decided that Tony and Melinda would be down as their next of kin.

"Richard and Mary were two of the best agents, best people, I've ever met." Director Tenet says.

"You don't have to tell us that." Tony says, his voice bitter, to hide the pain.

"Do you know where Peter is?" Lian asks, looking at her daughter, not at all surprised by Tony's
reaction.

"Here. He's safe." Melinda answers, "Do we need to do anything else tonight?" Melinda asks, wanting her mother and Director Tenet to leave so that she and Tony can actually react.

"No, we'll call you tomorrow." Lian tells her daughter.

"I am truly sorry for your loss, Agent May, Mr Stark-May." Director Tenet says, before he and Lian leave.

"This can't be happening." Tony says, as tears well in his eyes.

"It is." Melinda says, turning to Tony, and the two of them hug. Once Melinda and Tony are hugging the two of them both break down in tears as deal with the fact that two of their best friends, their oldest friend other than each other, are dead.

About half an hour after Lian and Director Tenet left Melinda and Tony have called one person and the two of them have checked on the kids, and are now just sitting on the couch, both having silent tears rolling down their faces, as they sit side by side, holding each other's hands.

For Melinda and Tony it's like the rest of the world doesn't exist, like nothing does other than each other and their grief, and so they don't even notice when the elevators open and Rhodey walks.

"Tony, May." Rhodey says, walking over to them, and neither of them react, something which doesn't surprise Rhodey, and so he squats down in front of them, putting his hand on each of their legs, "Melinda, Tony." Rhodey once more say, and this time they both look up at him.

"Rhodes, what are you doing here?" Melinda asks, looking surprised.

"Do really think I was going to leave you guys alone?" Rhodey asks, as Tony and Melinda called him, as after the two of them, not counting Peggy and the extended Howling Commando family, he knew Richard and Mary longest, with Coulson closely behind him.

"Thanks Rhody." Tony says, honestly glad to see his friend.

"What can I do?" Rhody asks, knowing better than almost anyone how much Richard, and Mary, mean to Melinda and Tony, and so he wants to do something to help, while avoiding his own grief as he knows that if he breaks down he can't help Tony and Melinda.

"I don't know." Melinda says, not being able to think right now.

"Okay, how about calling people." Rhody suggests, wracking his brain and trying to think of something, "It's the middle of the night but the family will want to know." He says, knowing that, "Who should I call first?" he asks, as he can guess, but he want to try and give Melinda and Tony to focus on something, anything.

"Aunt Peggy." Tony answers, without even needing to think about it.

"And Coulson." Melinda adds, agreeing with Tony's first suggestion, "Once they know everyone will."

"Okay, I'll make the calls." Rhody assures his friends, "And some coffee, and tea, too." he says, before leaving the room heading to the kitchen so that he can make the calls, and some coffee, and tea, as he figures Melinda and Tony won't be going back to bed.
"When they dropped off Peter did it seem like something was wrong? Like they knew something like this was going to happen?" Melinda asks Tony.

"No, they just seemed like they were on a rush to leave." Tony admits, "Thanked us for looking after Peter, said hello and hugged Bobbi and Daisy, then left." He explains.

"Did they say when they'd be back?" Melinda asks, trying to see if there was any hint that Richard and Mary knew they being targeted.

"Yeah, a couple of days if things went to plan." Tony says, "I don't think they knew, if they did I don't think they could have left Peter." Tony comments, and as he does he gets a look of horror on his face, "Peter… how do we tell him?"

"I don't know, he won't really understand, he's too young." Melinda realises, "We need to keep our promise to Parker and Mary." Melinda says, looking at Tony, "We're all he has now." She says, knowing that as while he does have the extended family she and Tony are the closest thing to parents he has.

"I know." Tony says, "And we will. We'll look after him, love him, raise him, and make sure he always knows how incredible Mary and Richard are, how much they love him." He says, it being clear to Melinda that he is making a promise to his friends.

"Yeah, we will." Melinda confirms.

In the kitchen Rhodey has called Peggy, who promised she would call basically everyone who needed to know, and as he waits for the coffee to brew, and hot water to boil, Rhodey takes a deep breath and calls Phil.

"Coulson." Phil answers, after a few rings, though it is clear that he was fast asleep.

"Phil, it's Rhodey."

"Rhodey? What's going on? Are May and Stark okay?" Phil asks, as he assumes Rhodey is calling him because something happened to them.

"Richard and Mary are dead." Rhodey explains.

"What? How?" Phil asks, sounding shocked.

"Plane crash. It wasn't an accident." Rhodey explains.

"Oh god." Phil says, sounding horrified, "Peter?"

"Was with Melinda and Tony." Rhodey explains, "I'm with them. I called Peggy, she's letting everyone in the family who needs to know, and I called you…"

"I'll let Clint, Natasha, and Hill know." Phil assures him, "We'll come straight to New York."

"Give it a few hours, so that May and Tony can tell the kids, so they don't wonder why everyone is here." Rhodey explains.

"That's probably a good idea." Phil realises, "Pepper, Happy, is Peggy calling them, or are you?"

"I will." Rhodey says, knowing that it is for the best.
"Okay. Do you want me to bring anything when we come?" Phil asks.

"Um, food, maybe something to help distract Bobbi and Daisy." Rhodey suggests, not completely sure he can think straight right now.

"Sure." Phil answers, "I can't believe they're gone." He says, as he has known Richard and Mary a very long time and considers them family.

"Me either." Rhodey confirms, doing his best not to cry.

Three hours later Melinda, Tony, and Rhodey are in the living room, where they have been for the last three hours looking at photos of them with Richard and Mary, all three of them on their third cup of either coffee or tea, and none of them really talking.

"Mr Stark-May, Mrs Stark-May, Mr Peter is awake." JARVIS reveals, as Melinda and Tony asked JARVIS to tell them when Peter is awake.

"Thanks J."

"Thanks JARVIS."

Tony and Melinda say at the same time, and the two of them exchange looks before standing up, both having decided without speaking that they will talk to Peter together.

"I'll wait down here." Rhodey promises his friends, and once he does Melinda and Tony both nod and head upstairs.

About a minute later Tony and Melinda walk into the spare room where Peter is, a room that is between Daisy and Bobbi's room that they both realise will be his for good now,

"Unca Ony, Ant May." Peter, who is sitting up in his cot says, as they walk towards him.

"Hey Kiddo." Tony greats, as Melinda gets to Peter and picks him up.

"He's so small." Melinda says, as she kisses Peter's head and holds him close, "What do we even say?"

"I don't know." Tony admits, taking Peter's hand.

"I think I have an idea." Melinda says, as she gently hands Peter over to Tony before leaving the room.

"Aunt May and I love you so much, Pete." Tony tells his godson, who he now has guardianship of, "Never forget that." He says, and Melinda walks back into the room holding a picture frame.

"Peter, who's this?" Melinda asks, showing the picture that is off Richard, Mary, Melinda, and Tony from Melinda and Tony's wedding.

"Mama, Dada." Peter says, pointing to each of his parents.

"Yeah, they love you so much." Melinda says, her voice breaking slightly, "Peter, something's happened, your Mama and Dada are gone." Melinda explains, trying to explain in the best way possible, in a way that Peter will understand.
"Gone?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"They died, Kiddo." Tony says, realising what Melinda is doing, "They gone and not coming back." He explains.

"Mama? Dada?" Peter asks, looking between Melinda and Tony it being perfectly clear that he doesn't understand what is going on and so in response Melinda just hugs Tony, and Peter at the same time.

About half an hour later Peter is no closer to understand what happened than he was when Melinda and Tony first told him, and so they have given up trying for now, and the three of them are in the kitchen with Rhodey, drinking more coffee and tea as they feed Peter breakfast.

"Coulson, Nat, Clint and Maria will be here in about twenty minutes and are bringing breakfast." Melinda reveals, having just got the message.

"Good, that's good." Tony says, looking relieved, and as he speaks Bobbi and Daisy, who were clearly racing, run into the kitchen.

"UNCLE RHODEY!" Daisy says, sounding excited, as she runs over to him.

"Hey Daisy." Rhodey says, hugging her.

"What are you doing here?" Bobbi asks confused, as she hugs her uncle too.

"Bobbi, Daisy, can you both sit down?" Melinda asks her daughters.

"Something bad's happened, hasn't it?" Bobbi asks, looking between her parents, as she and Daisy sit down.

"Yeah, it has Little Bird." Tony confirms.

"Last night Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary were on a plane, and it crashed." Melinda explains, looking between her daughters.

"Are Aunt Mary and Uncle Richard okay?" Daisy asks, sounding concerned.

"No Tiny Toni, they're not." Tony says, looking sad.

"Bobbi, Daisy, Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary died in the plane crash." Melinda explains, looking between her daughters.

"No! No!" Bobbi yells, before running upstairs, running past Pepper and Happy, tears rolling down her face.

"I'll go." Melinda says, following after her daughter, trusting Tony to help Daisy.

"Tiny Toni?" Tony asks his daughter concerned.

"I saw Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary last night, they can't be dead. Dead means they're bones, they weren't bones." Daisy says, looking confused, and as she does Tony, Pepper, and Rhodey exchange looks, none of them sure how to address that, but Tony knows he has to.

"Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary died after they left here last night." Tony explains, "And they're not bones, people turn to bones after they have been dead for a while." Tony explains, wondering if it
is way too much for a six-year-old to understand, but he honestly has no idea what else to say.

"I don't want Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary to be gone." Daisy says, starting to cry.

"Oh, Daisy..." Tony says, leaning forward and hugging his youngest daughter.

While Tony is talking to Daisy downstairs Melinda has followed Bobbi to her room, where she finds her daughter, who used her speed to run, on her bed, hugging the toy mockingbird that Tony made her all those years ago, as she looks at a picture of her family, including Richard and Mary, on the day Melinda's adoption of Bobbi was legally approved.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, sitting down on her daughter's bed.

"You said crash, it wasn't an accident, was it?" Bobbi asks, looking at her mother.

"No, it wasn't." Melinda confirms.

"I knew it." Bobbi mutters.

"Do you want to talk?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"After my parents, and my brother, died I never wanted to lose anyone else." Bobbi admits, speaking about her biological family, which is something she doesn't do often.

"I know, it's not fair how many people you've lost." Melinda says, pushing her daughter's hair out of her face.

"I can't believe I'm not going to see Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary again… I'm going to miss them so much." Bobbi says, her voice breaking, "And Peter, it's not fair, he's lost his parents and he's too young to even realise."

"Yeah, it's not fair." Melinda admits.

"You knew Uncle Richard your whole life, didn't you?" Bobbi asks her mother.

"Yeah, I did." Melinda confirms, as while Richard's mother was the daughter of a Howling Commando his father was a CIA agent, Lian's partner, which is why she and Ricard knew each other their whole lives, "He's my brother… I'm going to miss him so much." Melinda admits, honestly not being able to imagine what her life is going to be like without Richard in it as she can't remember a time where he wasn't.

"I'm sorry Mom." Bobbi says leaning forward and hugging her mother, and as soon as she hugs her mother Bobbi starts to cry, while Melinda fights not to as she wants to be there for her daughter.

**August 9th 2002**

Three days have passed since Melinda and Tony were woken up at three so that they could be informed of Richard and Mary's death. While Tony and Melinda are barley handling themselves, they are focusing on being there for Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter, which is actually helping them a little. Out of the three kids Bobbi understands exactly what is going on while Daisy mostly understands what is going on, though it is clear that she is confused about some things, and Peter understands nothing.

It is early on a Friday morning and the day of Richard and Mary's private funeral where there will
just be fellow agents, and family, and a few close friends who know what is going on.

Having already gotten ready themselves Melinda and Tony are getting Peter ready, as after a lot of talking, not just to each other but other members of their family, they decided that Peter should be at the funeral, even if he doesn't understand what is going on.

"How are we going to get through today?" Tony asks, as Melinda finishes dressing Peter, knowing that while they have both been to funerals before, including Tony's parents, this is different as they have to look after their kids.

"I don't know." Melinda admits, "We've just got to be there for Peter, and Bobbi, and Daisy."

"Yeah, we do." Tony confirms, and as he does there is a knock on the door.

"Come in." Melinda says, and Rhodey walks in.

"What's up?" Tony asks.

"Everyone's here so that we can go together, but Bobbi and Daisy won't come out of their rooms." Rhodey explains, "Not even when Sharon and Antoine went to talk to them." He explains, and as he does Tony and Melinda exchange concerned looks.

"Okay James, can you take Peter downstairs, why we go talk to the girls." Melinda requests.

"Sure." Rhodey says, walking over and once he is close enough Melinda gently hands Peter over Rhodey, "Hey Peter." Rhodey greets, as Melinda and Tony head out of the room.

"I'll talk to Little Bird." Tony says.

"And I'll talk to Daisy." Melinda says, and the two of them head in opposite directions, Melinda heading to Daisy's room while Tony heads to Bobbi's.

Even though she is usually big about giving her girls privacy Melinda walks into Daisy's room without knocking.

"Daisy." Melinda says, as she walks over to her daughter, who is fully dressed, lying on her bed and holding a picture from last Christmas of their entire family, "Talk to me." Melinda says, as she sits down next to her daughter.

"I just don't understand how they are gone." Daisy explains, "They were here and now I'll never see them again? That doesn't make sense." Daisy admits, "They're Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary, they're always around."

"Death never makes sense Daisy." Melinda tells her daughter, "And it's never fair." She admits, "I know it's hard to understand that Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary won't be around anymore, but you need to know that they love you Daisy, and you'll always have your memories of them." Melinda explains, honestly not sure what else to say.

"I wish I could tell them that I love them." Daisy tells her mother.

"They knew." Melinda assures her daughter, "Daisy the funeral today, it's not for Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary, it's for us. It's so that we can say a final goodbye, it's a way of accepting that they're gone, and that we're not going to see them again." Melinda explains.

"Am I going to have to see them?" Daisy asks, looking afraid.
"No." Melinda says, as there is close casket, and even if there wasn't she isn't sure she would let Daisy see the bodies, "Do you think you can get up, and come downstairs with me?" Melinda asks curious, and Daisy nods.

Like Melinda Tony walked into his oldest daughter room without knocking, even though he normally wouldn't, and as he does he finds Bobbi, who is fully dressed, just sitting at her desk.

"Little Bird." Tony says, walking over to her.

"I hate funerals." Bobbi reveals.

"Me to." Tony admits, "But it's a chance to say goodbye, to celebrate the impact Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary had on our lives." He explains.

"I know that." Bobbi admits, "I just miss them." He says.

"Me too." Tony confirms.

"Not long after Mom took me in I was missing my family and Uncle Richard told me that when you love someone they're never really gone because you'll carry around a piece of them forever." Bobbi reveals, Richard having told Bobbi that as he remembered losing his own mother.

"He's a smart man your Uncle Richard." Tony comments, smiling slightly.

"I love you Dad." Bobbi says.

"I love you too Little Bird." Tony responds, "So much." He says, "We've got to get going." He admits.

"I know." Bobbi says, with a sigh, and the two of them get up and head out of the room, and just as they are heading out of Bobbi's room they see Melinda and Daisy heading out Daisy's room, and together the four of them head downstairs.

Less than a minute after they left Daisy and Bobbi's rooms Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy walk into the living room where Rhodey, Peggy, who is now holding Peter, Sharon, Trip, their respective parents, Coulson, Clint, Natasha, Maria, Pepper, and Happy are.

"It's time." Peggy says, looking around at everyone, "We've got to go." She says, looking at Tony and Melinda knowing that they are both going to struggle today, even if neither of them admit it.

"Yeah, we do." Melinda confirms, and once she does everyone heads to the elevators, both Melinda and Tony knowing that today is going to be impossibly hard, but they're going to get through it because they have their family around them, and their daughters, and Peter, need them to be strong.
Chapter 19

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support. I'm really sorry about the pain of the last chapter. PLEASE LEAVE A REVIEW/COMMENT.

October 16th 2002

Two months have passed since Richard and Mary died, and Peter doesn't understand anymore about what happened, though he has started to ask for his parents less, something which makes Melinda and Tony incredibly sad.

In the two months that have passed Melinda and Tony have adopted Peter, as in Richard and Mary's will it was made clear that that's what they wanted Tony and Melinda to do if they died before Peter was five, and Daisy and Bobbi, who have started first grade and sophomore year respectively, have both embraced their new brother.

It is a Wednesday afternoon and Tony is in his lab, with Peter playing in a playpen nearby, working on something he is going to be giving a presentation on in a couple of hours,

"Okay, this should do it, Pete." Tony says, even though he knows Peter has no interest in what he is doing, as he connects some wires, "J?" Tony asks.

"The wires are connected; the device is working perfectly." JARVIS Informs Tony.

"Great." Tony says, looking relieved, and as he does he sees the time, "Now where is your Aunt May, Peter? She should be home by now." He says, as Melinda knows about his important meeting and so she arranged to make sure she is home in time to pick up the girls and get Peter from him.

"Ant May?" Peter asks, looking up at Tony.

"Yeah, she should be here soon." Tony says, "J, upload everything to the Stark server so that I have it." he requests.

"Yes Sir." Jarvis answers and once he does Tony's phone starts to ring, and when she sees Melinda's name on his caller ID Tony smiles,

"Hey Mel. You almost here?" Tony asks, curious.

"Tony, I'm sorry, I'm still in DC." Melinda explains, feeling guilty.

"Tony, I'm sorry, I'm still in DC." Melinda explains, feeling guilty.

"What's going on?" Tony asks, wondering why Melinda wouldn't be able to come home.

"Fury's called Nat, Clint, and I into his office. We've got to justify our actions on a recent mission, I don't know how long I'll be." Melinda explains, "Tony I'm sorry, I know I promised, and I know how important this meeting at Stark is." Melinda says, truly feeling bad for not being there.

"It's okay, you can't control this." Tony assures his wife, "I'll pick up the girls, and take them and Peter to Stark with me. I'll see if Pepper and Happy can watch them while I'm in the meeting." He
"Okay." Melinda says, "I'll make this up to you, Tony, and the kids, I promise."

"Okay, but you really don't have to." Tony assures her as he hears, "MELS, WE'RE BEING CALLED IN." being yelled by Clint.

"I got to go, I love you." Melinda says to Tony.

"Love you too." Tony says, before hanging up, "Okay Kid, looks like we've got to get cleaned up. We've got to pick up your sisters and then you're coming into Stark with me." Tony explains, as while he and Melinda are still referring to themselves as 'Aunt May' and 'Uncle Tony' to Peter, having decided that he can decide what he wants to call them himself when he is older, they do refer to Bobbi and Daisy as his sisters, walking towards Peter.

"Obbie, Aisy." Peter says, not quite able to pronounce Bobbi and Daisy's full names.

"Yep, we'll see them soon." Tony says, picking up Peter and heading out of the lab with him.

A little while later Tony has changed into a suit and driven to Daisy's school with Peter. As Bobbi walks from Midtown to Daisy's school, once he is out of the car, and carrying Peter, Tony goes looking for his oldest daughter in the group of parents and siblings who are waiting for their kids to come out.

"Dad?" A voice asks, and Tony turns to see Bobbi.

"Hey Little Bird." Tony greats, greeting her with a one armed hug.

"I thought Mom was picking us up tonight." Bobbi comments.

"She was, but she got held up in DC, so you, your brother, and sister are going to come to Stark with me." Tony explains.

"You know I can take Daisy and Peter home, watch them why you're at your meeting." Bobbi suggests.

"No." Tony answers, as he and Melinda haven't talked about that.

"Dad, I'm fifteen I can look after Peter and Daisy for a couple of hours." Bobbi points out, "Think about what you and Mom were doing at Fifteen."

"That's not an argument you want to make." Tony says, knowing that neither he or Melinda want Bobbi to do what they did at fifteen.

"So, you don't trust me." Bobbi says, looking hurt.

"Of course, I trust you." Tony assures his daughter, "Bobbi your Mom and I haven't talked about you looking after your brother and sister alone, but I promise we'll talk about it tonight, but for now the three of you are coming to Stark." He explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, not looking that happy, but she figures her parents talking about the possibility is better than nothing.

"Okay." Tony confirms, turning to face where the children are coming out of the school, "Daisy!"
Tony calls, greeting her.

"DAD!" Daisy yells, running towards him, and once she is close enough Tony hugs her, neither of them, or Bobbi, who is standing right next to her father and pulling faces at Peter who Tony is still holding, noticing a person taking a cell phone picture, "Where's Mom?" Daisy asks curious, as they break apart.

"Work, you're coming to Stark with me." Tony explains.

"Cool." Daisy says, with a grin.

"Let's go," Tony says, looking between Bobbi and Daisy, and the three of them start to walk back to the car.

Not long after he picked up Bobbi and Daisy Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter arrive at Stark Industries, and once there Tony takes them straight to his office, the most private and safe place for them.

"My meeting is down the hall and will start soon." Tony explains, looking between Bobbi and Daisy, "I'm going to go find Pepper or Happy, to stay with you guys when I'm in the meeting." Tony explains, as he puts Peter down on the floor with some toys.

"You really don't have to do that, Dad. We'll be fine," Bobbi once more argues, and before Tony can respond the door to his office opens and both Pepper and Happy walk into the room.

"We've got a problem." Pepper reveals, as she walks over to Tony's computer.

"What's going on?" Tony asks, noticing the concerned looks on both of his friends faces and knowing it is not a good thing.

"This." Pepper says, as she opens up a webpage and Tony walks over to see and as he sees his heart sinks.

"Are there any pictures with their faces?" Tony asks, his voice shaking slightly.

"Not that we've seen." Happy confirms, and Tony is relieved about that.

"Dad? What is it?" Bobbi asks concerned, as she knows it must be a big deal for Tony to be concerned.

"Someone took a cell phone picture of us at Daisy's school." Tony explains, as in the picture he is hugging Daisy as Bobbi is pulling faces at Peter, but because of the angle of the picture, and the low resolution thanks to it being a cell phone picture, his face is the only one that can clearly be seen, "And they must have heard both of you call me Dad." Tony explain, as the entire article is about Tony Stark's secret children.

"Oh." Bobbi says, looking concerned as she knows that that is something to worry about, as Tony sits down at his computer.

"What are you doing?" Daisy asks curious.

"Activating JARVIS, he's going to find these pictures and delete them." Tony explains.

"You can't delete things off the internet." Daisy tells her father.
"Watch me." Tony says, as he also sends a message to Coulson by text as from what Melinda said Coulson is the only one who isn't in the meeting with Fury, and there might be something he can do.

"Tony, everyone's here for the meeting." Pepper informs him.

"I just need five minutes." Tony explains, "And I need you both to stay here with Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter while I'm in the meeting."

"Yes Boss." Happy says.

"Of course." Pepper confirms.

"Thank you." Tony says, as he continues to do what he can to get rid of the pictures and articles.

A while later Tony's meeting has gone very well, and he, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are all back home. While Bobbi and Daisy are in their respective rooms doing their homework, Tony is in the living room with Peter, working on a laptop to see how much the media, and public, knows about the kids.

"J, are you sure there are no pictures where Bobbi, Daisy, or Peter can clearly be identified?" Tony asks, as he continues to search.

"Positive Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Good, that's good." Tony confirms, though he knows he and Melinda are going to have to deal with what was revealed, and as he does the elevator doors open and Melinda walks out, "Mel, I'm sorry, I should have realised that the person was taking a photo." He says, before Melinda can even say anything.

"It's okay, it could have happened to either of us." Melinda says, walking over to him, "Coulson filled me in. No picture clearly shows their faces?" Melinda asks, as she sits down next to him.

"Yeah, JARVIS confirmed that, and in all the articles they don't describe any of the kids in detail." Tony explains.

"That's good." Melinda says, looking relieved.

"Yeah, JARVIS and I are deleted as quick as we can, but places keep reposting." Tony explains, annoyance in his voice.

"We're going to have to figure out what to do." Melinda realises.

"I don't want the kids to go through what I went through; having media constantly around, it's not the kind of life any kid should have to have." Tony says, it being clear that he doesn't want Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter to have the same kind of pressure he had, plus him and Melinda know that that media, and public, knowing about them could just put a target on Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter's backs.

"No, it's not." Melinda confirms, "You know more about how to handle this, so what should we do?" Melinda asks.

"We've got two choices." Tony admits, "We can keep trying to delete the pictures and articles, and not address the articles at all, and eventually the press might loss interest." Tony explains, "Or we can confirm the articles and ask for privacy."
"Do you think they will do that?" Melinda asks curious.

"Depends, and either way we'll likely be of interest until something bigger comes along." Tony explains.

"Which option do you think we should go with?" Melinda asks, knowing that Tony understands this more than her.

"Keep deleting and ignoring; eventually they're lose interest." Tony explains, "if we confirm they won't give up until they have something concrete." He explains.

"Then that's what we'll do." Melinda says, and the two of them drift into silence.

"Little Bird wants to look after Peter and Daisy alone." Tony explains.

"Yeah?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony.

"Yeah. When I said we were going to Stark she argued that she could bring Peter and Daisy home, look after them until one of us got home, I promised we'd talk about it." Tony admits.

"She is fifteen." Melinda comments.

"Yeah, she made that argument, said to think about what you and I were doing at fifteen…I pointed out that that wasn't the best argument to make." Tony admits, and Melinda laughs.

"Really isn't." Melinda confirms, "I think we should say yes, but make conditions of making she JARVIS alerts us if something happens, and no friends or other people over…. Unless it's Sharon or Antoine."

"Sounds good to me." Tony confirms, and once again Melinda and Tony drift into silence, both of them knowing they are going to have to talk to Bobbi and make it clear that they trust her, but that if she is going to watch her brother and sisters there will be conditions.

**January 7th 2003**

Almost three months have passed since the cell phone image of Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter was made public and in the time the strategy of ignoring it has worked and even though things were intense at first the media has lost interest and things have gone back to how they were before, with the occasional speculation about *Tony Stark's Secret Children*.

It is a Tuesday morning, that also happens to be Peter's second birthday, and so he, Daisy, Bobbi, Melinda, Tony, and Rhodey are all in the kitchen of the Stark-May apartment, where Melinda is walking across the apartment carrying a birthday cake which has two candles on it.

"*Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday Dear Peter, happy birthday to you.*" Tony, Melinda, Rhodey, Bobbi, and Daisy sing as Melinda puts the cake in front of Peter.

"You got to blow out the candles, Peter." Daisy tells her little brother, and in responds Peter just puts his hands in the cake, and squishes it, and so Bobbi quickly blows out candles, so Peter doesn't get hurt.

"SQUISHY." Peter comments.

"Yeah, but you're not supposed to squish the cake." Rhodey says, looking amused.

"Don't be such a sour puss, it's fun." Tony tells his friend.
"We can still eat it, right?" Daisy asks, looking between her parents.

"Yeah, we can." Melinda says, as she knows Peter's hands are clean.

"Then we'll go skating, right?" Bobbi asks.

"Right." Melinda, Tony, and Rhodey confirm, as they are all going Ice Skating for Peter's birthday.

A couple of hours later Melinda, Tony, Rhodey, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are at an ice ring together, an ice ring that Tony brought out. While Tony and Rhodey are with Peter, teaching him to sake, Melinda, Bobbi, and Daisy are skating together, it being clear that both girls want to skate as well as their mother, who is amazing. Something else that is clear is how much fun the entire family is having, how much they love each other.

March 13th 2003

Two months have passed since Peter's second birthday and with every day that pasts Melinda and Tony are seeing him develop into more of little person, and both know that Richard and Mary, who they talk about a lot with Peter, would be so proud of their son.

It's a Thursday night, a lovely night in Frankfurt, but instead of enjoying the city Melinda is in a surveillance van with Phil listening to Natasha and Clint who are at a very fancy party, looking for targets.

"I can't believe we lost rock, paper, scissors." Melinda says, sounding a little annoyed, "I swear Nat cheated somehow."

"Would you really want to be in there? Dancing and flirting?" Phil asks, as he very much doubts it, unless Tony was with Melinda of course.

"Well, no, but they get the good alcohol." Melinda comments, causing Phil to laugh.

"I'll buy you a drink once Nat and Clint have identified the targets." Phil says.

"I'll hold you to that." Melinda assures Phil.

"I know you will." Phil responds, and as he does Melinda remembers something she wanted to ask.

"You still coming over this weekend?" Melinda asks curious, "Daisy, Peter and Bobbi are really looking forward to spending time with Uncle Phil." Melinda comments.

"I wouldn't miss it. I have a great weekend planed." Phil admits, as he loves spending time with the three Stark-May kids.

"Um, guys if you're done talking about your weekend plans and alcohol, we do have a job to do." Clint says, through the coms, sounding amused.

"We're waiting on you Barton, we can't move in until you identify the targets." Melinda responds.

"Back table, all wearing matching ties." Natasha says, through the coms, "If you want in on the fun I'd recommend you get in here."

"Let's go to work." Melinda says to Phil and the two of them hurry into the building.
Over the next few minutes Phil and Clint basically stand back as Melinda and Natasha take down the targets, both Clint and Phil knowing that Melinda and Natasha don't need there help.

"I never get tired of watching this." Clint says, with a grin, as he watches Melinda and Natasha fight.

"It is an amazing sight." Phil admits, as Natasha and Melinda take down the last of the targets, and as they do Phil walks over to the bar to get Melinda the drink he promised.

May 6th 2003

Two months have passed since Melinda, Clint, Natasha, and Phil's mission in Frankfurt and since then they have done several more missions in Europe.

It is a Tuesday morning, that happens to be Bobbi's sixteenth birthday, and she, her parents, Daisy and Peter are sitting in the living room of the apartment, eating birthday cake as Bobbi opens her presents.

"One of these presents is a car, right?" Bobbi asks, looking between her parents.

"You'll have to see." Melinda tells her daughter, as after a lot of debate Melinda and Tony did get Bobbi a car, but they both agreed that Bobbi will have to be responsible and pay for the expenses of it.

"I don't like that answer." Bobbi mutters, as Melinda and Tony exchange amused looks, "Daze, Pete, want to help me open presents?" she asks, curious and her siblings help her to unwrap her presents, which in Peter's case is just ripping the wrapping paper off, as Melinda and Tony watch on in amusement.

"Um, Bobbi, I think you want this present." Daisy says, handing a box over to her sister, and as soon as she has it Bobbi opens the box.

"NO!" Bobbi says, looking amazed, "You got me a car?" Bobbi asks, looking between her parents.

"Yes." Melinda confirms, "But there are conditions. You have to be responsible and pay for the expenses."

"And being responsible includes you being taught the basics of looking after a car, including basic repairs." Tony explains to his daughter, as that was something else he and Melinda agreed.

"I'm good with that." Bobbi answers, "Thanks Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, before hugging both her parents, "Who's taking me to get my learners tonight?" Bobbi asks curious.

"I am." Melinda says, "We'll also do a driving lesson this afternoon." Melinda explains.

"Cool." Bobbi says, with a grin, honestly looking forward to school being over.

Hours later, her school day feeling longer than it has any right to, Bobbi has finished school, gotten her learners permit, and is in her new car with her mother, about to start the lessons.

"Okay, when you first get in a car, you have to make sure everything is right, mirrors..." Melinda starts to say.

"I know." Bobbi tells her mother.
"I know you've read about it, but the practical application is different." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Yeah, I know." Bobbi says, and Melinda gives her daughter a look, "Grandma, kind of taught me." Bobbi explains, looking sheepish.

"What?" Melinda asks, sounding surprised.

"Um yeah, Grandma kind of gave me a driving lesson last summer, said it was something I needed to know." Bobbi explains, not sure how her mother is going to react to that.

"Oh." Melinda says, fighting not to react to that as she doesn't want Bobbi to think she is angry with her when in fact she is furious with her mother, "Why don't you talk through what she taught you and we'll go from there." Melinda suggests.

"Okay." Bobbi explains, before she starts to explain what she knows, and before long she has explained everything, and Melinda and Bobbi really begin the lesson.

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Hours later, when the kids are asleep, Melinda and Tony are in their bedroom, while Tony is sitting up in bed Melinda is pacing back and forth.

"I cannot believe she did this." Melinda says angrily, "She didn't ask she just did it. How could she?" Melinda asks, her voice breaking slightly as her mother has done a lot of things over the years, but this is worse.

"Mel." Tony says, getting up and walking over to her, "You know how paranoid your mother is, and that she has good reason to be, she probably thought she was teaching Bobbi something she needed to know."

"Are you defending her?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony in shock, as Tony is the last person she would expect to defend her mother.

"No." Tony answers, "I'm just giving a possible explanation." Tony explains, "I don't think Lian would have intended to hurt you."

"She never does." Melinda mutters.

"I know." Tony says, before hugging his wife, "I know." Tony says, kissing the top of Melinda's head and just holding her, knowing that Melinda wants to be good enough for her mother, but she constantly feels like she isn't and even though he knows that Lian loves her daughter and is proud of her he also knows Melinda doesn't feel like that.

**July 2nd 2003**

Almost two months have passed since Bobbi's sixteenth birthday and since then Bobbi has finished her sophomore year of high school and Daisy has finished first grade.

It is early on a Wednesday morning during summer and Bobbi is fast asleep in her bed, or at least she is until her light is suddenly comes on and Bobbi hears footsteps.

"Bobbi, Bobbi wake up!" Daisy tells her sister, as she jumps on her sisters' bed, and her sister.

"What are you doing, Daisy-Lin?" Bobbi asks her sister, doing her best to hide her annoyance at being woken up.
"It's my birthday!" Daisy tells her sister, sounding excited, "I'm seven today! Wake up!" Daisy says, sounding excited.

"I'm up, I'm up." Bobbi says, as she sits up, "Happy birthday, Daze." Bobbi says, as she hugs her sister.

"I've got to go wake up, Peter." Daisy says, once she and Bobbi break apart, and she goes running.

"DAISY!" Bobbi calls after her sister, but Daisy doesn't stop she just keeps running.

After leaving her sisters room Daisy runs next door into her brothers' room and just like with Bobbi Daisy jumps onto her brother, who now sleeps in a toddler bed, causing Peter to scream.

"Peter, sorry, it's okay." Daisy says, trying to reassure her brother, as Melinda and Tony run into the room.

"What happened?" Melinda asks, looking between her two youngest children in worry, as Bobbi, who is pretty sure she knows what happened, walks into the room to.

"Daisy?" Peter asks.

"Yeah, wake up." Daisy tells her brother, "Sorry for scaring you." Daisy says, looking between her parents.

"Why did Peter scream?" Tony asks.

"I'm jumped on him." Daisy explains, "It's my birthday, and I'm excited. I didn't mean to do the wrong thing."

"It's okay, Daisy." Melinda assures her daughter as Tony walks over to her, and picks her up, "Being excited is understandable." She assures her daughter, "But you've got to be careful, your brother is still little."

"Sorry Peter." Daisy says, looking at him.

"It's okay." Peter says, before hugging his sister.

"You know there are presents and cakes downstairs, how about we go open and eat them." Tony suggests.

"Yes please." Daisy says, before going running downstairs, her siblings and parents right behind her.

A little while later Daisy has blown out her candles and she, her parents, and siblings are all sitting on the floor in the living room eating her birthday cake as she opens her presents.

"This is a really special present, Daisy, it's from your Dad and I." Melinda says, as she carefully hands Daisy over a present.

"It's heavy." Daisy notes as she takes it.

"It is." Tony confirms, and Daisy proceeds to rip open the wrapping paper where she finds a laptop which is clearly not one that could be brought in any store.

"A laptop?" Daisy asks, looking between her parents in amazement.
"Yep, I know lately you've shown how much you like computers, and so I built it for you." Tony explains to his daughter.

"Thanks Dad." Daisy says, before hugging him, "Thanks Mom." She says, before hugging her mother too, "I love it." she admits.

"So, don't hold us in suspense anymore, what are we doing for your birthday today?" Bobbi asks her sister curious.

"Coney Island." Daisy says, "I want to go to Astroland." Daisy explains, and as she does Tony and Melinda exchange looks.

"I think we can do that." Melinda answers, as while it is more public and likely busier than she would usually like it is clearly what Daisy wants and so she'll say yes to that.

"But you might want to hold off on more cake for now." Tony tells his daughter.

"Yeah, good point." Daisy confirms, "Can we go once I open my presents?"

"Of course." Melinda answers, and once she does Daisy continues to open her presents, as her siblings and parents watch on, though at one-point Tony does step out to make a phone call to arrange buying out Astroland so that it can just be their family there.
August 16th 2003

Over a month has passed since Daisy's birthday and for most of that month Sharon and Trip have once more been staying in New York, at the Stark-May apartment. Something else that has happened in the last month is the anniversary of Richard and Mary's deaths, and while Peter didn't really understand what day it was it was a struggle for Melinda and Tony.

It is a Saturday afternoon and Melinda and Tony are in the living room watching Daisy and Peter play when Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip walk into the room.

"Mom, Dad, can we talk to you?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Sure." Melinda answers.

"Of course." Tony confirms, as they both turn to look at Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip.

"I want Sharon and Antoine to met some of my school friends. So, I was wondering if we could go out tonight." Bobbi explains.

"Where to?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Jess's, her parents will be there, and some of our other friends." Bobbi says, controlling herself carefully so that her mother can't tell that she is lying, and once she does Tony and Melinda exchange looks, having a conversation without words.

"Sure." Tony answers.

"Be home by ten thirty." Melinda tells her daughter.

"It's a Saturday night, and a special occasion, can't we stay out a little later?" Bobbi asks curious, "Please Mom, Dad." She requests, putting a slight begging aspect to her voice.

"I guess we could make it eleven." Tony answers, and Bobbi grins.

"But no later." Melinda adds.

"Thanks Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, looking thrilled.

"Thanks Uncle Tony, Aunt Melinda." Sharon and Antoine say together.

"Have fun you three." Tony tells his daughter, niece and nephew.

"I'm sure we will." Sharon says, looking happy as she, Bobbi, and Antoine head out of the room, as Melinda and Tony go back to watching Daisy and Peter play.
Hours late Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are not at a friend of Bobbi's like they told Melinda and Tony rather they are at a party with some friends of Bobbi.

"We don't have parties like this back home." Trip comments, as he looks around.

"I'm not surprised, this is New York, things are different here." Bobbi comments, as she realised that pretty quickly when she first moved there.

"Really are." Sharon says, looking around, when suddenly a fellow teenager comes running into abandon warehouse where the party is.

"COPS, RUN." The kid yells, and as soon as he does Bobbi, Trip and Sharon going running, and as they run, once she checks to make sure people aren't paying attention to her, Bobbi grabs hold of Sharon with one hand, and Trip with the other, and uses her powers to help all three of them run faster until they are several blocks away.

"Okay, I think we're good." Bobbi realises, as the three of them stop running, and she lets go of Trip and Sharon, "Did I hurt either of you?" she asks concerned, looking between her friends.

"No." Sharon answers.

"Me either." Trip confirms, to Bobbi's complete relief, "You know that was a risk, right?" he asks, knowing all about Bobbi's powers and how she has to keep them a secret for her own safety.

"It was worth it. Things would have been so much worse if we were caught by the police." Bobbi explains.

"True." Sharon says, and as she does she catches sight of her watch, "We are so screwed."

"Why?" Bobbi and Trip ask together, neither realising why Sharon is so concerned.

"It's fifteen minutes to curfew." Sharon explains.

"Crap." Bobbi says, looking worried.

"We're in Brooklyn, how long will it take to get back to the apartment?" Trip asks.

"Forty minutes by public transport, maybe half an hour by cab." Bobbi explains, "Or I could use my powers and run us home, but I'm not sure how long that will take." She admits.

"And risk you exposing yourself, no way." Sharon tells her best friend, "It's too big of a risk." She says, not wanting Bobbi to take that kind of risk for her, and she knows that Trip will feel the same way.

"Sharon's right, we can't let you risk it." Antoine says, completely agreeing with Sharon, just like she suspected he would.

"For the record I make my own choices." Bobbi tells her best friends, "But you are right." She admits, "Let's hope we can find a cab."

"Guessing a main road will be our best shot?" Sharon assumes.

"Yeah, come on." Bobbi says, and the three of them start to walk together, all being pretty sure that they aren't going to make it home before eleven, but at the same time, despite the time and where they are they feel safe because they know they can handle themselves, especially with Bobbi's powers.
A little over half an hour after Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip started to look for a cab, the three of them are in the elevator on their way back up to the Stark-May apartment.

"Chances that we can get in without Aunt Melinda and Uncle Tony realising?" Trip asks curious.

"Zero." Bobbi and Sharon say together,

"JARVIS has probably already told them we're on our way up," Bobbi assumes, as the elevator doors open, and just like she was expecting her parents are waiting.

"Uncle Tony, Aunt Melinda." Sharon greets, as she, Bobbi and Trip walk out of the elevators, all three of them assuming they are in big trouble.

"You're late, sit down." Melinda tells the three, her voice stern and knowing better than arguing with Melinda Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip hurry over to the couch to sit down, "Curfew was fifteen minutes ago." Melinda says, looking between the three teenagers, "Where were you?"

"We were trying to find a taxi." Bobbi explains, trying to tell as close to the truth as possible.

"That's doesn't answer your Mom's questions, where were you?" Tony asks curious.

"With Bobbi's friends." Trip answers, knowing what Bobbi is doing and thinking it is a good strategy.

"You're hiding something, all of you." Melinda realises, looking between them.

"No." Trip, Bobbi, and Sharon say together, all speaking too quickly.

"You weren't at Jess's." Melinda realises, "Where were you?" Melinda asks, giving all three of the teenagers a stern look.

"Brooklyn." Trip answers, being the first to crack under the very intense look that Melinda is giving and considering the circumstances neither Bobbi or Sharon blame him.

"Let me guess, at a party." Tony realises, and the looks on Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip's faces tell him everything he needs to know.

"So, let me get this straight, the three of you missed curfew, you lied about where you were going, and now tried to lie again?" Melinda asks, looking between her daughter, Sharon, and Trip.

"Yes Mom."

"Yes, Aunt Melinda."

The three teenagers confirm.

"You're grounded, all three of you." Melinda says, as it was established a long time ago that when Sharon and Trip stay in New York they have to follow Melinda and Tony's rules, "No computers, no phones, no tv, for a week." Melinda tells them, and it is clear that none of them are happy about it, but they know better than arguing with Melinda, but that doesn't stop them form looking at Tony.

"Nice try." Tony says, looking amused, honestly trying to hide how amused he is, "But I'm not going to change things." He says.
"Bed, all three of you." Melinda says, "And JARVIS tell us if Sharon, Antoine, or Bobbi use any kind of technology." Melinda requests.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS responds, as Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip get up and head up to bed, leaving Melinda and Tony in the living room.

**October 13 th  2003**

Almost two months have passed since Bobbi lied to her parents and she, Sharon, and Trip got in trouble. Since then Bobbi has started her junior year of High School, and Daisy has started second grade.

It's a Monday afternoon and while Tony has gone to pick up Bobbi and Daisy from school, Peter is napping, and Melinda is at the apartment having tea with Peggy.

"How are you doing, really Melinda?" Peggy asks her niece, clearly concerned.

"I miss Richard and Mary." Melinda admits, "And I hate that Peter isn't even going to remember them." She says sadly.

"He'll hear stories, it won't be the same, but he'll know about them from the people who love them." Peggy tells Melinda.

"Yeah, that's what Tony and I have promised each other, and him." Melinda admits, and the two of them continue to drink tea.

"How have your missions been lately?" Peggy asks curious.

"We've been pulling them off, but we've had our fair share of things going south." Melinda admits.

"That happens, it's why…." Peggy starts to say.

"We bring the guns." Melinda finishes, "I know. I remember everything you taught me." Melinda explains, and Peggy smiles back at her niece, and as she does the elevator doors open and Bobbi, Daisy and Tony walk out.

"AUNT PEGGY!" Daisy yells, sounding excited, as she and Bobbi run towards there Aunt and hug her.

"What are you doing here?" Bobbi asks, sounding excited, as she didn't know that her aunt was going to come over.

"I have some business I have to handle in New York." Peggy explains, "So I'm going to be staying here for a week." Peggy says, as even though she knows her business should be handled by Friday she is going to stay the weekend too so that she can spend time with Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter.

"That's amazing." Bobbi says, with a grin.

"If you two want to go put your school bags down then then, if you'd like, the three of us and Peter can go out of for the afternoon." Peggy says, looking between them, and without answering Daisy and Bobbi run upstairs.

"I'll go get Peter." Melinda explains, heading upstairs, and within ten minutes Peggy, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter have left the apartment together.

"So, Aunt Peggy has the kids, and we have the place to ourselves for a couple of hours." Tony
says, smirking as he walks over to Melinda, "Whatever shall we do?" he asks, putting on a fake confused voice.

"You're the genius, you tell me." Melinda responds, and in response Tony just kisses Melinda, and as they do Melinda jumps up and wraps her legs around his waist, which Tony grabs hold of for support, and as the two of them kiss the two of them make their way upstairs.

November 30th 2003

About a month has passed since Peggy came to stay for a week, something which every single member of the Stark-May family loved, and the truth is they were all sad to say goodbye to her. It’s a Sunday afternoon and Melinda and Tony are in Tony’s lab together while Bobbi, Daisy and Peter are in the living room.

"Come on, it's a great idea." Tony argues.

"No, it's not." Melinda responds.

"But you agreed with me." Tony says.

"Just because I agreed doesn't mean I want to be apart of it." Melinda responds, "We can't push them!"

"Why not!" Tony argues.

"Because it will backfire."

"You don't know that."

"I kind of do." Melinda says, as the door opens and Rhodey walks in.

"It will be perfect." Tony says.

"It really won't be." Melinda responds.

"What the hell are you two arguing about?" Rhodey asks curious.

"Tony wants to set up Pepper and Coulson." Melinda explains.

"And Mel agrees with me that they could be good together but doesn't want to set them up." Tony adds.

"Seriously? JARVIS said you've been arguing about this for an hour." Rhodey says, looking between Melinda and Tony.

"One hour and four minutes." JARVIS corrects.

"What do you think?" Melinda asks Rhodey, wanting his opinion.

"I think you two have issues." Rhodey admits, "So I'm going to go find the Stark-May's I actually like." Rhodey says, clearly teasing his friends, before leaving the lab.

"They would be good together." Tony tells Melinda.

"I'm not denying that, but we can't push them." Melinda responds, and once more their argument continues.
January 11th 2004

About a month have passed since Melinda and Tony were arguing about whether to set up Pepper and Phil, something which they didn't end up doing, and in that time Peter has celebrated his third birthday.

It's a Saturday afternoon and while Melinda is on a mission, and Tony is working in his lab, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are playing together, playing a game where two of them are trying to get to a chair which is in the centre of the living room while the third sibling tries to tag their sibling before they can touch the chair.

This time Bobbi is the one trying to tag her siblings while Daisy and Peter are trying to get to the chair. Thinking she has an opening Daisy starts to sprint towards the chair, but before she can touch it Bobbi grabs her sister around the waist,

"Got you." Bobbi says, and then realising something she quickly turns and picks up Peter, who tried to use Bobbi being distracted by Daisy to turn to win.

"Not fair, using powers." Daisy tells her sister.

"That wasn't using powers." Bobbi reveals, "This is." Bobbi says, as she, with ease, lifts both her siblings up above her head at the same time.

"What are you three doing?" Tony asks, looking amused, as he looks between his children.

"Having fun." Bobbi explains, "We've invented a game. Trying to get to the chair." Bobbi reveals, as she gently puts her siblings back on the ground.

"That sounds like fun." Tony realises.

"It is." Peter confirms.

"Do you want to join us?" Bobbi asks curious.

"You know what, yeah, I do." Tony confirms, feeling that even though he has a ton of work waiting for him in the lab playing with his kids is where he'd rather be.

"Then you're it." Daisy tells her father, "Your job is to stop us from getting to the chair." She explains.

"Okay, close your eyes and count to thirty." Bobbi informs her father and once she does Tony closes her eyes and the three siblings go running and all four of them start to play their game together.

April 21st 2004

A couple of months have passed since Tony spent an entire afternoon playing a new game with his children and ever since then Tony has had to go to LA a few times to supervises projects happening at the Stark Factory there.

It's a Wednesday afternoon in the middle of a war zone and Melinda, Coulson, Clint, Maria, and Natasha are running as fast as they can onto their jet.

"What are we going to do?" Maria asks, looking concerned, as she hits the button to close the ramp that she, Clint, Phil, Natasha, and Melinda just ran up.
"Phil, Maria, Nat, you're going to strap in, and Clint, for once in your life you're gonna shut up, sit in the co-pilots seat and do exactly as your told." Melinda instructs, her voice having an edge to it which tells the others she's concerned.

"Yes Ma'am." Clint says, as he and Melinda both jump into the pilots and co-pilots' seat's respectively, Clint having decided that, given the situation, he's not going to argue with Melinda.

"May, there are too many other aircrafts, we're not going to get out of this one." Phil says, from where he is strapped in between Maria and Natasha.

"Not with that attitude we won't." Melinda says as she soars into the sky.

Once in the sky it is clear just how many people are surrounding them as there are about five other jets around them,

"Mels, if this gets us killed I'm going to haunt you forever." Clint tells friend.

"And If we don't die I'm buying you a drink." Natasha says.

"And if the backseat fliers don't shut up we don't have a chance." Melinda says, sounding annoyed, as while she has an idea she doesn't know if she is going to be able to pull it off, "Remember what I said, do exactly what I say." Melinda tells Clint.

"You got it, Mels." Clint assures her, and once Melinda gets Clint's conformation that he will do what she says, Melinda puts full power behind the jet and starts to pull mauvers and speed, to try to get away from the jets that are following them.

For the next fifteen minutes Melinda, with Clint's help, manage to pull of some of their best flying of their lives, some of which causes Phil, Maria, and Natasha, who usually have strong stomachs, to feel sick, but they manage to get away from those who were following them.

"You're crazy." Clint tells Melinda, "But you're a good kind of crazy, the kind I'm glad is watching my back." He says, with a grin.

"Everyone okay?" Melinda asks, after smiling back at Clint.

"Yep." Natasha says

"Barely." Maria answers.

"All good." Phil answers.

"Let's go home." Melinda says, as she continues to fly this time flying in a more reserved manor than the way she was just flying.

**July 4th 2004**

It has been almost three months since Melinda, with Clint's help was forced to fly in very unconventional ways to save themselves, Phil, Natasha, and Maria, and in that time, Bobbi has finished her junior year of school, Daisy has finished the second grade, Melinda and Tony have celebrated their third anniversary; Daisy has turned eight, while Bobbi has turned seventeen.

It's mid afternoon and Melinda, Tony, their kids, Sharon, Trip, Peggy, Natasha, Clint, Phil, Maria, Pepper, Happy and Rhodey are together, and have been for a week, at the Jersey Shore where they have rented a house at Myrtle Beach.
While Tony and Melinda are helping Peter build sandcastles in the sand, as Peggy watches on and takes photos, Clint, Phil, and Rhodey are cooking lunch, Natasha, Pepper, and Maria are making drinks, as Happy is watches on, Daisy is just sitting alone on the deck watching everyone.

"Daze? What's up?" Bobbi asks, as she walks over and sits down next to her sister, as Trip sits down on her other side, and Sharon stands in front of them.

"Nothing." Daisy lies.

"Yeah, there is, somethings up." Sharon says, being able to tell that.

"You know you can always talk to us, Daisy." Trip tells her.

"Antoine's right, Daisy. No matter what I'm here for you, we all are." Bobbi assures her sister.

"I feel like I have no friends." Daisy admits, sounding sad, "Peter's great, but he's little and no fun sometimes, and I don't really have good friends at school." Daisy admits, as she is always careful about what she says to people, not wanting to say too much, and so she doesn't make friends easily, "And you guys are so close, I feel like I have no one." She admits.

"You have us Daisy, always" Sharon assures her.

"We're family." Trip tells her, "And that's better than friends because we'll always be there for each other." Trip explains, making a note to talk to Uncle Tony and Aunt Melinda about Daisy's concerned.

"So true." Sharon confirms.

"Come on, let's go swimming." Bobbi suggests.

"I'm not..." Daisy starts to say.

"That wasn't a choice." Sharon says, and once she does Bobbi picks up her sister and the three of them, Bobbi carrying Daisy, go running towards the water.

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Hours later everyone who is at Myrtle beach have watch the fireworks together though Peggy disappeared quickly with tears in her eyes, so Melinda went to talk to her, while everyone else watched the rest of the fireworks before heading to bed, or to drink and play poker.

Having just finished talking to Peggy Melinda is walking onto the deck where Tony is with two glasses of scotch.

"How's Aunt Peg?" Tony asks, clearly concerned, as he hands Melinda one of the glasses.

"Okay. You know what day it is, I think everything just hit her when we all together watching the fireworks." Melinda comments, sitting down next to Tony, as she is pretty sure that being surrounded by family Peggy thought about who she wishes was with them.

"Makes sense." Tony comments, "She's never stopped loving him, but she still fell in love again." He comments, knowing that for a fact as he has no doubt that Peggy was completely in love with her husband, who died a while ago.

"Yeah, she did." Melinda confirms.

"She'll always love him though, that will never change." Tony comments, clearly talking about
Steve.

"Yep." Melinda confirms, and the two of them drift into silence, as they drink their scotch, "Did everyone seriously go to bed?" Melinda asks curious, as that doesn't seem likely.

"Nah, there may be a poker game going on, and possibly drinking." Tony admits, knowing that that possible is most likely a definitely.

"Why aren't you being a part of it?" Melinda asks curious.

"I wanted to wait for you, make sure Aunt Peg was okay." Tony admits.

"I love you." Melinda says, before leaning forward, and kissing him, "Let's go play poker." Melinda says, once they break apart.

"Yeah, why not, I always love winning Coulson's money." Tony says, with a smirk, and the two of them exchange amused looks and head into the house, heading to the basement where Phil, Natasha, Clint, Maria, Rhodey, Happy and Pepper are.

September 8th 2005

Two months have passed since the Stark-May's, Sharon, Trip, Phil, Natasha, Clint, Maria, Peggy, Rhodey, Pepper, and Happy since over a week at Jersey Shore and ever since the Stark-May siblings, Sharon, and Trip have been enjoying their summer vacation.

It is a Wednesday morning, Daisy's first day of third grade and Bobbi's first day of senior year. As she is in her room getting ready Bobbi hears a knock on her door.

"Come in." Bobbi says, and both her parents walk in, "What's up?" Bobbi asks her parents.

"We just wanted to talk to you." Melinda explains.

"How you feel about starting your senior year?" Tony asks curious.

"Nervous, excited, a little sad." Bobbi admits.

"That's completely normal." Melinda assures her daughter, "It's the end of a lot of things, but the beginning of so much more." She explains.

"Yeah, guess it is." Bobbi realises, "Did you guys need something?" she asks, feeling like her parents would be in her room for a reason.

"No, we just want to tell you that we are both so proud of you." Melinda tells her daughter, "You have come so far, achieved so much, and every day I am proud to call you my daughter." Melinda assures Bobbi.

"I am to." Tony says, "We love you Little Bird, so much." Tony assures his daughter.

"I love you guys, so much." Bobbi says, looking between her parents, "I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for you." She admits, looking sad, "Thank you."

"You never have to thank us, Bobbi." Melinda says, and Bobbi just hugs her parents, honestly not wanting to think about where she would be if it wasn't for them.

November 18th 2004
About two months have passed since Bobbi and Daisy started school again and since then both girls have been doing extremely well. It's an early evening in Russia and Melinda and Natasha are on a mission just the two of them.

"There are no easy ways in or out, especially not to the office." Natasha comments, as she and Melinda sit in a surveillance van watching a private club where a group of ex KGB agents are.

"These used to be your people, any ideas about how we can pull this off?" Melinda asks curious.

"One… but I'm gonna need you to trust me." Natasha explains, wondering if she is asking to much.

"You know I do." Melinda responds, not that surprised that Natasha is doubting that as even though it has been seven years Natasha still doubts that those closest to her trust her.

"Okay." Natasha says, "Hold tight." She says, before leaving the van.

After Natasha leaves the van Melinda just sits and waits, wondering what is going on as while she completely trusts Natasha she would love to know what is going on, but she soon realises that she might get an answer as she sees some of the KGB agents leave the club, not long after Natasha entered.

"Guess I'm about to find out." Melinda mutters, continuing to watch the screen.

"Come out, Agent May." A voice with a heavy Russian accent says, "You're surrounded." The same voice says.

"I really hope you know what you're doing." Melinda mutters to herself, assuming that this is part of Natasha's plan, and so she gets up and heads to the doors of the van, "I'm coming out, I'm unarmed." Melinda reveals, telling the truth, before climbing out of the van.

Once Melinda is out of the van she looks around and sees about half a dozen men, all with guns, which they are pointing at Melinda, with Natasha standing with them.

"That's her, the women who's kept me from coming home for the past seven years." Natasha says, looking at Melinda, "Be careful, she's as deadly as I am."

"How could you do this?" Melinda asks, putting a note of betrayal in her voice even though she still trusts and believes in Natasha.

"Easily." Natasha says, as one of the men hits Melinda over the back of her head and knocks her out.
Having heard enough Melinda closes the door and starts to, quickly and quietly, search the office. After a bit of searching Melina manages to find what she is looking for, a safe, which within five minutes, and a lot of trouble, Melinda manages to get open and take what she and Natasha were sent to get, before climbing out of the window.

Once Melinda is on solid ground she goes to where will be the most likely place for Natasha to meet her, still believing, even with everything she heard and saw, that she can trust Natasha, and within about two minutes her suspicion is proven to be correct when Natasha appears.

"Did you get it?" Natasha asks.

"Yep, let's go." Melinda tells her.

"Linda I'm..." Natasha starts to say, and it is clear to Melinda that she is about to apologise.

"There's no need, let's go." Melinda says, and the two of them go running.

A while later Melinda and Natasha have gotten back to their plane and are now flying it home.

"Okay, what's up?" Melinda asks, as Natasha has been surprisingly quite, and even though it wouldn't normally bother her it is now.

"Nothing." Natasha says.

"Come on Nat, you're a better liar than that." Melinda tells her friend, "What's going on?"

"You said I didn't have to apologise, but I do. You were hurt." Natasha says to her friend.

"I was knocked out, it's not a big deal, we completed the mission." Melinda points out, "It was a great plan Nat. You did good."

"You never doubted me, did you?" Natasha asks, feeling amazed by that as even after seven years she isn't completely used to it.

"Never." Melinda assures her, "I trust you, always." Melinda assures her.

"Я люблю тебя, Маленькая Сестра." Natasha says to Melinda, (I love you, Little Sister) and Melinda can't help but smile, as while Natasha looks younger than her she is actually a lot older, something which she reminds Melinda of frequently.

"Я тоже тебя люблю, Сестра." Melinda responds (I love you too, Sister) and the two of them drift into silence as they continue to fly home.
February 5th 2005

About three months have passed since Melinda and Natasha’s mission in Russia and in that time Peter has celebrated his fourth birthday. It’s a Saturday afternoon and while Melinda is on a mission with Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are home together, all four of them in the lab as Bobbi and Daisy are working on their homework, Peter is colouring in and Tony is working on his designs.

"Dad, I have a question." Bobbi says, feeling confused about what she is doing.

"Sure, what is it?’’ Tony asks, trying to make sense of something in his designs, so he doesn't look up, but yet he is paying complete attention to Bobbi.

"Water is released during polymerisation reaction. Which monomer is likely to have been involved in the reaction?’’ Bobbi asks her father curious.

"Glucose." Tony answers, without even needing to think about it.

"Thank you." Bobbi says, a little amused that Tony just gave her the answer, but she isn't going to admit that, as usually he gives her the process, which he makes sure she understands, and then helps her figure out the answer on her own.

"No problem." Tony says, "Why is this not connecting?’’ Tony mutters to himself.

"Mr Stark-May Agent Coulson and Agent Barton are here they need to talk to you." JARVIS says.

"Okay, I'll be right there." Tony says, feeling concerned as Melinda should be with them, "Little Bird, can you keep an eye on your brother and sister?’’

"Sure Dad.” Bobbi answers, reaching the same conclusion that Tony has reached, that Melinda should be with Coulson and Clint.

"I'll be back as soon as I can.” Tony says, before leaving.

After leaving the lab Tony heads straight to the living room, and honestly he can feel his sense of dread rise with every step, and seeing Coulson and Clint, who are clearly trying to hide something, makes that senses of dread even worse.

"Please tell me she's alive." Tony says, a level of desperation in his voice, as he looks between Coulson and Clint.

"She's in surgery." Coulson answers, feeling like he doesn't even have to say that Melinda is hurt, "At a S.H.I.E.L.D medical facility in Zurich.” He explains.
"What happened? How bad is she hurt?" Tony asks, his voice breaking.

"We were on mission, I can't say where." Clint explains, "Things went south, there was an explosion." He reveals.

"May got some serious shrapnel injuries. She was in bad shape when we left Zurich." Phil explains.

"Nat and Maria are with her, waiting for news, and Fury gave permission for you and the kids to come to the facility." Clint explains, and Tony just stands in shock, and horror, as he digests everything he is being told.

"Tony?" Phil asks concerned, "Did you hear what we said?" he asks.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "I'll go get the kids." Tony says, wiping his eyes and pulling himself together as he knows he can't full apart around Bobbi, Daisy and Peter, even though he may want to.

"If Mels doesn't make it…." Clint starts to say.

"I know." Phil says, not needing Clint to continue.

After leaving Coulson and Clint Tony walks back to the lab, and when he walks in he finds Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter exactly where he left them.

"Little Bird, Tiny Toni, Kid." Tony says, walking over to them.

"Dad?" Bobbi and Daisy ask.

"Uncle Tony?" Peter asks, as Tony pulls a chair over and sits down near all three of his children.

"Something happened to Mom, didn't it?" Bobbi asks, looking at her father.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, sounding sad, "Uncle Clint and Uncle Coulson are here because Mom was hurt on a mission, she's been taken to a S.H.I.E.L.D medical facility in Switzerland."

"We're going there, right?" Daisy asks, looking upset.

"Right." Tony confirms, "Bobbi, Daisy, go pack a bag each, some clothes and important things you want to bring with you" he explains, "Bobbi, help your sister when you're done, I'll help Peter." Tony explains, also planning on making one phone call as he does.

"Yes Dad." Bobbi and Daisy say and they both head out of the lab.

"Come on, Kiddo." Tony says, picking up Peter and the two of them head out of the lab too.

A few hours later Tony, Phil, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are on a jet to Switzerland, with Clint flying, and thanks to the speed of the jet they will be landing in Switzerland much sooner than they would had they been trying by any other jet other than a Stark one.

"Bobbi, is Aunt May okay?" Peter asks his big sister in a quiet voice as he is sitting between his sisters.

"I don't know, Pete, I don't know." Bobbi admits as she puts her arm around her little brother, and as she does Tony's phone rings.
"Romanoff? Has something happened?" Tony answers, having checked the caller ID.

"She's still in surgery. The doctors just gave us an update." Natasha explains, knowing that she will likely have to be patient with Tony.

"What did they say? How is she?" Tony asks, speaking fast and it is clear to Natasha that he is close to losing it, even if he is trying to be strong.

"They say she's in critical condition. The shrapnel has caused internal injuries to Linda's liver and kidney, as well as having a collapsed lung, and broken ribs, they are trying to repair all the damage." Natasha explains.

"Did they say what her chances are?" Tony asks worried.

"No but using S.H.I.E.L.D medical tech increases her chances." Natasha explains, wanting to say what she can to help Tony.

"Okay." Tony says, honestly not sure what else to say.

"I'll call you if there is another update." Natasha says.

"Thanks." Tony says, before hanging up.

"Is Mom okay?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"She's still in surgery. Aunt Nat says that the doctors are doing what they can." Tony explains, as while Bobbi doesn't call Natasha 'Aunt' Daisy and Peter do.

"Is that good?" Peter asks, looking concerned.

"Yeah, it is." Tony says, knowing that things could go bad, but for the moment the fact that Melinda is still in surgery and the doctors are doing what they can, is a good thing, as everyone on the plane drift into silence.

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A little while after Natasha called Tony Clint lands the plane at the S.H.I.E.L.D. Trauma Zentrum, and once they landed Clint and Phil lead Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter, who Tony is carrying, to where Natasha and Maria are waiting.

"Have there been any more updates?" Tony asks, the second he sees Natasha and Maria.

"Not yet." Maria answers.

"How are none of you hurt?" Tony asks, as Bobbi gently takes Peter from Tony and takes him and Daisy over to the seats, looking between the other agents who seem to have some minor injuries but nothing close to what Natasha described Melinda's injuries to be.

"Mels protected us." Clint says, guilt in his voice, "Took the blunt of the explosion in the process."

"Of course she did." Tony mutters, not overly surprised, as he walks over and sits down with his kids.

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For about an hour Tony sits with his kids, and is joined by Rhodey who got permission to fly in from where he was in the Middle East, waiting for new. While he just sits and waits for news Bobbi and Daisy read with each other while Peter naps on his lap, and Rhodey watches him in
concerned, as he tries, and fails, to make it seem like that's not what he is doing.

"Tony, that's the doctor." Phil says, seeing a women walk towards them, and Tony quickly, but carefully moves Peter of his lap and stands up, and gives Bobbi a look telling her to stay with her siblings.

"How's Mel?" Tony asks, walking over to the doctor, with Rhodye who is right by his side.

"Mr Stark?" The doctor asks, clearly surprised, and confused.

"It's Stark-May, Melinda May's my wife." Tony quickly explains, "How is she?"

"Agent May is in recovery, she's stable." The Doctor explains, to Tony's great relief, in fact he is so glad that he quickly hugs Rhodye before turning back to the doctor, "Agent May has four broken ribs, a collapsed lung that has been repaired, shrapnel damage to her liver and kidney, both of which have been repaired, though we did need to resect a lobe of her liver, and she also sustained blood loos which has been replenished." The Doctor explains.

"She'll be okay, though, right?" Tony asks, his relief vanishing as he becomes more worried.

"She should completely heal, and the removed part of her liver will regenerate with time." The Doctor answers.

"That's great." Rhodye says, looking between Tony, and Clint, Natasha, and Phil who are looking about as relieved as Tony.

"Thank you." Tony says, looking relieved, "Can our kids and I see her?" Tony asks.

"Of course." The Doctor answers, "She won't wake for a few hours though." She reveals.

"Okay." Tony says, walking over to where Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are sitting, Peter having woken up, being pretty sure that Bobbi would have heard everything, even if her siblings didn't.

"How's Mom?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"She's out of surgery, she's going to be okay." Tony says, looking relieved, and Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter look just as relieved as he feels.

"Can we see Aunt May?" Peter asks curious.

"Yeah. Come on." Tony tells his kids, and all four of them stand up and head out of the waiting area, the doctor leading them to Melinda's room. Leaving Rhodye, Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria who are just looking thrilled that their friend is okay.

A couple of minutes after Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are shown into Melinda's room where Melinda is lying still in a bed, connected to the machines that are monitoring her, and the IV's that are helping her.

"Mommy?" Daisy days, her voice breaking, sounding both scared and upset, and so Tony squats down a little, as Bobbi walks over and sits down next to her mother.

"It's still your Mom, Tiny Toni." Tony assures his daughter.

"It doesn't look like it." Daisy says, sounding afraid.
"I know, you should listen to this too Peter." Tony says, and Peter looks to him, "All those tubes and wirers are helping your Mom they're helping her get better." Tony explains, looking between Daisy and Peter as he speaks, "But if you think it's too scary you both can go sit with your Uncles, Aunt Nat, and Maria." Tony says, Maria being someone that none of them call Aunt.

"I want to stay." Daisy answers, after a moments pause.

"Same." Peter confirms.

"Okay." Tony says, and once he does he, Daisy, and Peter walk over and sit down around Melinda as well, Tony taking Melinda's hand as he sits down.

For a few hours Tony sits with Melinda, in those few hours Rhodey, Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria all take turns coming into check on them, and Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter all fall asleep, something which doesn't surprise Tony.

While all his kids fall asleep Tony stays wide awake and just goes between staring at Melinda and staring at the machines that are monitoring Melinda. Finally, after what feels like a lifetime, Tony feels Melinda's hand moves in his.

"Mel, can you hear me?" Tony asks, "Open your eyes Baby, come on, just open them." Tony begs.

"Tony." Melinda says, opening her eyes.

"Hey." Tony says, feeling beyond relieved as Melinda looks to him.

"What happened?" Melinda asks.

"You protected your team from an explosion." Tony explains, "You've really got to stop being a hero." He says.

"I'm not a hero." Melinda tells Tony, "But I'll never stop protecting my team." Melinda says, "You know that."

"Yeah, I do." Tony admits, even though he may wish otherwise sometimes, as he pushes Melinda's hair out of her face, "I love you Mel." Tony says, before leaning forward and kissing her.

16th April 2005

Over two months have passed since Melinda was hurt, and in that time her injuries have healed, and as of a week earlier she is back on normal duty.

It is a Saturday afternoon and Daisy and Peter are together in the living room of the apartment while Bobbi is doing homework in he room and Melinda and Tony are both in the lab, Tony working on something while Melinda is doing paperwork.

Sitting on opposite parts of the very large couch, Daisy and Peter are hitting a balloon back and forth, clearly playing volleyball with it.

"My point!" Daisy says, as Peter misses a hit and the balloon hits the floor.

"I know, I know." Peter says, looking at his sister in annoyance, and he hits the balloon back at Daisy.

For the next few minutes Daisy and Peter continue to play together, hitting the balloon back and
forth, both gaining a few more points. As the siblings continue to play they become more competitive, and so as his sister has hit the balloon at her in a way that is really difficult for him to catch, Peter dives forward, and tries to hit it, but fails and instead falls of the couch and hits the coffee table.

"PETER." Daisy yells in terror, "JARVIS, GET MOM AND DAD." Daisy says, sounding terrified, as she hurries over to her brother, "Peter, Pete, talk to me. Are you okay?" Daisy gets to her brother, "Daisy?" Peter asks, crying and bleeding as he cut his arm om the table.

"Peter, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry." Daisy says, sounding worried, as she gets to Peter's side.

"What happened?" Melinda asks as she and Tony run into the room.

"We were playing…. Peter was hurt." Daisy says, looking upset, moving back from her brother, as Melinda walks over to pick up her son, while Tony walks over to Daisy.

"It was an accident, Tiny Toni, it's okay." Tony assures his daughter, seeing how upset she is.

"Peter's hurt." Daisy says, looking upset.

"I'm okay, Daisy." Peter assures his sister.

"See, Peter's okay." Tony tells Daisy, "You two were playing and there was an accident, accidents happen, it's okay." Tony assures his daughter.

"Your Dad's right." Melinda says, looking at Daisy, "It's okay, it's not your fault." She assures Daisy, "Let's go get a band-aid." Melinda tells Peter, and the two of them head out of the living room.

"Dad does Peter hate me?" Daisy asks, looking at Tony, looking worried.

"Of course not." Tony says, putting his arm around Daisy, "Peter's your brother, he loves you, could never hate you." Tony assures his daughter and the two of them hug, it being clear that Daisy still feels guilty for the accident.

May 6 th  2005

Almost three weeks have passed since Peter accidently got hurt while he and Daisy were playing, something which she has felt guilty about ever since, but that guilt hasn't stopped her from playing games with Peter.

It is early Friday morning, and Bobbi is fast asleep, or she is until she is woken up by her siblings jumping on her.

"Daze… Pete?" Bobbi asks confused, as she opens her eyes.

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY!" Daisy and Peter yell as Melinda and Tony walk into Bobbi's room carrying a birthday cake, and Bobbi notices that her Dad is also carrying a large present.

"Thanks Guys." Bobbi says, smiling at her sisters.

"Happy Birthday to you..." Tony starts to sing, "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday Dear Bobbi, Happy Birthday to you." Tony, Melinda, Daisy, and Peter sing, and once they finish singing Tony and Melinda put the cake, which is on a tray, on Bobbi's lap, and she quickly blows out the candles, as Melinda and Tony sit down on the bed too.
"Thanks Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, smiling at her parents.

"Happy Birthday Bobbi." Melinda says.

"Happy Eighteenth Birthday, Little Bird." Tony says, smiling at her, looking proud.

"I'm not so little anymore, Dad." Bobbi says, to her father.

"You'll always be my Little Bird." Tony tells his daughter.

"And my little girl." Melinda adds, and Bobbi just smiles, feeling completely touched.

"We should eat the cake, it looks really good." Daisy comments.

"It really does." Bobbi says.

"Yep." Peter confirms.

"Once we eat there are presents downstairs, and once you get home from school, and for the rest of the weekend we're going to do whatever you want." Tony explains to his daughter.

"Sounds good to me." Bobbi admits, knowing what she wants most is to spend time with her family.

"Like your Dad said all your presents are downstairs, but we wanted to give you this one first." Melinda says, and Tony hands Bobbi the present he is holding over, as Melinda moves the cake so that Bobbi can open the present properly.

Taking the present for her father, and feeling curious about what it is, Bobbi quickly unwraps the gift and inside she finds a large wooden chest, with carved on the front, "M. Stark, Dad's Mom." Bobbi says, looking between her parents, as she runs her name over the name.

"Yep." Tony confirms, as Bobbi opens the chest, "Dad was the famous scientist, but she was amazing too." Tony explains, as Bobbi finds a lab coat, microscope and other scientific tools and equipment, "So with you being a biology degree at college your Mom and I thought you might like that. All the equipment is in perfect working condition even if it's a bit old." Tony explains, as he made sure of that.

"I love it." Bobbi says, looking amazed, knowing how much of a big deal it is for Tony to part with something that belonged to his mother, "Thank you." Bobbi says, looking between her parents and feeling touched, "I love you guys so much." Bobbi says, smiling to her parents.

"We love you too." Melinda and Tony say.

"Us to!" Peter tells his sister, hugging her.

"Yep, me too!" Daisy confirms hugging her sister, and for a few minutes the three Stark-May siblings hug each other and once they break apart all five members of the Stark-May family proceed to eat Bobbi's birthday cake together.

June 17th 2005

Over a month has passed since Bobbi's eighteenth birthday and the day of her high school graduation has come. Alone in her room Bobbi is getting ready, and as she gets ready she is just standing and staring at her mirror when she hears a knock on her door.
"Come in." Bobbi says, and as she does her parents walk into her room, "I'm almost ready." Bobbi reveals.

"It's okay, take your time." Tony assures his daughter.

"How you feeling?" Melinda asks her daughter curious.

"Excited." Bobbi admits, "And a little sad."

"I can't imagine that, I was happy to finish high school." Melinda comments.

"Same." Tony adds.

"Well in all fairness Dad, you were fifteen when you finished high school, and Mom, you were going straight into S.H.I.E.L.D. You had things to be excited for." Bobbi explains.

"So, do you." Tony tells her, "Bobbi you've got accepted to one of the most prestigious colleges in the country, and you're going to be going there with your two best friends, it's something to be excited for." Tony tells her, as Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip all got accepted to, and decided to attend, the same college.

"Yeah, guess it is, but I still have no idea what I want to do with my life." Bobbi explains, as while she does have one idea, she's not sure she can bring herself to admit it.

"You've got plenty of time to figure it out." Melinda says, walking over to her daughter, "Enjoy today, you earned it." Melinda explains, "I'm so proud of you."

"Thanks Mom." Bobbi says, smiling at her.

"We both are, and you should be too, you have a lot to be proud of." Tony tells Bobbi, walking over to her too.

"Thanks Dad." Bobbi says, before she just hugs her parents.

A couple of hours Bobbi's graduation has begun and Melinda, Tony, Daisy, Peter, Rhodey, Pepper, Happy, Coulson, Clint, Natasha, Maria, William, Lian, Peggy, Trip and Sharon, the ladder two having already had their gradations, are sitting together watching with proud looks on all of their faces.

"Barbra May Susan Morse." The officiant says, Melinda and Tony having arranged to have Bobbi be announced by that name rather than Barbra Susan Stark-May, and as soon as Bobbi's name is called Melinda and Tony stand up and cheer both looking incredibly proud and having tears of joy in their eyes as they watch their oldest daughter receive her diploma.

**July 1st 2005**

Two weeks have passed since Bobbi graduated high school, and because it is a hot day Bobbi, Melinda, Daisy, Peter, and Tony are on the roof of their apartment swimming in their pool.

As they both love it Bobbi is throwing, using her powers but still being careful, both her siblings into the water as their parents are watching on in amusement, both completely trusting Bobbi and knowing that she will never intentionally hurt her siblings.

"I know that look." Melinda says, looking at Tony, who's staring at her, "What are you thinking?"
"That you're the beautiful woman I've ever known." Tony says, completely meaning that, as he leans forward and kisses Melinda, a kiss she happily responds to.

"You don't look so bad yourself." Melinda comments, as they break apart, and she puts her arms around Tony's waist, pulling him in close.

"I'm better than not bad and you know it." Tony tells Melinda, who gives him an amused look.

"What else you thinking?" Melinda asks, curious, being pretty sure that Tony is thinking something else.

"That we have an amazing family." Tony comments, as he looks over at his kids.

"We really do." Melinda confirms, smiling at her kids too, completely agreeing with Tony.

"MOM, DAD. COME JOIN US." Daisy yells, and after exchanging amused looks that's exactly what they do both Melinda and Tony knowing that with their kids is their favourite place to be.

July 17th 2005

Over two weeks have passed since Tony, Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter had fun in the pool together, and since Daisy turned nine the day after, and for most of those two weeks Sharon and Trip have been staying at the Stark-May apartment.

It's a Sunday evening and Melinda and Tony are both in Tony's lab, while Tony is working on his newest inventions Melinda is siting cross legged on one of his benches doing her paperwork, honestly preferring to sit in Tony's lab to do her work rather than her office.

As Tony and Melinda work the door opens and Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip walk in.

"Um, Mom, Dad. Can we talk to you?" Bobbi asks.

"Sure, what's up?" Tony asks.

"We wanted to ask something." Bobbi explains.

"As long as it's not asking if you can go out so that you can sneak off to a party again, go ahead." Melinda says.

"It's not." Trip assures his aunt.

"Then ask away." Melinda tells them, as she looks up and looks between the three eighteen-year old's.

"So, Antoine and I have been talking, you know how we both, like Bobbi, got into Empire State?" Sharon asks.

"Yeah, did you decide not to go?" Tony asks, looking between the teenagers as last he knew they were all excited.

"No, we're still going." Trip confirms, "Sharon and I were talking because we were wondering if, rather than having to pay for dorms or trying to find an apartment, we could move in here during the school year." He explains, looking a little nervous, and once he asks Melinda and Tony exchange looks, bit being clear that they are thinking the same thing.

"Of course." Melinda answers.
"The spare rooms have practically been yours for years anyway." Tony adds.

"Thanks Aunt Melinda, Uncle Tony." Sharon, and Trip say together, looking glad.

"You don't have to thank us, we're happy for you to be here." Melinda explains.

"This is going to be great." Bobbi says, looking between her two best friends, "Let's go tell Daze and Pete." She says, and she, Sharon, and Trip head out of the lab.

"So guess this place is going to be a busier from now on." Melinda comments, once the three teenagers leave.

"Come on Mel, it's Sharon and Antoine, you love every second of when they are here." Tony comments, as knows Melinda loves spending time with their niece and nephew, and she loves how happy it makes Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter when they are around.

"You do to." Melinda responds.

"Never said I didn't." Tony admits, and the two of them drift into silence as they continue doing their work, both feeling like the more people they consider family around the better, especially because they never want Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter to feel as lonely as they did when they were kids.
A little under two months have passed since Sharon and Trip asked if they could move into the Stark-May apartment and since then they have done exactly that. It is early on a Thursday morning, which is Daisy's first day of fourth grade and Peter's first day of pre-kindergarten.

Even though Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip don't start College for a few more weeks the three of them have joined Melinda, Tony, Peter, and Daisy at breakfast.

"You looking forward to today, Pete?" Antoine asks his cousin curious.

"Yep." Peter says, with a nod.

"What about you Daisy-Lin, you looking forward to school?" Bobbi asks her sister.

"Yep." Daisy responds, sounding as excited as her brother, "We should go soon Dad."

"I know." Tony says.

"Before you go we're taking a picture." Melinda explains, looking between Daisy and Peter, both of whom stand up, "You three too." Melinda says, looking between Bobbi, Trip and Sharon.

As all three of them know better than arguing with Melinda, Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip all stand up and spend the next few minutes letting Melinda take photos of them, Peter, and Daisy, all doing different poses.

"Okay Mel, we've got to go." Tony says, noticing the time, "Daisy and Peter can't be late on their first day."

"No, they can't, glad you see that now." Melinda comments, knowing that when it is just Tony going somewhere he has rather interesting definition of 'on time' as she walks over to her two youngest children, "I love you, have a great day." Melinda says, as she hugs her two youngest kids.

"Will you be home when we get home?" Peter asks curious.

"I'm not sure." Melinda admits, as Peter and Daisy walk to get their school bags. As Peter and Daisy walk to get their school bags Tony walks over to Melinda.

"I love you." Tony says to her.

"I love you too." Melinda responds, and the two of them kiss and break apart.
"Let's go." Tony says, and once he does, he, Daisy and Peter leave.

"What do you three have planed for today?" Melinda asks curious as she starts to pick up the dishes.

"School shopping." Bobbi explains.

"We've been putting it off and don't have long now." Sharon adds.

"Have fun." Melinda says, continuing to pack up.

"Aunt Melinda, we can handle this." Trip assures his aunt.

"We really can." Bobbi assures her mother.

"Okay, thanks. I'm already on track to be late for a meeting with Fury." Melinda explains, as she puts the dishes down, "I'll see you when I get home. I love you." Melinda says, looking between the three.

"Love you Mom." Bobbi says.

"Love you Aunt Melinda." Sharon and Trip say, and once they do Melinda leaves the apartment while Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip pack up the dishes from breakfast.

November 18th 2005

About two months have passed since Daisy's first day of fourth grade, and Peter's first day of pre-k and in that time Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip have started college. It's early evening and Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are in Bobbi's room together.

"Okay, are we sure about this?" Bobbi asks, looking between Sharon, and Trip, wanting to make sure that they are feeling confident about what is going on.

"Completely." Sharon answers.

"Same." Trip confirms, "We've talked about this enough, it's time we take action."

"Okay." Bobbi says, pressing the send button on her phone, "Now we wait." She comments, and as she does Sharon realises something.

"Wasn't that number only for emergencies?" Sharon asks

"Technically." Bobbi admits, "I'm sure he won't mind." She adds as an afterthought.

"Guess we'll see." Trip says, and the three friends drift into silence.

For a few minutes Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip stand in silence and wait, until finally Bobbi's phone goes off, telling her that she has gotten a new message.

"Is that him?" Sharon asks.

"Yep." Bobbi confirms, "He'll meet us tomorrow, at two, in Central Park." Bobbi explains.

"Here we go." Trip says, as he, Bobbi and Sharon exchange looks.

"Miss Bobbi, Miss Sharon, Mr Antoine, dinner is ready in the kitchen." JARVIS reveals.
"Thanks JARVIS." Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip say together, and once they do the three of them head out of Bobbi's room, knowing that tomorrow is going to be interesting, that's for sure.

The following afternoon Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are together in Central Park, just waiting, knowing that this meeting will quietly possibly change everything. As the three of them wait together, in an area of the park which is deserted, they look around, looking for the person they are waiting on.

"Incoming." Sharon says, noticing who they are waiting for.

"Does he ever not wear that jacket?" Trip asks, curious, looking a little amused.

"Nope." Bobbi answers, as Nick Fury walks up to Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip, "Nick." Bobbi greets.

"Bobbi, Sharon, Antoine." Fury says, looking between the three of them, "I was surprised to get your message." He admits, as that is something that doesn't happen often, "What did you want to talk about?" he asks, having a few ideas, but he wants to hear it from the three of them.

"As you know we're all in college, and we've been talking about what we want to do with our lives and we've come to a decision." Bobbi explains.

"We want to join S.H.I.E.L.D." Sharon explains.

"All three of us." Trip adds.

"Have you talked to any of your family about this?" Fury asks, looking between the three of them, being pretty sure they haven't as he hasn't heard anything from Melinda.

"Aunt Peggy." Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip say in perfect unison.

"Of course." Fury says, looking a little amused, knowing without a doubt that if joining S.H.I.E.L.D was something that the trio truly wanted then Peggy would have been completely supportive.

"Nick, we know, better than any incoming agent, what we'd be getting into and it's something we all want." Bobbie explains.

"We want to continue the family business, we want to protect people." Sharon adds.

"This is something we've been thinking about for a while, and it's something we all want." Trip explains.

"Okay." Fury answers looking between them, "You'll have to undergo assessments, which will be conducted by an unbiased agent, but I don't see any of you failing those." Fury admits, as honestly, he would be very surprised if any of them failed and as he does Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip all look very happy, "That being said there will be two conditions."

"What are they?" Bobbi asks.

"You'll all finish this year of college." Fury explains, "And you have to tell your respective parents; by the end of November." He reveals.

"Yes Sir." Bobbi, Trip and Sharon say together.

"Good. I'll be in contact." Fury says, before walking away from the three eighteen-year-old's.
A while after Fury left them in the park Sharon, Bobbi, and Trip are walking out of the elevator at the apartment, and while Trip and Sharon go one way Bobbi goes the others.

"You going to talk to them now Stark-May?" Sharon asks curious.

"Yeah, might as well get it over with." Bobbi admits.

"Good luck." Trip and Sharon say together.

"Thanks Carter, Trip." Sharon says, and while she heads to her father's lab which is one way, Sharon and Trip head to the stairs to go upstairs which is in the opposite direction.

Once Bobbi gets to her father's lab she pauses, and takes a deep breath, before she walks into the lab.

"Hey Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, as she sees her father working at one of his benches, working on an invention, while Melinda is sitting at another bench working on paperwork.

"Hey Little Bird." Tony says, as Melinda looks up from what she is doing, "What's going on?" he asks.

"Sharon, Antoine and I just met with Fury in Central Park. We're going to join S.H.I.E.L.D." Bobbi explains, looking between her parents, and as she does Melinda jumps down from where she is sitting and walks over to her daughter.

"Is this something you really want to do?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yeah." Bobbi confirms.

"What about college?" Tony asks his daughter.

"I'm going to finish this year, it's actually one of Fury's conditions, and eventually I will get a biology degree, it might just take a while." Bobbi admits, "I've been thinking about it for a while, and Sharon, Antoine and I have been talking about it, and I realise with S.H.I.E.L.D I can do good. I might even be able to use my powers to protect people, just like you've always done." Bobbi explains, looking at her mother.

"You know how dangerous being a S.H.I. . agent is." Tony says, walking over to his daughter.

"I do, but it takes a lot to hurt me." Bobbi points out, "I know you're both going to worry about me, but this is something I want to do, but more than that this is something I need to do." Bobbi admits, "I hate how I got these powers, you both know I've struggled with them, but nothing's going to change the fact that I have them, so I might as well use them to do some good; I think I can do that with S.H.I.E.L.D." Bobbi explains, looking between her parents.

"Okay." Melinda says, realising that this is something her daughter really wants to do, and nothing's going to stop her.

"I'd rather you have a safe, boring job, but I can tell that I'm not going to talk you out of this." Tony admits, "You don't need my permission, but you have my blessing." Tony tells his daughter.

"Thanks Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, feeling thrilled, before she hugs both her parents at the same time, feeling relieved that they are supporting her.
Almost two months have passed since Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip revealed that they want to join S.H.I.E.L.D and in that time they have completed assessments that they could complete without going to a S.H.I.E.L.D facility, Sharon and Trip have both told their parents, and Peter has turned five.

It's a Sunday night and Tony, Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Daisy, and Peter are eating dinner together, while Melinda is on a mission.

"How are you just eating salad? There is amazing pizza." Daisy says to Trip, looking at him in surprised.

"I like to eat well, there is nothing wrong with that." Trip tells Daisy.

"When you're passing up on this pizza there is." Bobbi informs him.

"Agreed." Sharon comments.

"Yep." Tony confirms.

"It tastes really good." Peter comments.

"Looks like you're out numbered here Trip." Bobbi tells her friend.

"Nothing new there." Trip admits, as he continues to eat his salad.

"Mr Stark-May Director Fury is here to see you." JARVIS says.

"Thanks JARVIS." Tony says, feeling concerned as he can't imagine a good reason for Fury to be there to see him, if he was there to see Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi it would be different but Fury being here to see him concerns him, "Stay here, I'll be back." Tony says, before getting up and heading out of the kitchen, as Bobbi, Sharon and Trip exchange looks as he goes.

Less than a minute later Tony walks into the living room where Fury is waiting, with a look on his face that is impossible for Tony to read,

"What's happened?" Tony asks concerned, assuming that something has happened.

"There has been a complication on the mission Melinda, Coulson, Barton, Romanoff and Hill are on." Fury explains.

"What kind of complication? Is Mel okay?" Tony asks, looking worried.

"I don't know." Fury admits, saying three words her hardly every says.

"What do you mean you don't know? What happened?" Tony asks, his voice breaking.

"Due to the events on the mission May, Coulson, Barton, Romanoff, and Hill were forced to split up, they agreed to meet up at a rondeau point, and May never made it." Fury explains.

"How long has it been? Maybe she's just a little late." Tony comments, trying to think of an explanation.

"They agreed to meet eight hours ago." Fury explains.
"No." Tony says, in complete horror, and as he does his legs give out and he collapses, but Fury reacts, and catches him before he can hit the ground.

"Hey, you can't fall apart." Fury says, as he is pretty sure that being hard and harsh may be best right now, "May is not dead, she is out there, fighting, and if there is one thing I know about Melinda May it is that she never stops fighting." Fury tells Tony, "Coulson, Barton, Romanoff and Hill are looking for her, and they're not going to give up."

"I can't lose her." Tony admits, as tears start to roll down his face.

"I know." Fury says, as he knows well enough that Tony, or Melinda, would be destroyed if something happen to the other one, "I'll keep you updated, but you need to believe in your wife, be there for your kids."

"I do believe in her." Tony says, standing up, "The second you know something...." Tony starts to say, as he moves back from Fury.

"You'll be my first call." Fury assures Tony, before leaving.

After Fury leaves Tony turns away from the elevators and just looks around, trying to collect himself a little as he knows that if he walks into the kitchen looking how he feels then Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are going to realise that something horrible has happened. As Tony looks around the room his eyes are drawn to a picture, and so he walks over to it, and picks it up, a picture of him and Melinda on their wedding day, a picture that Peggy insisted they take.

"Please come home." Tony says to the picture, and for a few moments, he just stares at it, before he finally puts it down and heads back to the kitchen.

From the moment Tony leaves the kitchen Bobbi, Trip, and Sharon become worried about what Fury could want, and with every minute that passes they become more worried, but try to hide that fact from Daisy, and Peter, until Tony walks back in.

"Dad? What's going on?" Bobbi asks, telling that something is very wrong.

"Is Mom okay?" Daisy asks, being old enough now, at nine years old to understand that something bad has happened.

"Fury doesn't know." Tony admits.

"What do you mean he doesn't know?" Sharon asks concerned, "How does he not know?"

"Mel's missing." Tony explains, "Uncle Coulson, Uncle Clint, Aunt Nat, and Maria are looking for her." He reveals.

"Aunt May, missing?" Peter asks, looking upset.

"Yeah Pete." Tony confirms, and as he does Daisy runs over to Tony and hugs her father, and as she hugs her father Daisy starts to cry.

Far away from where Tony, Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Daisy and Peter are Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria are in the plane that they flew to the mission, using all the equipment to try and figure out where Melinda could be.
"Come on May, where are you?" Phil mutters to himself.

"She could have been followed, and so she's hiding out somewhere safe until she can deal with whoever is following her." Maria suggests.

"Would make sense." Clint admits.

"We just need to figure out the path Linda would have used, maybe then we can figure out where she would have held up." Natasha reveals, "Then we can find her, help her, and bring her home."

"That's exactly what we're going to do." Phil says, knowing that he isn't going to accept anything else.

**Two days later**

Two days have passed since Fury told Tony that Melinda went missing and ever since Natasha, Clint, Maria, and Phil have been trying to find her, while Tony is slowly falling apart. Due to that fact Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi have been doing their best to help Tony, as well as Peter, and Daisy, but it is becoming clear that the more time that passes the more Tony falls apart.

Wanting to check on her father, who she knows is slowly losing it, Bobbi is walking into the lab, where her father is sitting at his monitors, looking horrible as he hasn't slept since he found out Melinda was missing.

"Dad." Bobbi says, walking over to him.

"I need to find something, need to find her." Tony says, his voice full of desperation.

"You need to sleep, and to eat more than cold pizza and coffee." Bobbi tells her father.

"I need to keep working, keep trying to find a way to save Mel." Tony admits.

"Dad." Bobbi says, putting her hand on her father's shoulder, "Uncle Phil, Uncle Clint, Nat, Maria, are trying to find Mom, there's nothing you can do, not from here." She admits, "But Daisy, Peter, they need you. They're falling apart Dad, Sharon, Antoine and I are trying to help, but they need you." Bobbi tells her father.

"I need to keep working on this algorithm." Tony admits, as he hurriedly types, as he's using information that Coulson and the others gave him to narrow down possible places where Melinda could be, "I'm almost done, once I'm done and I send it to Uncle Coulson and the other's, so they can use it, and then I'll go to Peter and Daisy." Tony explains, looking so focussed on the computer that Bobbi is pretty sure an explosion could go off in the lab and he wouldn't notice.

"Fine." Bobbi says, leaving the lab, and as she leaves she catches a glimpse of the screen Tony is working on and gets an idea.

A few minutes later Bobbi is up in her room throwing stuff into a bag, including a few weapons from her mother's collection. As Bobbi packs her stuff her door opens and Trip and Sharon walk in.

"What the hell are you doing?" Sharon asks, looking at her friend in surprise.

"I caught sight of Dad's screen. Mom's missing in Morocco, I'm going to go find her." Bobbi explains, "It's about time I do something with these powers."
"You can't be serious." Trip says, looking at her in shock, "Morocco is a big place you wouldn't even know where to begin."

"Well I can't do nothing." Bobbi says, picking up her bag, "Mom's missing, Dad's falling apart, Daze and Pete are too, I need to do something." She says, "Don't try to stop me." She says, looking between her best friends.

"We're not going to." Sharon admits, as she and Trip exchange looks.

"We're coming with you." Trip tells her.

"No, no way." Bobbi says, looking between her friends, "It's too dangerous."

"Don't even try it Stark-May. We're going to be agents too, and we both love Aunt Melinda." Trip explains.

"Plus, there is no way we're going to let you go alone." Sharon reveals.

"Fine." Bobbi says, as she is pretty sure that the only way she could stop Sharon and Trip from going with her is to use her powers on them, and that's not something she is prepared to do, "We leave in half an hour." Bobbi says, knowing that if she, Trip and Sharon are going to go then she has to talk to Daisy and Peter.

In Morocco Phil, Clint, Natasha, and Maria have just gotten the algorithm from Tony and are running it.

"Okay, in red will be locations, that from what you've said, are the most likely places Mel would have gone for cover." Tony explains, "There's about ten of them."

"And we've been to nine of them." Natasha reveals, looking at the map, "That leaves one."

"Let's hope you're right, Stark." Phil comments desperately hoping he is.

"No one hopes that more than me." Tony admits.

"We'll let you know what we find." Maria says, before ending the call.

"Let's go, now." Natasha says, and they move out.

Less than ten minutes after they got the possible location from Tony, thanks mainly to Natasha's driving, she, Coulson, Clint, and Maria arrive at the location, which they find is being surrounded by men, who are clearly in a holding pattern which tells the four agents that Melinda has been holding them off, and considering everything, even if she managed to get more guns, she is probably very low on ammo.

"How we going to do this one?" Maria asks.

"Nat, take the back, get to May." Phil says, knowing that would be best, "Clint, you're with me, we're going to draw the attack onto us. Maria, you handle any stragglers." He instructs.

"Yes Sir." Maria, says, and once she does she, Clint, Phil, and Natasha all leave the vehicle and start to execute Phil's plan.
Within a few minutes Natasha manages to fight her way inside the building and makes her way to where the best vantage point would be,

"Whoever's out there, if you come any closer I'll shot." Melinda's voice says, as Natasha gets towards what seems like an open area, and Natasha feels beyond relieved.

"Linda, it's me." Natasha says.

"Nat?" Melinda's voice responds, sounding just as relieved as Natasha feels,

"Yeah, it's me." Natasha says, walking into the room where she finds Melinda surrounded by guns, both hand and more advance, which she has clearly stolen, with a ripped cloth tied around her leg which tells Natasha she was hit, "You good?"

"Yeah, and I'm glad to see you." Melinda says, standing up, with a slight amount of trouble, 
"Tony… I need to talk to him." She explains, as surviving, Tony, and her kids have been all that she has been thinking about for the past two days.

"We'll call once we're back at the plane, he helped us find you." Natasha reveals, as she walks over to her friend, "Any of these still good?" Natasha asks curious, clearly referring to the guns.

"No." Melinda answers, "I been using the ammo sparingly for the past twelve hours or so." Melinda reveals, and as soon as Natasha is closes enough Melinda hugs her, "I'm so damn happy to see you."

"Right back at you." Natasha admits, as she holds her friend, which a part of her thought she would never see again, tightly.

Back in New York Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip all of whom have packed bags, have headed into the upstairs living room where Daisy, and Peter, are playing Lego's.

"Daze, Pete." Bobbi says, as she walks over to her siblings, as Trip and Sharon stand back, knowing that this is something Bobbi has to do alone.

"Bobbi has Mom been found?" Daisy asks, looking at her sister, with a look of hope on her face.

"Not yet." Bobbi answers, as she squats down with her siblings, "Sharon, Antoine and I are going to go help Uncle Phil, Uncle Clint, Aunt Nat, and Maria to try to find her."

"You're leaving?" Peter asks, a hurt look on his face.

"To help." Bobbi explains, "I can't stay here and do nothing." She admits.

"Do you think you can help find Mom?" Daisy asks.

"I hope so." Bobbi admits, and as she does Daisy and Peter hug their sister.

As Bobbi, Daisy and Peter hug the three of them hear the sound of hurried footsteps, and Tony runs into the upstairs living room,

"Dad?" Bobbi asks, as she, Peter, and Daisy break apart.

"Mom's okay. She's on the phone now, Aunt Nat, Uncle Coulson, Uncle Clint, and Maria found her." Tony explains, looking beyond happy and as he does Bobbi, Daisy and Peter break apart and run towards Tony, who puts the phone on speaker.
"Mom?" Bobbi, and Daisy say at the same time Peter says,

"Aunt May?"

"Hi." Melinda says, sounding so happy to hear her kids.

"Are you okay?" Daisy asks.

"I am now." Melinda admits, as hearing Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter's voices make her feel so much better, "I'm on my way home, I'll see you soon, I love you, all of you."

"Love you too." Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, Tony, and even though they are too far for Melinda to hear, Sharon and Trip say.

March 11th 2006

A couple of months have passed since Melinda went missing, and since then her injuries have healed and even with her work it has been clear that Melinda is trying to be home with her family more, even if that means she brings more paperwork home.

It is a Saturday afternoon and because she doesn't want to do her homework Daisy decides to go find her brother and see if he wants to play chasey around the apartment. Figuring Peter's bed room will be a good first place to check Daisy heads there, where she finds the door is slightly open.

"Pete, can I come in?" Daisy asks curious.

"Sure." Peter says, and Daisy walks in and finds her brother sitting on the ground with what looks like the kind of scraps she's seen her dad throw out in the lab.

"What are you doing?" Daisy asks curious as she sits down across from her brother.

"Building. I want to see what I can make." Peter admits.

"Huh, cool." Daisy comments, "Have you talked to Dad?"

"No… I don't want Uncle Tony to be mad that I took stuff from the lab." Peter admits.

"Pete, you're building something with scarps, Dad wouldn't be made he'd be impressed." Daisy explains.

"You think so?" Peter asks his sister.

"I know so." Daisy assures his brother, "How about we get Dad up here, see what he thinks." Daisy suggests, and once she does Peter looks hesitant, and like he's considering things.

"Okay." Peter finally answers.

"Great." Daisy says, with a supportive smile, "JARVIS can you ask Dad to come up here." She requests.

"Yes, Miss Daisy." JARVIS responds.

"So are you building something specific or just seeing what the pieces become?" Daisy asks curious.

"Seeing what the pieces become." Peter answers, but even with doing that he has an idea of what he
is making thanks to how the pieces so far have fit.

"Cool." Daisy comments, and the two siblings drift into silence until Tony walks into the room.

"They're the scraps I threw out." Tony realises, "You know if you asked you could use any of the materials in the lab." Tony says, as he sits down with Peter and Daisy.

"I wanted to see what I could do." Peter admits.

"That's a good plan." Tony admits, smiling as he can see what Peter is attempting to do, and it is a pretty advance design, "You came up with this yourself, didn't you?" Tony asks.

"Yeah, it's stupid, right?" Peter asks, looking at his godfather in worry.

"No, it's really not." Tony assures him, "Why don't you talk me through what you are doing, and then if you get stuck, which it doesn't look like you're going to, I can help." Tony suggests.

"Okay." Peter says, and he proceeds to talk though his plan with his godfather, as Daisy watches on as while she isn't that interested in engineering and making things, or just watching her father and brother make things, beats doing her homework.
Chapter 23

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Because I realised it's going to be relevant soon. For this story I will be using the timeline of Iron Man 1 taking place in 2010 and Avengers taking place in 2012.

THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT. PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW

June 9th 2006

Three months have passed since Daisy found Peter building stuff in his room and since then, Bobbi has turned nineteen, and Peter has continued to build things, even working with Tony when Tony is sure that what he is doing isn't dangerous.

As of two weeks earlier Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip have finished their first year of college and because of that they are at a S.H.I.E.L.D facility where they are undergoing final assessments which will decide if they will be accepted to S.H.I.E.L.D's Operations Academy. It is currently late at night and even though Trip and Sharon have gone to bed Bobbi, who can function on less sleep, is still awake in the gym where there is an obstacle course set up.

"You're holding back." A voice says, as Bobbi finishes her latest go at the obstacle course, and she turns to see Phil.

"Uncle Phil." Bobbi says, looking glad to see him, "And of course I'm holding back, I don't want to lose control."

"You won't." Phil says, walking over to her.

"You don't know that." Bobbi tells him, "Tomorrow I've got to do the obstacle course, and spar with an agent, while being assessed by Agent Hand. The smallest miscalculation and I could seriously hurt someone, or worse." Bobbi says, looking worried about what she can do.

"Bobbi, you've been working on controlling yourself since you were six, and for years you've trained with your Mom, practicing using your powers and controlling them while fighting." Phil points out, "You don't have to hold back, you can use your powers to do better, without going too far, I know that, I believe in you." Phil comments.

"Thanks Uncle Phil." Bobbi says, looking touched.

"You don't have to thank me." Phil assures her, "Bobbi, your powers make you strong, but what is going to make you an incredible agent is your heart, and your instinct." Phil tells her, "I have faith in you."

"After what happened to my biological family I only have that heart because of Mom, and Dad, you, and the rest of our family.” Bobbi reveals, taking a step forward, knowing that she could have gone in a different direction, if it wasn't for the support has had, something which terrifies her, "Dad called earlier, he has faith in me, Mom does too, same with Sharon, Antoine, and Aunt Peggy, but I don't know if have faith in myself." Bobbi admits, opening up to Phil as she trusts him.
"You should. You going to do great tomorrow." Phil says, believing that, "Don't second guess yourself, you've got this, I'm so proud of you." He says.

"Thanks Uncle Phil." Bobbi says, it meaning a lot to her to hear her Uncle say that "I kind of wish it was you assessing me, or Uncle Clint, or Nat, or Maria." She admits, knowing perfectly well why her mother couldn't, and also knowing that both Trip and Sharon wish they were being assessed by someone they know too.

"Fury wanted someone objective." Phil explains, knowing that he decided that so that there was possibility that someone could claim special treatment, "So while I can't help with your assessment I can help you now."

"How?" Bobbi asks curious.

"I'm going to run this obstacle course with you, and spar with you until you believe in yourself as much as your family does." Phil explains, "You're worried you're going to lose control, well I know you're not going to, I trust you, now it's time you trust yourself."

Hearing Phil's offer Bobbi isn't sure what to say and so she just hugs him,

"Thank you." Bobbi says, as she hugs Phil, and after a few moments they break apart.

"Let's get to work." Phil says, once they do and just like Phil said the two of them start to do the obstacle course and spar, Phil being willing to do whatever he has to do to help Bobbi.

**June 23rd 2006**

Two weeks later Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip have completed their assessments, but are still waiting to find out if they have been accepted into S.H.I.E.L.D, though all three of them are pretty confidence that they will be as they don't see Fury passing up the chance to have them, and have returned to the Stark-May apartment where Daisy and Peter have finished school for the year.

It is early morning on a Friday and Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Daisy, and Peter, all of whom are fully dressed, are all in the main living area of the apartment setting up something.

"So, you're sure you've got all the basis's covered, right?" Sharon ask Bobbi.

"Yep, I talked to Pepper yesterday and she's got Stark handled, and I talked to Uncle Phil half an hour ago, and he said that as long as there is no end of the world event Mom won't get a call." Bobbi explains, as she places plates of food on a table.

"Knowing our luck today would be the day where there would be a world ending event." Sharon comments.

"Come on Girl, can't you optimistic for once in your life?" Trip asks.

"That's your job." Sharon responds, and before Bobbi can make a comment she hears,

"BOBBI" Being yelled by Peter and she turns to see her sister falling off a ladder, even though Bobbi strictly told her not to touch the ladder and so moving quickly, using her powers, Bobbi hurries to her sister, and manages to catch her before she can hit the ground.

"I got you." Bobbi tells her sister.

"I know." Daisy says, not looking at all afraid, as Bobbi gently puts her on the ground.
"What were you thinking? I told you not to touch the ladder." Bobbi tells her sister, her voice stern but she doesn't want to sound too angry.

"We wanted to help." Daisy explains.

"You guys can come help me and Sharon." Bobbi says, looking between her siblings, "Antoine." She says, giving her friend a look, as she leads her siblings over to where Sharon is.

"I've got it." Trip says, as he walks over to the ladder.

Upstairs, a little while later, both Melinda and Tony are asleep, it being just before Melinda is about to get up for the day, when JARVIS wakes them up.

"J? What's with the wakeup call?" Tony asks curious, as unless one of them asked JARVIS to wait them he doesn't usually do so.

"Miss Bobbi, Miss Daisy, Mr Peter, Miss Sharon, and Mr Antoine are requesting your presence downstairs in the living room." JARVIS explains, and as he does Melinda and Tony exchange surprised looks. After exchanging their surprised looks both Melinda and Tony get up and head downstairs.

Less than a minute later Tony and Melinda walk into the living room where they find a banner with 'Happy 5th Anniversary Mom & Dad' hung across the room, balloons, streamers and a table which is covered in food, and flowers.

"Happy Anniversary." Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, Sharon, and Trip say together when Melinda and Tony walk into the living room.

"Thank you, this is incredible." Melinda says, looking around in amazement.

"It really is." Tony admits, as he looks between his children, nephew, and niece, feeling beyond touched.

"This isn't the best part." Bobbi reveals.

"Then what is?" Tony asks curious.

"Our present to you." Daisy explains, and once she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks.

"Oh?" Melinda asks, looking between the kids.

"Today you both have the day off from Stark, and S.H.I.E.L.D." Peter says, having asked Bobbi just what to say.

"And we're going out." Bobbi explains, "Daze, Pete, Sharon, Antoine, and I have an entire day plan. We're not going to be back to eight tonight. You have the apartment to yourselves." She reveals, being pretty sure that she may have to be carrying Peter by the end of the day.

"You really don't have to be gone all day." Melinda tells her kids, Sharon, and Trip.

"We want to," Bobbi says, as she walks towards her parents, "I love you guys." She says, before hugging them both, "Happy anniversary." She says, as both her parents hug her, and as they hug Daisy and Peter walk over and join in on the hug.
After a few moments Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter break apart.

"Have a good day." Peter says, looking between Melinda and Tony.

"Thanks Peter." Melinda and Tony say together.

"We'll get out of your hair, Happy Anniversary." Sharon says, and once she does she, Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, and Trip walk over to the elevators.

"We love you guys." Trip says, as the group of five step onto the elevators, and Melinda and Tony watch them go.

"We have a really amazing family." Tony comments, putting his arm around Melinda.

"We really do." Melinda confirms, before kissing Tony, and the two of them start to enjoy their anniversary.

July 10th 2006

A little over two weeks have passed since Melinda and Tony's anniversary and since then Daisy has turned ten years old. It is a Monday afternoon and Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, Tony, and Melinda are playing soccer in the downstairs living room, Melinda having returned home from a mission a few hours earlier.

"I'm surprised you're okay with this." Trip tells Melinda.

"It's too hot outside, and the furniture has been moved. It's perfectly safe." Melinda says, and as she does she dodges pass Trip to get the soccer ball and kick a goal, "Don't get distracted. It's the first rule of being a S.H.I.E.L.D agent." Melinda tells her nephew.

"And apparently of playing indoor soccer." Trip says, looking amused, as the family continue to play together.

A few minutes after Melinda scored a goal the elevator doors open, and Nick Fury who is arriving at the apartment, has to climb over the couch so that he can get to the May-Stark's, Sharon, and Trip.

"Director." Melinda says, being the first to notice him and so she catches the ball that was kicked towards her and turns to look at him.

"No fair, using hands!" Peter argues.

"We're pausing for a minute Pete." Melinda tells him, "What's going on, Nick?" She asks, knowing that it takes a lot to bring Fury to the apartment.

"I'll here to give Bobbi, Sharon, and Antoine the results of their S.H.I.E.L.D assessments." Fury reveals, looking between everyone in the living room who have stopped to look at him.

"So, what's the verdict?" Sharon asks.

"Sharon Carter, Antoine Triplett, Barbra Stark-May, you have all been accepted into S.H.I.E.L.D's Operations Academy." Fury reveals, and the three teenagers look thrilled.

"Congratulations." Tony says, as Bobbi hugs her mother, and Sharon and Trip hug each other.

"Now, Bobbi I assume you'll be going by Morse while at S.H.I.E.L.D and that all three of you
would prefer if people who don't already know about your family connections aren't told." Fury assumes as that what he gathers, and Sharon, Trip, and Antoine exchange looks.

"Yeah, that's correct." Trip confirms, clearly speaking for himself, Bobbi, and Sharon.

"Stark-May is my name, but I know considering everything it would be safer and better choice to go by Morse." Bobbi admits, honestly, she would very much like to go by Stark-May, but she knows that it isn't possible, not if she wants to protect her family.

"Okay." Fury says, with a nod.

"Nick, want to play?" Daisy asks curious, and as there is so much innocence in Daisy's voice Melinda and Tony exchange amused looks.

"I can't stay, but thank you Daisy." Fury says, looking almost tempted, "Agent May, I'll see you tomorrow." Fury says, "Bobbi, Sharon, Antoine, you'll receive more information soon." He reveals, before leaving, once more climbing over the furniture to get out.

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Hours later the Stark-May's, Sharon, and Trip have stopped playing soccer, and because she feels like she has to Bobbi has decided that she is going to talk to her siblings about what is going to happen. Deciding to talk to her brother first Bobbi heads to Peter's room and knocks on his door.

"Come in." Peter says, and Bobbi walks in to find her brother sitting at her desk, working on something.

"Hey Pete, can we talk?" Bobbi asks, walking over to her brothers' bed and sitting on it.

"Sure." Peter says, and he walks over and sits down on the bed too, so he and Bobbi are both sitting cross legged, sitting across from each other, "This is about S.H.I.E.L.D, right?" Peter asks.

"Alright, it is." Bobbi assures her brother, "I'm not going to be around as much anymore Peter."

"I know." Peter says, looking sad, "I'm gonna miss you.

"I'm going to miss you too." Bobbi says, as she reaches over and takes Peter's hand, "But Peter, I promise you I'm always going be here for you. You're my little brother, nothing will ever change that, so if you need me, no matter what, I'm just a call away." Bobbi promises her brother.

"I love you Bobbi." Peter says, before hugging his sister.

"I love you too." Bobbi responds, as she returns the hug, and after a few moments they break apart, "I'm going to go talk to Daisy, let you get back to what you were doing." Bobbi tells Peter.

"Okay." Peter says, and as he gets up and heads back to his desk Bobbi heads out of Peter's room.

After leaving Peter's room Bobbi heads left to the next door which she knocks on.

"Come in." Daisy voice responds, and so Bobbi walks right in and as she sees her sister sitting on her bed on her computer she walks over to her.

"Can we talk?" Bobbi asks.

"Sure." Daisy says, as she moves her computer off her lap, "What's up?" she asks curious.

"I just talked to Peter, and now I want to talk to you." Bobbi explains.
"This is about you joining S.H.I.E.L.D, it's you're 'I'll still be here for you' speech?" Daisy asks.

"Yeah, but it's not a speech Daisy-Lin, it's a promise." Bobbi assures her sister, "You need me, and I'll be there."

"You can't promise that." Daisy tells her sister, "I know Mom's done her best to always be there for us, but she's missed things, and this job, being a S.H.I.E.L.D agent, it's not exactly safe." Daisy points out.

"Yeah, but you're forgetting Daze, it's not easy to hurt me." Bobbi tells her sister.

"You're still human though." Daisy tells her sister, looking worried, and Bobbi reaches out and takes both her sisters hands, just like she did with Peter.

"Daze, I can't promise that I'll never get hurt, but my promise that if you need me I'll be there, that is a promise I can keep, okay?" Bobbi asks her sister.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod, not sure if she believes it, "It's going to be strange without you around."

"I'll be back when I can, and you and Peter are going to be fine." Bobbi assures his sister.

"I'll look out for him, just like you've always looked out for me." Daisy tells her sister.

"Hey, I'm not going to stop looking out for either of you." Bobbi assures her sister, "It's still my job, S.H.I.E.L.D agent or not." She says, and Daisy looks amused.

"I love you Barbra-May."

"Love you too, Daisy-Lin." Bobbi responds, and the two sisters embrace.

**September 11th 2006**

Two months have passed since Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip were accepted into S.H.I.E.L.D, and finally the day where they have to leave for the Academy has come. Along with it being the day that Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi have to leave for the Academy it is also Daisy's first day of fifth grade and Peter's first day of kindergarten.

As this is going to be their last chance for a while Tony, Melinda, Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Daisy, and Peter are all having breakfast together.

"Peter, you excited to start kindergarten?" Sharon asks curious.

"Yeah, really am." Peter confirms.

"That's great Peter, you're going to have a great time." Trip tells him.

"I hope so." Peter comments, and as he does Bobbi sees the clock.

"It's time, we've got to go." Bobbi reveals.

"Yeah, we do." Sharon realises, and she, Bobbi, Trip, Melinda, and Tony all stand up, and as they do both Melinda and Tony walk over to Bobbi, and as they know what Bobbi wants to say, Trip and Sharon walk over to Daisy and Peter who they start to distract, and saying goodbye to them at the same time.
"I owe you guys everything." Bobbi admits, "Mom, you saved me when you found me in that facility, but you both saved me every single day you loved me, and was there for me, you are the best parents anyone could ever ask for" Bobbi explains, looking between her parents, "I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for you two, I can protect people because you protected me." Bobbi explains, "I love you." Bobbi says, before hugging both her parents.

"You never have to thank us for loving you." Tony tells Bobbi.

"We're so proud of you." Melinda tells her daughter, as both she and Tony kiss Bobbi's head, and for a little while the three of them hug before breaking apart.

Once Bobbi, Melinda, and Tony break apart Bobbi walks over to her siblings as Sharon and Trip walk over to Bobbi.

"Hey you two." Bobbi tells her siblings as she picks up both of them, with ease, being able to thanks to her powers, "I love you guys." Bobbi tells her siblings.

"Love you too." Daisy and Peter both say.

"You're going to be a great agent." Daisy says.

"You really are, you're a superhero." Peter says.

"Thanks Daze, Pete." Bobbi says, looking between her siblings and after holding them for a few moments longer Bobbi puts her siblings down on the ground.

"You are all going to be amazing agents." Melinda says, looking between Bobbi, Trip, and Sharon, "I believe in you."

"Thanks Mom." Bobbi says.

"Thanks Aunt Melinda." Trip and Sharon say together.

"Even though none of you need it, good luck." Tony says, and once he does Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip pick up their bags and head out of the kitchen, the three of them planning on driving Bobbi's car to The Academy.

Hours later Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip have arrived at the Academy and spent most of the day doing orientation activities before retiring to their dorm, a three-bedroom suite, that the three of them will be sharing, something which they suspect Fury arranged.

"This place is not bad." Trip comments.

"It's really not." Bobbi confirms, "You know from what Mom told me I think the dorm she shared with Uncle Phil is right across the hall."

"That's kind of cool." Sharon admits, "We're finally here, the three S.H.I.E.L.D Legacies, training to follow in our family's footsteps."

"I'm not a legacy, not like you guys." Bobbi says, looking between Sharon and Trip, feeling that they have more right to call themselves legacies than she does.

"Bobbi, your Mom is one of the best S.H.I.E.L.D's agents there is, hell she's one of the best in the Agency's history." Trip points out.
"And your adoptive Grandfather founded S.H.I.E.L.D. You're the definition of a legacy, we all are." Sharon says, looking between her two best friends.

"Which is why no one else can know, they won't understand." Trip comments, "They'll think we were given special treatment."

"Which didn't happen, if anything I think we had to jump through more hoops." Bobbi comments, as she is pretty sure that the tests the trio had to go through were more than other potential agents.

"Wouldn't surprise me." Trip admits, "We haven't talked about it, what are you going to do about what you can do?" he asks, looking at Trip.

"Not talk about it, hide it, as much as I can anyway." Bobbi explains.

"I'll help." Sharon says, "If I can."

"Same." Trip adds, "Thing are going to change, but three of us being able to count on each other, being there for each other, watching each other's backs, that's never going to change." He says, as he looks between his two best friends.

"Never." Sharon and Bobbi say together, and the three friends hug in the middle of the dorm that is going to be their home for a little while.

While Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are in their dorm at S.H.I.E.L.D's Operations Academy back in New York Melinda is standing in the doorway to Bobbi's room, and for once she isn't hyper focused on everything so she doesn't even realise when Tony walks up to her.

"Mel." Tony says, as he puts his arm around Melinda's shoulder.

"It's so strange not having her here." Melinda admits, looking sad, "I miss her already."

"Me too." Tony confirms, "Our girls out in the world, she's grown up."

"Yeah." Melinda says, leaning into Tony's arm, "I'm so proud of her, of everything she's done, but I'm scared of what might happen."

"Me too." Tony confirms, "But I think that's normal." He admits, "Bobbi might be nineteen, and she might be training to become a S.H.I.E.L.D agent, and hell she might be able to lift a car, but she's always going to be our daughter, and no matter her age she still needs her parents, we know that all to well." Tony comments, as he and Melinda have had times where they needed their parents and didn't have them, "We just need to keep being here for her."

"We will be, always." Melinda says, knowing that and the two of them drift into silence as they stand side by side, in each other's arms, as the stare at their daughters empty room, both Melinda and Tony feeling incredible proud of their oldest daughter, but missing her at the same time.
November 15th 2006

A couple of months have passed since Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi started at S.H.I. 's Operations Academy and so far the three of them have been doing very well, and make frequent calls to the Stark-May apartment.

It's the middle of the school week, but even with that fact Melinda, Tony, Daisy, and Peter are all home as Peter and Daisy have both gotten chicken pox, even though they were both vaccinated, and so Melinda and Tony are book looking after them.

"Mommy, it itches." Daisy complains.

"I know, but you can't itch Sweetheart." Melinda tells her daughter, "Take some of this." Melinda says, giving her daughter some medication, and Daisy takes it.

"When will it stop itching?" Daisy asks her mother.

"I don't know, soon I hope." Melinda tells her daughter, as Daisy yawns, "Why don't you try to get some sleep, I'll be right here."

"Where's Peter?" Daisy asks her Mother.

"With Dad, he's giving him a calamine bath just like I gave you." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, and she nods, "Sleepy." Daisy admits.

"Close your eyes Daze." Melinda tells her daughter, and that's just what she does.

Within minutes of Daisy closing her eyes she is fast asleep, but Melinda continues to sit with her daughter.

"Mrs Stark-May." Jarvis says, about five minutes after Daisy fell asleep.

"Yeah JARVIS?" Melinda asks, keeping her voice low.

"Miss Potts is here." JARVIS reveals.

"Thanks Jarvis." Melinda says, standing up, "I'll be right back." She tells Daisy before quietly walking out of the room.

About a minute later Melinda walks into the living room where she finds Pepper with two shopping bags.

"Pepper, thank you for doing this." Melinda says, as she walks over to her, "I know it's not exactly
within your job description."

"It's fine, it actually completely is." Pepper admits, "And even if it wasn't I'm happy to help." she admits.

"Thank you." Melinda says, feeling grateful as with two sick kids neither she nor Tony could get away to get more supplies.

"How's Daisy? How's Peter?" Pepper asks curious, truly wanting to know.

"Miserable." Melinda answers, looking like that fact hurts her, "They're both vaccinated so the doctor said they should be okay in a few days, but it's going to be a long few day for them."

"And you and Tony." Pepper realises, "If there is anything else I can do to help, please let me know."

"I will, thank you." Melinda responds.

"I should get back to Stark." Pepper reveals, as she hands Melinda the bags she has, "Tell Tony I've pushed the meetings that were on the schedule to next week." She explains.

"I will." Melinda assures her, "Thank you." Melinda says, making a note to thank Pepper in another way once Peter and Daisy are better.

"Of course. Bye Melinda."

"Bye Pepper." Melinda responds, and while Pepper heads out of the apartment Melinda heads back upstairs.

Three days later

Ever since Pepper dropped by with supplies Melinda and Tony have been doing everything they can to look after their two young sick kids, and finally both Peter and Daisy are showing the signs of getting better.

It's very late at night and Melinda and Tony are just returning back to their room after checking on their kids.

"I think they may actually sleep through the night." Tony says, as he collapses onto the bed.

"Don't jinx it." Melinda requests.

"You don't believe in jinx's." Tony comments, looking up at her.

"Neither do you." Melinda says, without missing a beat as she sits down on the bed, "I'm just glad they're doing better, I hated not being able to help." Melinda says, as they're was very little she and Tony could do that would really help Daisy and Peter.

"Me to." Tony says, moving closer to Melinda, "All I wanted to do was take away their pain; if I could have had chicken pox again I would have, just so they didn't."

"Same." Melinda says, laying down next to Tony, honestly feeling beyond exhausted, and the two of them take each others hands, "JARVIS if either Daisy or Peter seem like they are in distress wake us immediately." Melinda requests.
"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS responds.

"Kill the lights J." Tony requests.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS responds and that's exactly what he does. Seconds after JARVIS turns off the lights in their bedroom both Melinda and Tony are fast asleep still holding each other's hands, both feeling completely exhausted after the last few days.

**January 23rd 2007**

It has been a couple of months since Daisy and Peter had chicken pox and since then The Stark-May's have celebrated Christmas with Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip who came home for the holidays, and Peter has turned six.

It's a Tuesday morning and Melinda, Peter, Tony, and Daisy are having breakfast together in the kitchen of the apartment.

"The assignment was so easy. It took me five minutes and then I told the teacher and he didn't believe me." Daisy explains, looking between her parents.

"What was the assignment?" Melinda asks curious.

"Website coding, we had to code a simple website." Daisy explains, "I probably could have done it quicker, but I was talking." Daisy explains.

"Nice job." Tony says proudly.

"Thanks Dad. Computer coding just seems to come naturally to me." Daisy explains.

"That's impressive Daze, it's not like that for many people." Melinda tells her daughter, and Daisy grins proudly.

"It's time to go." Peter realises.

"Yep." Tony realises, "Are you heading to DC?" Tony asks curious.

"Only if I get a call, otherwise I'm going to do my paperwork here." Melinda explains.

"Guess I'll see you later then." Tony responds, honestly feeling a little annoyed that he has to go into Stark as he'd much rather spend time with Melinda.

"Yeah." Melinda says, as she walks over to Peter and Daisy, "Have a great day at school." Melinda says, before hugging each of her children, and once they break apart Tony, Daisy and Peter leave the apartment.

A while after Tony, Peter and Daisy left the apartment Melinda is in her study doing paperwork when she hears footsteps and so she looks up and sees Tony.

"Hey, I thought you had to go into Stark." Melinda comments, as she leans back in her chair.

"I decided to play hooky." Tony admits, as he walks over to Melinda, "It's not that often we can both be home at the same time with no kids." He admits, as he walks right over to the desk and leans against it, right next to Melinda.

"Very true." Melinda confirms, "Got any genius ideas?" Melinda asks curious.
"One, but I didn't need to be a genius to think of it." Tony admits, before leaning forward and kissing Melinda, as they kiss Melinda stands up and pushes Tony against the desk, and things between them quickly heaten up.

A while after Tony arrived back at the apartment Phil and Melinda are both arriving at the ground floor of the Stark-May apartment building.

"Here to get Melinda?" Pepper asks.

"Yep, we've got an assignment." Phil explains, "You here for Stark?" Phil asks, as they walk into the elevator that will take them to the Stark-May floors, an elevator that very few people have access to.

"Yeah, he didn't show at Stark and we have a meeting this afternoon." Pepper explains.

"Ah." Phil says, knowing that it is not the first time Tony has missed a meeting, and the two of them continue to ride up in the elevator, until the elevator doors finally open into the Stark-May apartment.

"JARVIS, where are they?" Phil asks, as he and Pepper walk into the apartment.

"Mr and Mrs Stark-May are in the study." JARVIS answers.

"Thank you, JARVIS." Pepper says, and she and Phil head to the study. Even though they should know better by now both Pepper and Phil walk straight into the study.

"Oh god." Phil says, as he and Pepper both see Tony and Melinda having sex on the desk, and hearing Phil's voice Melinda and Tony basically fall of the desk, as they try to cover up.

"Sorry." Pepper says, wishing that this was only the first time that this exactly situation had happened, and so she and Phil quickly exit the study and close the door behind them.

"I really wish we knocked." Phil mutters.

"Same." Pepper confirms, and she and Phil wait outside for about a minute until Tony and Melinda walk out of the study Melinda doing up her jeans, and Tony doing up his shirt as they walk out.

"I assume we have a mission." Melinda says, looking at Phil, who is avoiding looking at her.

"Yeah." Phil confirms.

"I'll grab my bag." Melinda says, kissing Tony before walking over to the stairs and hurrying upstairs.

"You have a meeting in an hour." Pepper tells Tony, "You have to be there."

"Yes Miss Potts." Tony says, and Pepper walks away, heading to the living room, "You alright there, Coulson?" Tony asks curious, as Phil is looking pretty mortified.

"No." Phil says, "I'll wait for May in the living room." He comments, following Pepper to the living room.

"MEL, I THINK WE TRAUMATISED YOUR PARTNER." Tony calls as he heads upstairs too, honestly feeling pretty amused with the events of the last five minutes.
May 10th 2007

Almost four months have passed since Pepper and Tony caught Melinda and Tony having sex in their office, and since then Bobbi has celebrated her twentieth birthday, the first since she was six that she didn't celebrate with her parents.

It's early morning, at least where Bobbi is, and because she is about to start on her first mission, which she Sharon, and Trip are doing with Victoria Hand and Isabel Hartley, and she knows her mother is on a mission, Bobbi has gone to an empty corridor and once there she pulls out her phone and calls her father.

"Hey Little Bird." Tony answers.

"Hey Dad." Bobbi responds.

"You okay?" Tony asks, a little bit of concern in his voice.

"Yeah…. Just a little nervous." Bobbi admits, "I'm about to go on my first mission." She reveals.

"Should you be telling me that?" Tony asks curious, being pretty sure he knows the answer to that.

"Probably not." Bobbi admits, "But I wanted to."

"I'm glad." Tony tells his daughter, "You're going to do great, Little Bird." Tony assures his daughter.

"How can you say that, you don't even know what I'm going to have to do." Bobbi says, leading out the fact that she doesn't even know what she is going to be doing yet.

"But I know you." Tony tells his daughter, "You want to protect people, just like your mom, that's the heart of a great S.H.I.E.L.D agent. Your powers and training and help, but who you are, that's what's going to make you great."

"Thanks Dad." Bobbi says, feeling incredible touched, and as she speaks Trip rounds the corner and walks into the empty corridor she is standing in.

"We're needed in the command centre." Trip tells Bobbi.

"Okay." Bobbi mouths at him, "Dad, I've got to go." Bobbi reveals, "I love you."

"Love you too." Tony responds, and once he does Bobbi hangs up.

"You good?" Trip asks curious.

"Yeah, I'm good." Bobbi responds and the two of them walk to the command centre.

"Morse." Izzy says, as Bobbi and Trip walk in, "You need a radio call sign, everyone else has picked one." She says, "Any preferences?" She asks, and as soon as Izzy asks Bobbi gets an idea,

"Mockingbird." Bobbi answers, feeling like it would be the perfect choice.

Four days later

For four days Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip complete their mission with Izzy and Hand. As the mission has been completed all three of them have been given a few days off and deciding to take advantage of that fact Bobbi has headed home, without telling anyone she was coming.
"Hey JARVIS." Bobbi says, as she walks into the apartment on a Monday afternoon.

"Miss Bobbi, welcome home." Jarvis says, and even though JARVIS is a programmed computer Bobbi is pretty sure she can hear joy in JARVIS'S voice.

"Thanks Jarvis, I'm glad to be home." Bobbi admits, "Anyone around?" she asks curious.

"Mr Stark-May has gone to pick up Mr Peter and Ms Daisy from school, but Mrs Stark-May is in the study." JARVIS explains.

"Thanks JARVIS." Bobbi says, and she heads to the study. As Bobbi gets closer to the study she finds the door open and so she just walks into the study, where she finds her mother doing paperwork, "Hey Mom." Bobbi greats.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, sounding glad as she gets up and hurries over to her daughter who she hugs, "It's so good to see you."

"I'm really glad to see you too." Bobbi admits, as she hugs her mother tightly, and after a few moments the two of them break apart.

"Are you alright?" Melinda asks, as the two of them sit down on the couch.

"Yeah, I really am." Bobbi admits, "Mom, every second of this mission I felt like I was doing something I was mean to be doing." She reveals, "I used my powers, and I had to hide that fact, but I was using them to protect people. It felt right." Bobbi admits, "This was the first time, apart from when I pushed Cal out of that window, that I thought having these powers wasn't all bad." Bobbi admits, "it's the first time that I've thought that maybe some good can come from all that pain, horror, and torture I went through." Bobbi admits.

"I'm glad you feel like that, but I'm sorry that it's taken this long." Melinda admits.

"Me too, but I would have never gotten this chance if it wasn't for you." Bobbi tells her mother, "You have higher clearance, can I tell you about the mission?" she asks curious.

"If you want." Melinda tells her daughter and Bobbi starts to tell her mother all about the mission she just did.

A while later Tony, Daisy, and Peter are arriving home, after Tony picked up the two youngest Stark-May's from school.

"Dad, can we have pizza for tea tonight?" Daisy asks.

"You're going to have to ask Mom that one." Tony tells his daughter, as they walk out of the elevators and into the living room of the apartment.

"I don't like your chances." A voice says, and Daisy, Peter, and Tony turn to see Bobbi standing with Melinda.

"BOBBI." Daisy and Peter yell and they run and embrace their sister.

After a few moments Peter, Bobbi, and Daisy break apart and Bobbi hugs her father. After Tony and Bobbi hug the Stark-May family proceed to spend an enjoyable night together as a family.

July 10th 2007
A couple of months have passed since Bobbi went on her first mission and since then she has gone on several more, returning to the Stark-May apartment, usually with Sharon and Trip, whenever she can, both Peter and Daisy have finished school for the year, and Daisy has turned eleven.

It's late evening on a Tuesday, a little while before her bedtime, and Daisy is heading downstairs to get a drink, as she is halfway down the stairs she hears the voices of her mother, father, and Uncle Phil.

"You're going to Lebanon, really?" Tony asks.

"How'd you guess that?" Phil asks, sounding surprised.

"For spies you two aren't as subtle as you really should be." Tony comments.

"We are subtle, you're just smart enough to figure it out." Melinda tells her husband, as she, unknown to Daisy, smiles at him.

"Flattery isn't going to make me forget how dangerous where you're going is." Tony argues.

"I know." Melinda says, as she walks over to Tony, not that Daisy can see that, "It will be okay." Melinda tells her husband, "I have the best people watching my back, and I know what I'm doing."

"I know you do; I still worry though." Tony admits, and he and Melinda kiss.

"We've got to go." Phil says and as he does Daisy sneaks back upstairs.

Once she is on the top floor of the apartment Daisy heads straight to bedroom. Once she is in her room Daisy grabs her computer,

"What makes Lebanon so dangerous? What could Mom be doing?" Daisy asks herself, "Let's find out." Daisy says, as she starts to type on her computer. Pretty quickly Daisy manages to find basic information, but not the information she wants, and so she decides to put her computer skills to good use and find more information, "User name." Daisy reads, realising that she needs an alias for what she is going to do, "Skye." Daisy says to herself and once he username is set up she starts to hack.

A while later, while Daisy is in her room hacking, Tony is down in the lab, working on new designs, that he has to present to Stark in a couple of weeks,

"Sir." JARVIS says.

"Yeah, J?" Tony asks, as he continues to work.

"There is unusual activity on apartments internet and systems." JARVIS reveals.

"What kind of unusual activity?" Tony asks, looking concerned, as he looks up from what he is doing.

"A computer in the apartment is searching for access on Lebanon and hacking sensitive websites and sources to do so." JARVIS explains.

"Let me guess, Daisy's computer." Tony says, as ever since Daisy started to show how good she is with computers he's been waiting for something like this to happen.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.
"Thanks J." Tony says, with a sigh, honestly having no idea how to handle this as hacking sensitive websites and sources is something he's done thousands of times, so he's not exactly sure how he can tell Daisy off for doing the exact same thing, "J, alert me if Daisy access information that is truly sensitive or if she accesses something that she can get into legal trouble for accessing." Tony says, deciding to hold of talking to Daisy, unless she does one of those things, until Melinda is home.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

Four days later

Ever since Tony was alerted that Daisy was hacking he has been monitoring what she has been doing, but hasn't talked to her. It's early evening and both Daisy and Peter are up in their rooms while Tony is in the lab working.

As Tony works he hears the door open and hears footsteps, due to the fact that he's not too focused, he hears, turns around, and sees Melinda walk in.

"Welcome home." Tony says, with a grin.

"Thanks." Melinda responds, as she walks over and kisses him, "How are the kids?"

"They're good, both in their rooms." Tony explains, "But there was an incident with Daisy a few days ago."

"Is she okay?" Melinda asks, clearly concerned.

"She's fine." Tony assures his wife, "But she must have heard Coulson, you and I talking because she started to search for information on Lebanon, and she was hacking websites to do it." he explains.

"Have you talked to her?" Melinda asks, like Tony she was waiting for something like this to happen.

"No, I wasn't sure how to tell her off for something I've done a thousand times." Tony admits, "I did ask JARVIS to alert me if she accessed anything she could be prosecuted for accessing, and she hasn't." he reveals.

"Right." Melinda says, putting her bag down, "Let's talk to her together." She says, "She needs to understand the seriousness of what she is doing, you get that."

"Yeah, I do." Tony confirms and both he and Melinda head out of the lab.

About a minute later Melinda and Tony get to Daisy's room and knock on the door,

"Come in." Daisy's voice says, and both Melinda and Tony walk into their daughter's room, "MOM!" Daisy says excited, as she hurries over to her mother and hugs her, "I'm glad you're home."

"So am I." Melinda admits, as she and Daisy break apart, "Your Dad and I have to talk to you." She reveals, and as she does Daisy looks between her parents.

"What about?" Daisy asks, pretending that she doesn't know exactly what her parents are talking about.
"Hacking." Tony answers.

"Oh, that." Daisy says, looking between her parents. "You were alerted as soon as I started to hack, weren't you?" Daisy asks, looking at her father.

"Not right away, but soon enough." Tony tells his daughter, "Daisy, hacking is a serious thing."

"You do it all the time." Daisy argues.

"You're right, your Dad does hack a lot." Melinda confirms, "But that doesn't change the fact that it is serious, or the fact that you can get into serious trouble if you hack certain things." She explains, "The kind of trouble your Dad and I couldn't protect you from."

"We're not saying don't hack, it's a great way to hone your skills, and you can learn important things and information, but you need to be careful." Tony explains to his daughter.

"I will." Daisy assures her father, "I'll be careful, promise." Daisy says, looking between her mother and Tony, who exchange looks.

"We trust you Daisy, but we're going to get JARVIS to monitor what you do when you're hacking, at least for a little while." Melinda informs her daughter.

"You're going to monitor my internet? That's so unfair!" Daisy objects.

"Not exactly." Tony explains, "If you start to hack something you can get in serious trouble for hacking JARVIS will alert you, and your mother and I." Tony explains, "That sound fair to you?"

"Yeah, I guess so." Daisy confirms, being pretty sure she doesn't have a choice, "Am I in trouble?"

"No." Melinda and Tony answers,

"We'll let you get back to what you were doing." Melinda explains, "Remember bedtime is in an hour."

"Yes Mom." Daisy answers, and once she does Tony and Daisy head out of their daughter's bedroom, Melinda heading to Peter's room to see her son while Tony heads back to the lab.

**September 21 st 2007**

About two months have passed since Daisy started to seriously hack and since then she hasn't, as yet, hacked anything she could get in serious trouble for, as well as Daisy continuing to hack she has started sixth grade while Peter has started first.

It is a Friday afternoon and Melinda and Tony are standing at the bottom of the stairs, in their apartment, talking.

"He really wouldn't talk about what was going on?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony in concern.

"Really." Tony confirms, "I'm worried, it's not like him."

"Me too." Melinda admits, and as she does both she and Tony hear the sound of the elevator doors open so they turn and see Bobbi walking into the apartment, "Hey." Melinda greats.

"Hey." Bobbi says, walking over to her parents, "Is something going on?" she asks, looking concerned.
"It's Peter, he's been quiet since I picked him up from school, and won't talk to us." Tony explains, looking concerned.

"Oh." Bobbi says, feeling as concerned as her parents, "I'll try talking to him, maybe he needs just needs to talk to his big sister." She says, before heading upstairs.

About a minute later Bobbi gets walks into the corridor where the bedrooms are, and so she drops her bag in her room, before walking next door, where she knocks on the door,

"Pete, it's Bobbi. Can I come in?" Bobbi asks, through the closed door.

"Yeah." Peter's quiet voice says, and so Bobbi opens the door and walks in.

As she walks in she finds her brother lying on his bed, with his legs up against chest,

"Mom and Dad are worried about you." Bobbi says, walking over to her brother.

"I know." Peter says, as that is the problem.

"What's going on, Pete?" Bobbi asks, as she sits on the bed next to her brother, "You know you can always talk to me." She says, as she puts her hand on his shoulder.

"We were talking about families in school today." Peter reveals, as he rolls over and looks at Bobbi, and as soon as he does Bobbi can see that he looks upset.

"And you thought about your parents." Bobbi realises.

"Yeah, but it wasn't just that." Peter admits, "We were talking about good parents, what they should do, and be, and for me that's Uncle Tony and Aunt May." Peter admits, looking conflicted, "I don't remember my parents, Uncle Tony and Aunt May have been, are, my parents, but that feels like I'm betraying my parents." He reveals, looking both upset, and guilty.

"You know my biological parents died when I was about your age." Bobbi reveals, and as she does Peter give her a surprised look, "It took me a while to start to see Mom and Dad, as Mom and Dad, but just because I do doesn't mean my biological parents aren't my parents, doesn't mean I'm betraying them, or forgetting them, just like you being my bother doesn't mean I'm replacing my brother who died." Bobbi explains.

"I didn't know you had another brother." Peter says, looking surprised.

"I did, he died with my parents." Bobbi confirms, looking sad, "And I miss him, but that doesn't make you any less of my brother, or Mom and Dad not my parents." Bobbie explains, "Pete, I knew your parents. To me they were Uncle Richard and Aunt Mary, and so I know without a doubt that you considering Mom and Dad to be your parents isn't something they'd have a problem with, in fact they would be happy that Mom and Dad are there for you in the way they wish they could have been." She explains.

"I love you." Peter says, before hugging his sister.

"Love you too." Bobbi says, returning the hug.

"Can you come downstairs with me?" Peter asks curious, as he has an idea, but wants Bobbi to be with him when he does what he is going to do.

"Sure." Bobbi responds, and the two of them get up and head downstairs.
About a minute later Bobbi, and Peter walk downstairs where Melinda and Tony are still waiting.

"Peter are you okay?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Yeah." Peter answers, "After school, and talking to Bobbi, I've made up my mind about something." He explains.

"About what?" Tony asks curious.

"If it's okay I want to call you Mom and Dad." Peter explains, looking between his parents, "And officially change my name to Stark-May-Parker, even if I can't go by that, is that okay?" Peter asks, looking between his parents.

"Of course, it is." Melinda answers, smilingly softly.

"It's beyond okay, Kid." Tony says, before he and Melinda hug their son at the same time, as Bobbi looks on with a smile on her face.

**November 17th 2007**

It has been a couple of months since Peter asked if he could call Melinda and Tony Mom and Dad, and since then he's been doing that all time, to Melinda and Tony's joy. It's a Saturday night and Daisy is heading towards the living room when she hears her father and brother talking.

"Can you tell me a story, Dad?" Peter asks curious.

"Any preferences?" Tony asks curious.

"My birth parents." Peter requests.

"Sure." Tony answers, with a smile, as he is always happy to tell Peter about his parents, "Once when me, your Mom, and your Father were kids we were at this boring event…" Tony starts to explain, having started to refer to Mary and Richard as Mother and Father to differentiate between him and Melinda, and as she hears what they are talking about, instead of heading to the living room Daisy heads to her mothers study, which is right near where she is standing and knocks on the door.

"Come in." Melinda's voice says, and Daisy walks in.

"Mom, can we talk?" Daisy asks curious.

"Of course." Melinda says, as Daisy walks over and sits down on the couch, and so Melinda walks over and sits down next to her, "What did you want to talk about?" Melinda asks curious.

"My biological father." Daisy says, and Melinda has to fight not to react that like, "Dad's my dad, but with Peter being so curious about where he came from I can't help but wonder about him." Daisy admits, "Can you tell me about him?"

"His name's Cal." Melinda explains, "He's a doctor. We met when I was out with Uncle Clint, Uncle Phil, Victoria Hand and Izzy Hartley." Melinda explains, choosing her details carefully.

"What happened?" Daisy asks.

"We didn't date long." Melinda answers, "When I found out I was pregnant with you I tried to find him, but the number I had was out of service, and I couldn't find him, even with S.H.I.E.L.D
resources and help from Tony.” Melinda explains, telling Daisy the complete truth, just leaving out a few details as even with how mature Daisy is she wants to protect her from the truth of Cal, at least until she is older.

"Oh, so he didn't want me." Daisy says, looking hurt.

"Daisy, he didn't know about you, still doesn't" Melinda tells her daughter, taking her hand, "Your Dad may not be your biological father, but he loves you, he is your father in every other way that counts." Melinda explains, "Blood doesn't make a family."

"I know." Daisy admits, "Dad is the best father in the world, I was just curious." Daisy says, trying to make it seem like it's no big deal.

"That's okay." Melinda says, putting her arm around her daughter, being able to tell that things are effecting Daisy if she is trying to hide it, and the two of them drift into silence; Daisy thinking about everything Melinda has told her while Melinda is thinking about how Daisy is going to react when she is told the complete truth.

**January 15th 2008**

A couple of months have passed since Daisy asked about her biological father and in that time the Stark-May's, Sharon, Trip, Coulson, Clint, Natasha, Pepper, Rhodey, and Maria celebrated Christmas together.

It's about lunch time on a Tuesday and Melinda and Tony are in at the Stark-May apartment waiting for Peggy who is coming over for lunch.

"Did Aunt Peggy say why she was coming over?" Melinda asks, looking concerned.

"No, she just said she had to talk to us." Tony explains, looking concerned, "She should be here any minute." He realises.

"Okay." Melinda says, being able to tell that Tony is concerned, and so she is too.

For a few minutes Tony and Melinda just wait in silence until the elevator doors open and Peggy walks into the apartment.

"Aunt Peg." Tony says happily as he walks over and hugs his godmother, "It's good to see you."

"It's good to see you too." Peggy says, as she and Tony break apart, and once they do Melinda and Peggy hug.

"What did you want to talk to us about?" Tony asks curious, having a bad feeling.

"We should sit down." Peggy says, and Tony and Melinda exchange concerned looks.

"Aunt Peggy, what's going on?" Melinda asks concerned, as the three of them sit down.

"I've been thinking about an easy way to tell you both this, but I think the best way is to just tell you." Peggy explains.

"Aunt Peg, what's happened?" Tony asks worried.

"I've been diagnosed with Alzheimer's." Peggy explains.

"No. That's not possible!" Tony objects, "Your fine, your memory's amazing." He says, looking
"It's true, I've been to several doctors." Peggy explains, as she reaches out and takes her godson's hand, "It's in the early stages, but it will progress."

"What can we do to help?" Melinda asks, being able to tell that Tony is getting upset.

"There's nothing you can do. I just want to spend as much time with my family while I'm still able to." Peggy explains.

"You got it." Tony says, fighting back tears, and he, Melinda and Peggy just drift into a sad smile, both Melinda and Tony thinking that they can't imagine Peggy not being able to imagine everything she's done.
Chapter 25

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Just a warning, this chapter is Bahrain, I apologise in advance. Please leave a review/comment.

May 15th 2008

Four months have passed since Peggy revealed she has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and in that time Bobbi has celebrated her twenty first birthday with Sharon, and Trip in Vegas, before returning home to celebrate with her parents and siblings.

It is a Thursday morning and Melinda, Tony, Daisy and Peter are in the kitchen of their apartment together, having breakfast.

"Will you be home tonight?" Peter asks his mother curious, as he is starting to realise more about what his mother does, is starting to understand how dangerous her job is.

"I'm not sure Pete." Melinda admits, "I don't know how long this mission will be." Melinda admits, and Peter nods.

"Where are you going?" Daisy asks curious.

"Bahrain." Melinda answers, knowing that where she is going isn't classified, but what she is doing certainly is.

"Giving away operational secrets, that's not like you." Phil says, as he walks into the kitchen.

"Uncle Phil!" Daisy and Phil say together.

"Hey Daisy, Peter." Phil greats.

"You're early." Melinda tells Phil.

"A little." Phil says, as Melinda goes to get her bag, and Tony hands Phil a cup of coffee.

"Barton and Romanoff on this mission?" Tony asks curious, knowing that Maria has been promoted so she doesn't work with Melinda, Coulson, Natasha and Clint much anymore.

"No, it's Melinda and I with another team." Phil explains.

"Really?" Tony asks, clearly concerned, as he knows enough to know that Melinda and Phil only work with another team when they are dealing with something big.

"Dad? Is that bad?" Daisy asks, looking concerned, having been able to tell that her father is concerned, and once she speaks Phil and Tony exchange looks, neither sure how to answer, at least not with Daisy and Peter in the room.

"Your Mom's the best agent there is." Tony says, knowing that, and thinking that It's a way to avoid answering Daisy's question.
"She really is." Phil says, "On every mission she keeps me safe, she's a hero."

"Wow." Daisy and Peter say, both looking amazed, as Melinda walks into the room, having heard a little of what Phil said.

"We've got to go." Melinda says, as she walks over to Daisy and Peter, "I love you, have a good day at school." She says to Daisy, before hugging her and once she and Daisy break apart she walks over to Peter where she says and does the same thing before walking over to Tony, "I'll see you soon." Melinda says, as Tony puts his arms around Melinda's waist,

"I love you." Tony says.

"Love you too." Melinda says, before kissing him, and once they break apart Melinda, with Phil, leave the apartment together, and before long Tony, Daisy and Peter leave the apartment to, so that that Tony can take the kids to school.

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Hours later, Melinda who was flying the plane that she, Phil, and the team who are with them, has landed it, after giving an agent back some music, walks over to Phil.

"This really a gifted individual?" Melinda asks Phil, not being able to help but think of Bobbi every single time they have a case like this, "What do we know?"

"Not much yet." Phil admits, "You know they're retiring this fleet?" Phil asks, looking around the plane that have been active about as long as he and Melinda have been agents.

"About time." Melinda says, with a sigh, "S.H.I.E.L.D's putting every dine into upgrading the Triskelion." Melinda comments.

"Well, not all the dimes." Phil says, and Melinda turns to look at him, and Phil moves a little closer to her, "Fury's quietly started a new Initiative." Phil reveals, keeping his voice quiet so that only Melinda can hear, "Instead of this catch-and-release with powered people we form a team, take earth's mightiest to find out if they're heroes."

"And you mention this because you want my help?" Melinda asks, assuming as much.

"Well, I know you've been wanting to spend more time with Daisy and Peter…" Phil starts to say.

"I'm staying in the field." Melinda says, as that's never been a question.

"Good, cause you'd be great, and that way, we could keep working together." Phil says, looking glad.

"Yeah." Melinda says, looking amused, "One mission at a time. Look alive." Melinda says, and the leader of the other team walks past.

"Agent Hart." Phil greats.

"We've got her, Phil." Hart says, "Gather up." He says, and as everyone walks over to see what is on the TV screen, "Meet Eva Belyakov, thirty five, index candidate." Hart says, "Russian intelligence has been pursuing her, Agents Coulson and May have been brought in to advise and make the approach." Hart explains.

"Thank you." Phil says, stepping forward, "We believe Miss Belyakov posses enhanced strength." Phil explains, "This is what happened when a Russian officer tried to stop her with his car." Phil
says, showing an image of a crushed car, "Just a friendly chat to bring her in for elevation." Phil explains, "And if all goes well, we'd gain an asset before the Russians find her."

"The approach will be public, it's not ideal, but we go in now, or we lose our window." Hart explains, "Local military's not used to standing down, welcome to Bahrain, let's hope Belyakov cooperates." Hart explains, as the ramp opens.

"And if she doesn't?" Melinda asks, realising that they are dealing with someone who has basically the same powers as her daughter.

"Then I call in the Cavalry." Hart says, looking at the tactical team.

A little while later Melinda, Phil, Hart, and O'Brien, a tactical agent, have talked over the mission and as they have no other choice it has been decided that Phil will make the approach while Melinda is walking around the market place, keeping an eye on everything, including a little girl who look to be about Peter's age, who is dancing around touching people.

"Hello, may I?" Phil asks Eva, referring to the seat in front of her, "My name is Phil Coulson, and I'm here to help." Phil says, as he sits down, "My group specializes in helping people like you, who have gifts."

"And why should I trust you?" Eva asks, with a Russian accent.

"Because I could take you somewhere safe." Phil reveals, "I know you've been on the run, but S.H.I.E.L.D can protect you." Phil says, "You're not alone in all of this."

"Locals incoming." Melinda says, through the coms, "Gun, blue shirt." She realises.

"Agent O'Brien be sure they don't interfere." Phil says, through the coms, "Why don't we go somewhere more secure?" he asks, as O'Brien approaches the men.

"No, I like it here." Eva responds.

"Coulson, we're running out of time." Hart says through the coms.

"These men can't help you." Phil says, "Let's talk somewhere calmer." Phil says, and as he does there are screams and things quickly go south as Eva, the armed locals, one of whom is holding the little girl Melinda saw, O'Brien, and several members of his team are taken into the building with cries of "Do not follow us."

A little while later Melinda, Phil, Hart, and the members of the team that are left are working out of a van trying to figure out what is going on.

"The warehouse connects directly to the market." Hart explains, "Once they holed up inside, my men cut off both exits, the alley and the market entrance." He explains.

"It's a rat's nest in there." Phil explains.

"Coulson, we ID'd Belyakov's friends, local Militia street gang, basically. That's their stronghold." Hart explains.

"Okay, I'm gonna call Agent O'Brien, see if they'll negotiate." Phil says, calling O'Brien, and after few rings someone answers, "O'Brien, is that you? You okay?" Phil asks.
"Leave us alone." O'Brien says.

"Can you talk?" Phil asks, "Are you making demands? Put me on with Belyakov?" he asks.

"Just leave us alone." O'Brien says, before hanging up.

"'leave us alone'?" Phil asks, looking confused.

"Is he trying to warn us away, or…." Melinda starts to say.

"We tried it the nice way, it's time for my team to do its job. Let's move out." Hart says, and Melinda looks less than happy.

"Yes Sir." Hart's team says, and he and the remaining men move out.

"I should go in." Melinda argues.

"Let them do their thing." Phil tells Melinda, as the two of them climb into the van so that they can oversee everything.

Over the next ten minutes Melinda and Phil listen as Hart, and the rest of the agents are basically swallowed into the building, the two of them hearing cries of 'friendly fire' and leaving the two of them alone with no guns.

"There are multiple hostages, our whole damn tactical team." Phil says, through the phone to the person he is talking to trying to get him and Melinda some help, "We need emergency backup ten minutes ago." He explains.

"Tell them to send me in, I can fix the problem." Melinda says, completely believing that.

"I strongly advise sending our specialist inside, Agent May," Phil says, "No, there are agents inside. There's no time to wait." Phil says, and he sighs, "Yes Sir, yes sir." Phil says, before hanging up, "Yay for red tape, they want us to wait." Phil explains.

"For how long?" Melinda asks, sounding annoyed.

"The Bahrainis are pissed. I think they're about two inches from bombing the building and calling it a night." Phil explains.

"If they go in, it's gonna be an assault. People will die. I can do this. It's all about slipping in and pulling them out." Melinda explains.

"S.H.I.E.L.D is not authorized for any action," Phil says, and as he does they hear sirens, "Go." Phil tells Melinda who grabs her knife and runs off, as Phil climbs out and starts to face the incoming authorities.

"Oh, what are we saying this time?" Phil mutters to himself, "Nuclear? Bio? Eh, bio always works." Phil mutters to himself, as one of the men walks up to him, "My name is Phil Coulson, I represent the Strategic Homeland Intervention Enforcement and Logistics Division, and you are about to enter a quarantine site." Phil explains, and the men try to walk past him, "Colonel, you can't send your men in there!" Phil says, as he fights against one of the men, "A biological weapon was set off! Nasty stuff, flesh eating." Phil explains, "Weapon sale gone bad with the Russians, give my team time to assess." Phil requests.

"Did you say, 'biological weapon?'" The soldier asks.
"Yeah, I did." Phil confirms.

After Melinda leaves Phil she heads to the alley near the building, and even though she knows that it is a huge breach of protocol Melinda pulls out her phone and calls Tony.

"Mel?" Tony says, answering after a few rings, "You never call during a mission."

"I know." Melinda confirms, "Things have gone south, we're going off book."

"How south? How bad are things?" Tony asks, sounding terrified as he knows Melinda wouldn't call him during a mission unless things were truly bad.

"Hostage situation, our guys inside." Melinda explains.

"You're going in alone." Tony realises, knowing that because he knows Melinda.

"Yeah."

"Mel…" Tony says, sounding upset.

"I have to, they have a little girl." Melinda explains, and from that Tony knows that there isn't a person I the world who would be able talk Melinda out of this, "I love you Tony, and our kids, tell them for me." Melinda requests, "You, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are the best thing in my life, you…." Melinda starts to say, but Tony cuts her off.

"Mel, no, it sounds like you're saying goodbye." Tony realises, his voice breaking, "Mel…"

"I've got to go." Melinda reveals, stopping Tony before he can say more.

"I love you." Tony says, and there is more that he wants to say, but before he can Melissa hangs up.

After Melinda hangs up she puts her phone back in her pocket and climbs up the side of the building and into it.

Back in New York Tony is just sitting in his office, in horrified shock.

"JARVIS, I want to know every piece of news coming out of Bahrain, any piece of news that could tell me what's happened to Mel, official or unofficial. I don't care, I just need to know." Tony says, his voice breaking.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Come on, Mel, come home to me." Tony mutters, and as he does his phone rings, "Mel?" Tony asks, answering without even checking the caller id.

"Dad? What's going on?" Bobbi asks, sounding panicked.

"Do you know something?" Tony asks his daughter, wondering if she has already gotten the news about Melinda.

"Kind of." Bobbi admits, "I can't explain it, but I just got an overwhelming feeling, as clear as day, that's telling me Mom's not okay, that she's terrified and somethings seriously wrong." She explains.
"Really?" Tony asks, wondering what is going on, "Do you think it's your powers growing, somehow?" he asks, as that's the only reason he can think off.

"I don't know, maybe." Bobbi says, sounding uncertain, knowing that she has never felt something like this before, "Where's Mom?"

"On a mission." Tony answers, "She just called me, things have gone south, she's going in alone."

"Oh god." Bobbi says, knowing that things would have had to have gone truly south for her mother to call her Dad, "I'll dig around here, see what I can find. I'll let you know if I get another feeling." Bobbi explains.

"Okay. If I hear more I'll call you." Tony tells his daughter, "I love you, Bobbi."

"Love you too, Dad." Bobbi says, before hanging up.

"J, any relevant news?" Tony asks, needing to know more, needing to know that the women he loves, the love of his life, is okay.

"There are unconfirmed reports that there as been a biological weapons attack." JARVIS reveals.

"That's a cover if I've ever heard one." Tony mutters, and as he does he tries to think of any way to find out what is going on a way, to get some accurate information, and he gets an idea, so he makes another phone call.

"Romanoff." Natasha's voice answers after a few rings.

"Romanoff it's Tony." Tony says.

"Stark? Since when do you call me?" Natasha asks exchanging a look with Clint, who she is with.

"It's about Mel." Tony explains.

"What's happened?" Natasha asks, hiding how concerned she is.

"She's on a mission with Coulson and she called me. Said things have gone south." Tony explains, speaking fast, "Is there any way you can find out more information, any news?" he asks, clearly demonstrating how terrified he is.

"Yeah, I can try." Natasha says, wanting to get information for both Tony and herself, "I'll let you know as soon as I know something." Natasha promises.

"Thanks Natasha." Tony says, before hanging up, "Please be okay, please be okay." Tony mutters to himself, needing Melinda to be okay.

A few minutes after Melinda called Tony she has made her way into the building, and she found Agent Hart, O'Brien and the other agents, but as they are clearly being controlled, Melinda locked them in a room and has headed down stairs so that she can fight Belyakov, fighting several men as she goes.

Once downstairs Melinda makes her way into what seems like the main room of the building, where Melinda is knocked flying across the room.

"I feel all their pain, and I grow stronger." Eva says, as she grabs a chandelier and Melinda starts to get up. As Melinda starts to get up she sees the little girl she saw earlier hiding behind some crates,
"Stay back, honey. I'll get you out of here." Melinda says, "It's gonna be okay." Melinda tells the little girl before she stands up.

"I've had their pain. Now give me yours." Eva says.

"Come on, I've got plenty to share." Melinda says, as she and Eva start to say, Eva swinging the chandelier at her, which Melinda dodges, and the two of them fight, Melinda managing to hold her own a little as she is kicked, hard, in the stomach, which basically throws her across the room.

As Melinda gets back on her feet, feeling pain and cramps in her stomach which she knows she has to ignore, several of the men who are working with Eva enter. Seeing the men Melinda grabs a lamp, which she breaks off both ends off, and starts to fight, using the lamp as a stick as she fights Eva.

"Feel enough pain yet?" Melinda asks, "Let everyone go and this can end." Melinda says.

"No, I want more." Eva says.

After Eva speaks Melinda and Eva continue to fight, during which time Melinda gets flipped to the floor. As she once more gets up to her feet, continuing to ignore the pain she is in, she starts to fight without one of the men, who shoots her in the leg as they fight, but that doesn't stop her from fighting, managing to take him down.

After Melinda takes down the man she starts to fight Eva once more, who with her strength, once more knocks Melinda down to the ground, and using that Melinda is able to use the stick and impales Eva with it, killing her.

After Eva is dead Melinda collapse on the ground slightly, and more men come into the room, clearly still being control,

"She's dead. Snap out of it!" Melinda says, as she tries to get up, but between the pain in her stomach, and the gunshot wound in her leg, she finds it rather difficult.

"I like the pain." The girl says, coming out from behind crates and the second she sees her Melinda realises that the girl has powers, that she is the one controlling the men, and the second she comes to that realisation Melinda can't help but be reminded of Bobbi, who was about the same age as this girl when Melinda found her.

"You killed mother." The girl says, a she waves her hand, killing the men as easy as breathing, "And now there is so much pain." The girl says, as she waves her hand and kills more men, "I like all their pain." The girl says, as more men come in, "I'm scared, I want to leave." The girl says, looking upset.

As the girl looks so scared part of Melinda wants to move forward and embrace her, tell her everything is going to be okay, but after everything she has seen over the last few minutes Melinda knows that she can't do that and so she moves back.

"Please, take my hand." The girl says, sticking out her hand, and as she does Melinda flashes back to when she said the same thing to Bobbi, as more men, this time S.H.I.E.L.D agents that are being controlled, come into the room.

"Not them." Melinda asks, knowing that she can't let that happen, that she has to protect her agents, "Let them go, we can fix this, we can help you." Melinda says, believing that, believing that they can help this little girl, "Just don't…" Melinda says, as she continues to move back.
"Take my hand." The Little Girl asks, "Give me your pain." She says, walking towards Melinda, "I need a new Mother. I'll take your pain." The girl says, as Melinda continues to move back and as she does she feels the gun that was used to shot her.

"Stop." Melinda tells her, "Don't… just put your hand down and stop." Melinda says, hoping that she can get the girl to stop as she wants to help her, but she also wraps her hand around the gun, "Everything's gonna be all right." Melinda says.

Outside Phil has managed to calm the Bahrain officials down, but it is clear that they aren't going to give up and as Phil tries to hold them back he hears a single gunshot, after things have seemed to calm down, and so he goes running into the building.

When Phil and the Bahrain team get into the building Phil pushes pass them and finds Melinda, bruised and bloody, holding the dead body of the little girl.

A few minutes later Phil is helping Melinda out of the building, Melinda being unable to walk herself.

"Hey, every agent who walked out of that building is alive because of you." Phil says, as he helps Melinda towards a waiting ambulance.

"That girl, I…. I couldn't save her." Melinda says, as her voice breaks, "I…. she didn't understand, I tried." Melinda says, as she and Phil get to an ambulance.

"It's all right. You have to let the girl go, Melinda." Phil says, "Let the girl go." He says, as Melinda breaks down and starts to cry, as Phil hugs her, "Okay, okay, we'll get though this." Phil says as he just holds his friend.

About an hour later Melinda and Phil are at a little hospital, Phil is wide away while Melinda had to be sedated after she reacted violently when the paramedics tried to examine her. As Phil sits by his friend's side he realises that Melinda's phone is ringing, and normally he would just let it ring but when he sees Tony on the caller ID Phil reaches over and answers it.

"Mel? Are you okay? What happened?" Tony's worried voice says.

"Tony…" Phil starts to say.


"A mission went south." Phil reveals.

"I know that, Mel called me. Is she okay? Why are you answering Mel's phone?" Tony asks his voice hurried.

"I know that, Mel called me. Is she okay? Why are you answering Mel's phone?" Tony asks his voice hurried.

"I don't know the details, May's hurt, it's not serious." Phil quickly says, knowing that but not knowing the specifics of how she is injured as the doctors wouldn't tell him, "But she reacted violently when the paramedics tried to treat her, they had to forcibly sedate her."

"Why? What happened?" Tony asks, sounding worried.

"I don't know." Phil answers, wishing he did, "She saved our Agents, but something must have happened, I've never seen her like this, never seen the look she has in her eyes" He reveals.
"Oh." Tony says, honestly not sure what else to say and terrified about what could have happened to Melinda, "I'm coming to Bahrain, I'll be there as soon as I can." Tony tells Phil, needing to be with Melinda.

"No, don't." Phil tells him, thinking that it would be a bad idea, "May's injuries seem minor, I'm pretty sure that when she wakes up she'll be given the all clear, and we'll be on our way home. There will be no point for you to fly all the way out here."

"Okay." Tony says, not liking it but realising that Phil is right, "When Mel wakes up tell her I called, that I love her." He requests.

"I will." Phil says, "Bye Stark." He says, before hanging up.

**Twenty four hours later**

Ever since Tony talked to Phil he has been preparing himself to see Melinda again, not sure what else to except after what Phil said, especially considering he hasn't spoken to Melinda because she isn't answering her phone, but thanks to Natasha he knows that she will be arriving home tonight.

It's a Saturday evening and Tony is pacing back and forth in the living room, just waiting for the elevator doors to open and Melinda to walk out.

"Dad?" A voice asks and Tony turns to see Daisy and Peter standing at the entrance to the corridor which leads to the lab, gym, and stairs, "Is something wrong?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"Has something happened to Mom?" Peter asks, sounding just as concerned as his sister.

"Mom should be home soon." Tony answers.

"Dad, that's not an answer to Peter's question." Daisy realises, walking towards her father.

"The truth is I don't know." Tony admits, not wanting to lie to his children, "Something happened on the mission Mom and Uncle Coulson were on, I don't know the details, but I do know that according to Uncle Coulson Mom wasn't seriously hurt." He explains.

"When did you say Mom will be home?" Peter asks, sounding worried.

"Soon." Tony answers and once he does Daisy and Peter walk over and sit on the couch, and just wait.

For the next few minutes Tony continues to pace back and forth while Daisy and Peter just sit on the couch and wait, until finally the elevator doors open and Melinda, limping slightly, walks out.

"MOM!" Peter and Daisy yell, and they run towards their Mother. As they are so focused on their mother Daisy and Peter don't notice the look of terror on Melinda's face, but Tony does, he even notices Melinda looking like she is going to push Daisy and Peter away.

"Daze, Pete." Tony says, as he walks towards Melinda, Peter, and Daisy, and Daisy and Peter break apart from their mother.

"Mom?" Daisy asks, being able to tell that something is wrong, while Peter just looks confused, not quiet understanding what is going on.

"Why don't you guys go upstairs." Tony suggests, watching Melinda, and their kids, and being able to tell that Melinda is not okay.
"Okay." Daisy says, after looking between her mother and father, "Come on, Pete." Daisy says, and she leads her brother upstairs.

"It's okay, Mel." Tony says, walking towards Melinda and having no idea what else to say, "It's me, Daisy, and Peter." He says, sticking out his hand to take Melinda's, but the second he does he realises that that is a huge mistake as Melinda flinches back, and looks even more terrified than she did when Peter and Daisy ran towards her, "Mel?" Tony asks concerned, putting his hand down.

"I need to have a shower." Melinda says, before hurrying upstairs, or as fast or technically goes as fast as she can with her injured leg.

"What the hell happened?" Tony mutters to himself, as she watches Melinda go.

About an hour later Tony is waiting in his and Melinda's bedroom, just waiting for her to come out of their bathroom, where she has been since she hurried upstairs. Finally, after what feels like forever to Tony, Melinda walks out of the bathroom.

"Mel, what happened?" Tony asks, not moving towards her as after what happened he is pretty sure that would be a bad idea.

"I….. I can't." Melinda admits, shaking her head.

"Okay, when you want to talk I'm here, I love you." Tony tells his wife, feeling pretty useless and not sure what else to say.

"I'm leaving fieldwork…. I can't do it anymore." Melinda admits.

"Really?" Tony asks, sounding surprised as that was the last thing he was expecting, and Melinda nods,

"I'm going to transfer to Admin." Melinda reveals.

"You'll hate that." Tony says, knowing that.

"It's for the best, I can't leave all together, but can't stay in the field, not anymore." Melinda admits, as she fights a yawn.

"Okay." Tony says, deciding that they will talk about it in the morning, and the two of them drift into silence, as Melinda walks over and climbs into bed.

Even though he really wants to hold Melinda Tony is pretty sure that it would just end badly and so he just lies down next to Melinda, with a gap between them bigger than it's ever been.

Hours later Tony suddenly wakes up and at first he isn't sure what wakes up until he hears moaning and realises that Melinda is tossing and turning.

"MEL, MEL WAKE UP." Tony says loudly, about to shake her awake, but he stops himself as after the way Melinda reacted earlier to touch Tony knows that that won't be a good choice, "J, full light, and alarm, just in here." Tony request, knowing that it will be a shock, but hopefully a less distressing than him shaking her awake, and seconds later it works as Melinda sits up in shock, "Cut the alarm." Tony says, "Mel, it's okay." Tony says, "You're home."

"Tony… Tony." Melinda says, trying to get her baring's.
"Mel, talk to me, please." Tony asks, "I want to help." he admits.

"You can't." Melinda admits, "You should get some sleep. I'm going to go stay in Bobbi's room tonight." Melinda says, before getting up and leaving, before Tony can say anything, and as Tony watches Melinda go he wishes, more than anything, that he could help her.
Two days have passed since Melinda arrived home from the mission in Bahrain, and ever since Tony, Bobbi, and Daisy are becoming more and more worried about her as it is perfectly clear that something horrible must have happened, and she's not okay, but Melinda isn't talking about it.

It's a Monday morning and Melinda is packing up her desk in the office she share with Clint, Phil, and Natasha as she is moving to the admin department.

"May, I didn't expect you to be back so soon." Phil admits, as he walks in the room with Clint and Natasha.

"Mels, what are you doing?" Clint asks, noticing what she is doing.

"I've transferred to admin." Melinda reveals.

"You're leaving fieldwork?" Phil asks, sounding shocked, as Natasha just looks at Melinda, reading her, and thinking about everything she knows about what happened, to try and figure out what actually happened and why Melinda is acting like this.

"You can't." Clint says, looking at Melinda in shock.

"Clint's right. You're a specialist, it's who you are, you just can't leave, we're a team." Phil objects.

"Shut up, both of you." Natasha says, having realised why Melinda is acting the way she is, as she knows the look Melinda has in her eyes all too well, and so she knows exactly what happened in that building in Bahrain, "This is Linda's choice, not anyone else's." Natasha says, "The Admin department is lucky to have you." Natasha tells her friend, giving her a supportive look.

"Thank you, Nat." Melinda says, feeling glad that someone is supportive.

"You don't have to thank me." Natasha says, as Clint and Phil exchange looks, "I'm going to miss having you watch my back." She admits, as while it took her a long time to trust Melinda, to trust anyone, and now she does, so it's going to be strange being in the field without her.

"I don't need to be in the field to watch your back." Melinda reveals, "I should go." Melinda says, before picking up her box, "Phil, Clint." She says, before leaving the office that has been hers for a very long time.

"What the hell just happened?" Clint asks, looking shocked.

"What just happened is Linda made the choice that's best for her, and if you two are the friends I know you are then you're going to support her." Natasha says, before leaving the office, leaving...
Phil and Clint feeling pretty confused about what the hell is going on.

Not far from the Triskelion Tony, who flew to DC after dropping Daisy and Peter at school, is arriving at Peggy's house, a house she is still living at despite her diagnosis.

Walking up to Peggy's front door Tony knocks, and waits. After a few moments the door opens revealing Peggy.

"Tony." Peggy says, before hugging her godson, "It's good to see you."

"It's good to see you too." Tony responds.

"Come in, I just made tea." Peggy says, letting Tony into the house and the two of them head to the kitchen.

A few minutes later Tony and Peggy are sitting at the kitchen table, both of them drinking tea,

"Now, what's going on, Tony?" Peggy asks her godson.

"What makes you think that I'm not just here to see you?" Tony asks curious, and Peggy just gives him a look, "I'm here about Mel."

"Has something happened?" Peggy asks concerned.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "Mel was on a mission last week. She called me when things went south." He explains, "There was a hostage situation, Mel went in alone. Next thing I know Coulson's answering her phone and he's telling me that she had to be sedated because she reacted violently when the paramedics tried to check her out." Tony explains, "Ever since Mel flinches back when anyone goes to touch her, she doesn't sleep, doesn't talk, won't tell me what happened." Tony says, looking hurt, "I just want to help her, but I don't know how." Tony says, sounding upset, and the truth is he wants to help Melinda more than anything, "How do I help her Aunt Peg?" Tony asks, feeling like Peggy might know.

"Oh, my darling, you be there for her." Peggy tells her godson, realising that things must have been truly bad for Melinda to react how Tony is describing, "Your respect her boundaries, if there are things that Melinda reacts negatively then you stop doing them." Peggy reveals, "I don't know if Melinda will ever tell you what happened, you need to accept that she may never, and hard as it maybe you have to be patient, and supportive." Peggy explains to her godson.

"We take each other's hands, that's how we show support, but Mel looks terrified when I try to take her hand." Tony reveals, "I don't want to make things worse, I just want to help."

"Then you figure out how to be supportive in another way." Peggy explains, "Tony I know how much you love Melinda, you've just got to keep loving her, in the way she can accept right now." Peggy explains, "Don't give up on her, even if she tries to push you away."

"I never will." Tony confirms, and the two of them drift into silence.

A few hours later Tony, who had lunch with Peggy as well, is arriving home, knowing he has a little while before he has to go pick Daisy and Peter up at school.

"Dad." A voice says as Tony walks in the living room and she sees Bobbi, who hurries over to him.
"Bobbi." Tony says, hugging his daughter, "It's really good to see you."

"It's good to see you too." Bobbi admits, as they break apart, "How's Mom?"

"We should sit down." Tony says, and he and Bobbi walk over to the couch, "I'm not going to lie to you, Little Bird, your Mom's not good." He admits.

"Everyone at S.H.I.E.L.D is talking about what happened, Mom's become even more of a legend than she already was." Bobbi admits.

"What are they saying?" Tony asks, wanting to know

"A lot different things." Bobbi admits, "It seems like everyone has a different story, the only thing that everyone agrees about is that she saved agents in Bahrain, they're calling her The Cavalry." Bobbi explains, "Dad, what really happened?"

"I don't know." Tony answers, "Your Mom won't talk about it, and she flinches at any physical contact, especially if anyone tries reaching out to her." Tony explains.

"I knew it was bad." Bobbi admits, "After I called you I knew Mom was hurt, and that she wasn't okay, but I wasn't expecting this." She admits.

"How did you get that feeling?" Tony asks.

"It just kind of happened." Bobbi admits, "It was all a sudden I knew Mom wasn't okay, and was terrified, I never felt anything like it before." She reveals, "A strange advancement of my powers is the only thing that makes sense, but I'm not exactly sure how that could have happened."

"There's a lot about your powers that we've never known." Tony admits, "The theory has always been that you got your powers from an attempted recreation of the super soldiers' serum, but it was different, maybe the difference caused this to develop." Tony says, trying to think like a scientist.

"Yeah, maybe." Bobbi says, looking uncertain, "Guess I'll have to see if I develop anything else." Bobbi admits and the two of them drift into silence, both worrying about Melinda, and wondering how and why Bobbi's powers seem to be changing.

Hours later Peter and Daisy, who were both very happy to see their sister, arrived home and four of the five members of the Stark-May family are having dinner together.

"Sir, Mrs Stark-May is home, she has headed to her office." JARVIS reveals.

"Thanks J." Tony says, and as she does Peter and Daisy exchange looks, "I'm going to take your Mom some dinner." Tony says, looking between his children.

"Let me, Dad." Bobbi says, wanting a chance to talk to her mother, and so she puts some food on a plate, "I want to talk to mom."

"Good luck." Daisy mutters, as Bobbi gets up and heads out of the room.

After leaving the kitchen Bobbi heads straight to her mother's study, where she opens the door,

"Mom, it's me." Bobbi says, as she pushes the door a little, and walks into the study.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, looking at her daughter in surprise, and for a second Bobbi thinks she sees
a flicker of fear, something which causes her heart to sink, as her mother has never once been afraid of her, "I didn't realise you would be coming home tonight."

"I have some time between missions." Bobbi reveals, "I brought dinner." Bobbi explains, as she walks over and places the plate on the table, and sits down on the chair on the other side of the desk.

"Thank you." Melinda says, but then she doesn't look up from what she is doing.

"Mom, if you want to talk, I'm here." Bobbi tells her mother, "I love you."

"I need to focus on this." Melinda tells her daughter, feeling like she doesn't deserve her daughter's love.

"Okay." Bobbi says, standing up, "I'll be with Dad, Peter, and Daisy, once you get your paperwork done you should join us." Bobbi says, before exiting the study, closing the door behind her, and as she walks to the living room she isn't surprised to find her mother waiting.

"How'd it go?" Tony asks concerned.

"Not good." Bobbi says, "I don't know what happened, but she's not mom anymore." Bobbi says, tears coming to her eyes, and having no idea what to say Tony just takes a few steps forward and hugs his daughter.

June 13th 2008

A month has passed since Melinda went on the Bahrain mission and with the more time that passes the clearer it becomes that Melinda isn't okay, a she isn't sleeping, and won't let any of her family touch her, not even Tony.

It is a Friday afternoon and Tony is trying to wrap up some work so that he can get out of the office to pick up Daisy and Peter, both of whom are realising how not okay Melinda is and they both hate that fact.

"Tony, everyone's ready for the meeting." Pepper says, as she walks into Tony's office.

"What meeting?" Tony asks, looking confused.

"The meeting where you explain the designs you submitted for manufacturing last week." Pepper explains.

"That's today? I though it was next week." Tony says, sounding surprised as he has been so focused on looking after Daisy and Peter, and trying to help Melinda, that he must have lost track.

"No, it's today, and everyone's waiting." Pepper explains.

"I can't go. I have to go pick up Daisy and Peter." Tony informs Pepper.

"Tony you can't cancel this meeting, people have flown in from all over the country to be here." Pepper explains, "Can't Melinda pick them up." And before he can stop himself Tony huffs at that, "Tony, what's going on?" Pepper asks concerned, as in the last month she has noticed that something seems to be bothering Tony.

"Mel's not okay." Tony reveals, "Things went bad on a mission about a month ago. I don't know what happened, Mel won't talk about it, but she's been different ever since, she even left field
"work." Tony explains, "She's been avoiding me, and Peter, and Daisy, so even if I called her I don't know if she'd come." Tony admits, truthfully, he isn't overly sure if Melinda would answer his call, "I know the meeting is important, but I need to go pick up Daisy and Peter."

"I'll pick them up." Pepper offers, being pretty sure it is the best choice, "I'll take them back to the apartment until you're done with the meeting."

"Thank you Pepper." Tony says, looking grateful.

"You don't have to thank me, Tony." Pepper says, before leaving the office, and after Pepper leaves the office Tony leaves, heading to his meeting.

A little while after Pepper left Tony's office she is waiting at Daisy and Peter's school, waiting for the two youngest Stark-May children, to finish school. Finally, Pepper sees the two of them walk out together.

"Daisy, Peter." Pepper calls, waiving at them, and they walk over to her.

"Pepper? Why are you here, where's Dad?" Daisy asks, surprised to her, and a little bit suspicious as she was expecting Tony, who didn't say that he wouldn't be able to pick them up.

"There was a meeting, so your Dad got held up at Stark." Pepper explains, "I offered to come pick you two up and take you home."

"Okay." Peter says, with a nod, and Daisy can't help but feel a little bit suspicious as her father is usually the only person who picks them up.

"What did you give me for Christmas last year?" Daisy asks, putting her arm in front of Peter and stopping him from walking, it being the first question she can think of to verify that Pepper is actual Pepper.

"Rock band, for you and Peter to share." Pepper reveals, not at all surprised by Daisy's question. Having got Daisy and Peter rock band as they had been asking for it since it came out, and so when she asked Tony and Melinda what to get them they suggested that.

"Okay." Daisy says, nodding, and believing it is Pepper, "We can go." Daisy says.

"Okay." Pepper says, with a nod, and she, Daisy and Peter head to Pepper's car

A while later Daisy is in her room, doing her homework, when she hears a knock on the door,

"Yeah?" Daisy asks, and the door opens and Peter walks in, "What's up Pete?"

"Can I stay in here? Or are you busy?" Peter asks curious.

"Of course, you can stay." Daisy tells her brother, who walks over and sits down on Daisy's bed. Seeing what her brother is doing Daisy walks over and sits down next to him, "Do you want to talk?" she asks curious.

"School ends soon, and I'm not looking forward to summer." Peter admits.

"That's because you're a nerd." Daisy says, trying to joke, and Peter gives her a look, "I'm kidding Pete, why not?"
"Because usually during the summer we have fun with Mom and Dad… and Bobbi, but with the way Mom's been lately, I don't see that happening." Peter admits.

"Yeah, me either." Daisy says, putting her arm around in her brother, "But we'll have fun, okay, you and me, promise," Daisy assures her brother.

"Pinkie promise." Peter asks, sticking out his hand for Daisy.

"Pinkie promise." Daisy responds, and the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side, Daisy still having her arm around her little brother.

June 23rd 2008

Ten days have passed since Pepper picked up Daisy and Peter from school, and they have both finished school for the year. It's late on a Monday evening and both Peter and Daisy are in their beds asleep while Tony is sitting in the living room waiting for Melinda to come home.

A while after Tony started to wait the doors to the elevators open and Melinda walks out,

"Tony." Melinda says, sounding surprised, honestly, she purposely came home late so that she could avoid talking to Tony.

"I know you don't want to talk, and I'm not going to push, not tonight." Tony admits, as he walks over to Melinda, who notices his specific word choices, "Seven years ago today we vowed to be there for each other in times of need, and to soothe each other in times of pain, that's all I've been trying to do, Mel." Tony admits, "I love you." He says, stopping a couple of steps from Melinda, "I got dinner, keep it warm." Tony explains, "We don't have to talk, we can eat in silence if you want, but how about we have dinner together, it's our anniversary after all." Tony says, trying to get Melinda to open up to him, even if it's just a little, "Please Mel." Tony says, after a few moments of Melinda not saying anything.

"Okay." Melinda says.

"It's in the kitchen." Tony says, "After you." He says, and they both head there, and proceed to eat dinner together in total silence.

June 30th 2008

A week has passed since Melinda and Tony's anniversary and soon after the small glimmer of hope that Tony had, the hope that maybe this would be the start of things changing, disappeared as Melinda has continued to act in the same way she has for the last month and a half.

It is a Monday evening and Daisy is in her room hacking into stuff and talking to other hackers online, when she hears a knock on her door.

"Come in." Daisy says, and Tony walks in, as he does Daisy closes her laptop, "What's up, Dad?"

"I wanted to talk to you." Tony reveals, as he walks over, and as he does Daisy wonders if she has accidently started to hack something that could get her in serious trouble.

"Oh?" Daisy asks, trying not to give away what she is thinking.

"Your birthday's in a few days, I was wondering what you'd like, and what you'd like to do." Tony explains to his daughter, "We can do whatever you want."
"Thanks Dad, but the only thing I want not even you can get." Daisy tells her father, telling the truth.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that, name it." Tony tells his daughter.

"I want Mom back, the way she used to be." Daisy tells her father, looking upset.

"Oh, Tiny Toni." Tony says, moving towards his daughter, feeling his heart break for her, "I know things have been differently lately…” Tony starts to say.

"They suck." Daisy corrects.

"Yeah, they do." Tony confirms, "Something happened to your Mom, Kiddo, and she's trying to deal with it." he admits.

"I know that, and I know it must have been bad, but I miss her." Daisy explains, "Don't you?" she asks looking at Tony.

"Yeah, I do, Tiny Toni, I really do." Tony says, putting his arm around Daisy, honestly feeling completely useless at the moment, a feeling that he isn't' familiar with, but as he remembers what Peggy told him so he knows he has to be patient with Melinda, "I know it's not as good, but how about for your birthday I show you the new state of the art laptop Stark is working on." Tony suggests.

"Can I try it? Keep one?" Daisy asks, looking hopeful.

"I think I can twist the arm of someone in the R&D department." Tony reveals, and Daisy grins, "I know it's not what you want Daze, and it's not fair, but right now we've just got to be patient with your Mom." He explains, Daisy nods, and the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side, Tony hating that his daughter is in so much pain.

**September 1st 2008**

Two months have passed since Daisy's birthday, where Tony did as he said he would and took her into Stark where she did in fact get a state of the art laptop from Stark, which she saw get made, and ever since Daisy and Peter have been on summer vacation, a vacation that hasn't been as enjoyable as it usually is, despite Tony's best efforts.

It's the night before Daisy is going to start the seventh grade, while Peter starts the second, and Daisy is attempting to fall asleep when she hears her door open.

"Daze, you awake?" Peter's quiet voice asks.

"Yeah." Daisy says, and once she does she hears Peter walk across the room and climb onto her bed and sit down next to her, "You okay?" she asks, as she sits up properly, and covers her brother with her blanket as it is a little chilly.

"I don't know." Peter admits, "You know Bobbi hasn't come home much lately." He comments, sounding sad.

"I know." Daisy confirms, "I think it hurts her to see how Mom is, and so she's been staying away." Daisy admits.

"I miss her." Peter reveals.
"Me too." Daisy says, putting her arm around her brother, knowing that Bobbi calls all the time, but it's not the same. "You excited for school to start tomorrow?" she asks, purposely trying to change the subject, trying to distract Peter.

"Yeah." Peter says, looking excited, "Me and Ned are in the same class. It will be great." He says, speaking about Ned Leeds, his best friend.

"Yeah, I'm sure it will be." Daisy assures her brother, honestly being very glad that he has managed to make a best friend, something she hasn't done, though she does have not so close friends, "You know if anyone ever gives you a hard time…." 

"Come find you and you'll deal with them, I know." Peter says, smiling up at his sister, "Thanks Daze."

"You don't have to thank me, I'm your big sister Pete, it's my job." Daisy assures her brother, as the two of them drift into silence, and before long both the Stark-May siblings are fast asleep.

October 16th 2008

About six weeks has passed since Daisy and Peter started school again, something which has turned out to be the perfect distraction for both siblings as being so focused on school helps distract them from what's going on with their mother.

It's a Thursday afternoon and Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Rhodey are at Peter's school as there is a science fair and Peter has a presentation.

"Second grade science fair, he's even more of a nerd than you." Daisy tells her sister.

"Hey, this nerd is managing to do a biology degree while working full time, nerds are powerful." Bobbi tells her sister.

"If you say so." Daisy says, as Tony and Rhodey exchange amused looks, both of them in complete agreement with Bobbi, as they continue to walk, until they finally reach Peter's display.

"Dad, Uncle Rhodey." Peter says happily, hugging both of them, "Bobbi." Peter says, looking amazed.

"Hey Pete." Bobbi says to her brother, who hugs her, tightly, it being more than clear to Bobbi that he has missed her.

"I've missed you." Peter says as he hugs Bobbi.

"Missed you too." Bobbi assures her brother as they break apart.

"What no hug for me?" Daisy asks her brother, clearly teasing.

"I saw you half an hour ago." Peter tells his sister, as he looks around, "Mom not coming?" he asks, looking at his father.

"Sorry Kid, she got held up in DC." Tony explains, hating that he has to say those words as he knows how much Peter wanted Melinda at the fair.

"Right." Peter mutters, honestly not surprised after the way things have been lately, but still disappointed.

"You know this looks really cool." Rhodey says, looking at Peter's display, "Do you want to tell
me about it?" he asks curious.

"Sure." Peter says, with a grin, and he starts to explain all about his display and as he does Tony mouths a 'thank you' to Rhoby, feeling grateful that he was able to distract Peter.

**November 18th 2008**

Just under five weeks has passed since Peter's science fair, and six months have passed since Melinda's mission in Bahrain that changed everything. It's been six months of Melinda avoiding the people who love her the most, of her barley sleeping, and having nightmares, of her flinching away from any physical contact and of her pulling away from her children and family even more, something which is just hurting them. Even though Tony is trying to be patient with Melinda it is getting harder and harder for him to do so as he can see how much Daisy, Peter, and even Bobbi who is avoiding coming home, not that she'd admit that, are hurting; not to mention how much it is hurting him to see the woman he loves in so much pain and being unable to help her.

It's a Tuesday morning and Tony is driving Daisy and Peter too school, as he drives Tony notices that both Daisy and Peter seem to be quieter than normal, as normally they would be talking, or singing along to the radio, but instead they are sitting in silence.

"Tiny Toni, Kid." Tony says, "You okay?"

"Sure." Daisy answers.

"Yeah." Peter answers, and it is clear to Tony that both his kids are lying.

"Daisy, Peter, talk to me." Tony says to his kids, and as he does he sees, thanks to the rear-view mirror, Daisy and Peter exchange looks, "Please." He adds.

"Does Mom not love us anymore?" Peter asks, his voice sounding young and vulnerable, and as he is so shocked Tony has to slam on the breaks to avoid hitting the car in front of them, as he grew up thinking that one of his parents didn't love him, so he never wanted that for his children. Realising that it's probably not a good thing for him to be behind the wheel of a car right now Tony pulls over and turns of the car. Once the car is off Tony turns around and faces Daisy and Peter.

"Of course, your Mom loves you, both of you." Tony says, looking between his two youngest children, wanting them to believe that as he knows in his heart that it is true.

"It doesn't seem like it." Daisy admits.

"Daze, Pete, your mom loves you both, and your sister, more than anything in this world." Tony says, knowing that without a doubt, "Things are bad right now…” Tony starts to say, but Daisy cuts her off.

"Things have been bad for months." Daisy says, "She hasn't been Mom in months." Daisy reveals, "I know you said we have to be patient, and I'm trying, but I miss my Mom, and I just want her back." She says, looking upset.

"Me too." Peter admits, "It's like Mom died on that mission, and an imposter took her place." He says, looking upset.

Looking between his kids Tony opens and closes his mouth several times, trying to think of the right thing to say, but he doesn't know what to say, all he knows is that his kids are hurting, and that kills him, "I…. should get you to school." Tony says, realising that he has to talk to Melinda, and will right after his meeting at Stark, and he turns back to the front of the car, which he once
Hours later Tony, who's meeting ran longer than he was expecting, arrives home and he knows that Melinda has a forced day off, so she may actually be home, and if she is then they should have enough time to talk, even if it's only five minutes, before he has to go pick up Peter and Daisy.

"J? Mel home?" Tony asks.

"Yes Sir, Mrs Stark-May is in the study." JARVIS answers.

"Okay, tell me when I have to leave to pick up Daisy and Peter." Tony requests, as he walks towards the study.

"Mel, we have to talk." Tony says, as he walks into the study, where Melinda is working on something.

"I can't right now, I've got to get this done." Melinda says, wanting to avoid talking to Tony as he'll keep being supportive, keep saying he loves her, which is something she doesn't think she deserves anymore, not after what she did, not after what they lost.

"I don't care." Tony admits, and Melinda looks up from what she is doing, due to the tone of voice Tony used, "Mel, I love you, and I'm trying to support you, I know you need time, I understand that, but Daisy, Peter, even Bobbi don't. Tony tells his wife, "They think their Mom doesn't love them anymore." Tony says, the pain clear in his voice, "They miss you Mel, so much, and so do I." Tony reveals, "Mel, Bobbi doesn't come home anymore because seeing you like this hurts her, and Peter and Daisy just want their mom back. Please, stop pushing us away." Tony begs, and as he does Melinda becomes sure of something she's been thinking for the last few months, that Tony and the kids would be better off without her.

"I don't want to hurt them, or you." Melinda admits.

"Then stop pushing us away, please." Tony says, "Just let us in, talk to us."

"I can't." Melinda admits.

"Can't or won't?" Tony asks, there being an edge to his voice.

"Sir, it's time to go pick up Miss Daisy and Mr Peter." JARVIS says.

"Thanks J." Tony says, "Think about what I said, Mel, please." Tony says, before leaving the study, leaving Melinda to run over everything Tony said.

A while later Tony arrives back home with Daisy and Peter, and as soon as they walk into the apartment Daisy and Peter head up to their rooms.

"J? Where's Mel?" Tony asks, knowing they need to continue their conversation.

"Mrs Stark-May is not home, but she left something for you in the Lab." JARVIS reveals.

"Okay, thanks J." Tony says, heading to the lab.

About twenty seconds later Tony gets to the lab and he starts to search for what Melinda left him, and it doesn't take long to find what he is looking for, but the second he does his heart sinks, as lying on the bench that Melinda usually sits on is what Melinda never takes off, her wedding and
engagement ring, both of which are sitting on a note in Melinda’s handwriting. Picking up the note Tony sees it’s short, and just simply says,

'You and our kids deserve better, I'm sorry.'

AN2: I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY. This chapter is painful, and I don't want to give away spoilers, but all I can say is don't give up on Melinda and Tony.
Chapter 27

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you for the support. I am really sorry for the last chapter. Please leave a review/Comment.

Having gotten a call from Tony asking him to come over ASAP Rhodey arrives at the Stark-May apartment not long after Tony found Melinda's note and rings, but he doesn't know that,

"JARVIS, where's Tony?" Rhodey asks as he knows it will save him from looking around.

"Mr Stark-May is in the lab." JARVIS answers.

"Thank you." Rhodey says, and he heads straight there.

The second he walks into the lab, and see his best friend, Rhodey realises that something is seriously wrong with Tony,

"Tony? What's happened?" Rhodey asks concerned, as he walks towards Tony.

"Mel's gone." Tony says, his voice breaking.

"What?" Rhodey asks, looking confused, "What are you talking about?"

"I found this, and her rings." Tony says, handing Rhodey the note, having put the rings in his pocket, "I tried to push Mel, tried to get her to open up, but I must have pushed her too hard." Tony says, sounding guilty, "I need you to look after Peter and Daisy why I go find her, Pepper can handle anything that comes up with Stark."

"Okay, I can do that." Rhodey says, "But May's one of the best spies in the world, what makes you think you'll be able to find her if she doesn't want to be found?" He asks, wondering whether Tony has thought about that fact.

"I know her, better than anyone, even better than she knows herself right now." Tony explains, picking up the bag he packed while he was waiting for Rhodey to arrive, "I'll find her."

"Okay." Rhodey says, realising that he isn't going to talk his friend out of this, "I'll look after Daisy and Peter. If there is anything else I can do, call me." He requests.

"I will." Tony says "Thanks Rhodey." Tony says, before leaving pulling out his cell phone as he goes.

As Tony makes his way to the elevator, deciding not to say goodbye to Daisy and Peter as he doesn't want to have to lie to them, he pulls out his phone and dials a number he doesn't call that much, and just as he steps into the elevator, which has perfect cell reception, the person on the other end picks up.

"Romanoff." Natasha answers.

"Romanoff, it's Stark. Have you heard from Mel in the last couple of hours?" Tony asks, knowing
that after everything that has happened in the last few months the only person that Melinda might have called is Natasha.

"No, what's going on?" Natasha asks concerned, knowing that Tony wouldn't call her unless something very bad had happened.

"She's left, left her rings and a note." Tony reveals, his voice breaking slightly but he steadies it, hoping to do so before Natasha notices, but she does.

"Stark…" Natasha starts to say.

"I'm going to find her. I just thought she might have called you." Tony admits.

"She didn't." Natasha admits, feeling concerned, "I'll talk to Coulson, Clint, and Maria, see if she's called one of them." Natasha says, being pretty sure it wouldn't be likely as Melinda has been pushing them away, but it's still worth a try.

"Thank you." Tony says, "If you hear anything…." He starts to say.

"I'll let you know." Natasha says, knowing that she will only do so if she thinks it is what is best for Melinda.

"Thanks Natasha." Tony says, before hanging up, as the doors open to the garage, and as he walks out of the elevator towards one of his cars Tony knows exactly where he is going, just hoping he still knows Melinda as well as he thinks he does.

A little while after Tony left Rhody he has gotten JARVIS to call Daisy and Peter down to the kitchen for dinner, where they are having pizza.

"Uncle Rhody?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised.

"What are you doing here?" Peter asks curious.

"I'm going to be staying with you guys for a little while." Rhody explains.

"Where's Dad?" Daisy asks, and honestly it hurts Rhody, and gives him an idea of just how bad things are, to hear her not ask about Melinda.

"You guys might want to sit down." Rhody admits.

"It's something to do with Mom, isn't it?" Peter asks, as neither he nor Daisy make any effort to sit down.

"Yeah." Rhody confirms, "Your Mom needed some time away, so your Dad went to be with her, to help her." Rhody explains, trying to be as kind about it as possible, and honestly, he has no idea how much Tony wants Daisy and Peter to know.

"They're coming back though, right?" Daisy asks, looking worried.

"Yeah, I'm sure they are." Rhody says, being sure about Tony, Melinda is some what of a question, "But until then you're stuck with me."

"That's okay, Uncle Rhody, you're fun." Peter tells him.

"I'm glad you think so." Rhody says, looking amused, "I was thinking, if you two want we could
"eat this pizza and then go to the movies." Rhodey suggests, being pretty sure that both Daisy and Peter could use a distraction.

"Really?" Daisy asks, looking excited as that is something that never happens on a school night.

"Really." Rhodey confirms.

"Yes Please." Peter says, and both he and Daisy sit down and start to enjoy their pizza, as they both think about their parents and wonder when they'll see them again.

Hours after Tony left his apartment, trusting Rhodey to look after his two youngest kids, he is pulling into a farm, a farm that he, Melinda, Coulson, Clint, Richard, and Mary brought a very long time ago, even before Melinda took in Bobbi.

"Please be here." Tony mutters to himself, as he stops his car, and as he does he sees Melinda's motorbike, the bike he made her, and seeing that he feels completely and utter relief and honestly has never felt so happy about being right.

Once he parks his car Tony walks up to the house, up the steps, and into the house.

"Mel, it's me." Tony says, as he walks in, and deciding to head into the living room rather than upstairs, where he finds Melinda sitting on the couch.

"How'd you find me?" Melinda asks, as she was pretty sure that this would be a place where she wouldn't be found.

"We brought this place as a safe place. For sure only five of us know about it, though Fury and Natasha probably do, it's safe and you can be alone, I figured it was a good place to start." Tony admits.

"Did you think about the fact that maybe I didn't want to be found?" Melinda asks Tony.

"I did, but I'm not going to give up on you, not going to give up on us, even if you have." Tony explains, walking towards Melinda, who stands up, "Mel, I love you." Tony says, "And there is nothing that is ever going to change that." Tony says.

"You don't know what I did." Melinda says, standing up.

"Because you won't talk to me!" Tony argues, sounding frustrated even though he doesn't want to, and so he takes a moment to breath, "Mel, since that mission all you've done is push me, and the kids, away. I want to help you, just tell me how."

"I can't be helped." Melinda says.

"I don't believe that." Tony says, walking towards Melinda, slowly, but not reaching out for her, even though he wants to, "You're trying to deal with whatever happened alone, but you don't have to, you're not alone, we're best friends, partners, let me help, let me take some of the burden from you." Tony requests, "Please Mel." He begs, taking another step towards Melinda and watching her for signs of fear.

"I… I killed a child." Melinda reveals, tears coming to her eyes, and Tony doesn't stay anything, just allows Melinda to keep talking, "That little girl I told you about. She was controlling people with her powers, that we didn't know she had, leaching of everyone fear, and she could kill them with a wave of her hand." Melinda explains, it being clear to Tony that she having a hard time
telling him this, "I tried to talk to her, tried to get her to stop, said I wanted to help her, but she just wanted pain tried to get me to take her hand." Melinda explains, and once she does Tony understands why Melinda's been reacting the way she has, "She didn't understand, and she was going to kill our entire team, I shot her to save them, I killed her." Melinda says, breaking down in tears, and as she does Tony walks the step that separates them and hugs Melinda, and for the first time in six months she doesn't flinch, she lets Tony hug her, as she cries.

"I got you, Mel." Tony says, kissing Melinda's head, "The choice you made is a choice that no one should have to make." He tells Melinda, "You saved people Mel….."

"And I lost our baby." Melinda reveals, feeling that because she's opened up to Tony a little, that the flood gates have opened and that she can open up to him completely.

"What?" Tony asks, sounding shocked, feeling like he can't have heard what he thought he just heard.

"I was pregnant, I didn't know." Melinda reveals, looking up at Tony, who knows, without a doubt, that Melinda, wouldn't have gone on that mission if she knew, and she would have told him as soon as she did, "When I fought the girls Mother, who has powers like Bobbi, she kicked me in the stomach. The Doctor told me I had a miscarriage… I'm sorry, Tony…. I'm so sorry….. I got our baby killed." Melinda says, looking completely broken.

"No, you didn't." Tony assures Melinda, as tears well in his eyes, "It's not your fault Mel, you need to stop blaming yourself." Tony says, realising that that is part of the problem of what has been going on lately, "I love you." Tony says, before leaning down and kissing her, and once more Melinda doesn't flinch, in fact she responds to the kiss, until they break apart, "What you had to do was horrible, and it took something away from us, but don't let it take you away from us too, please." Tony begs, "The kids and I miss you, we love you, stop pushing us away, let us in, let us help you learn to live with what happened." Tony asks, "We want to help you, Mel, we want to be there for us, just let us, please." He begs, his voice breaking as it is clear that Tony wants this more than anything, and still a little hesitant, Melinda nods, and the two of them continue to hold each other, as both of them cry, morning what they have lost, but at the same time feeling like, for the first time in months, that things could actually be okay.

For a while Melinda and Tony just stand in the living room of their safe house, holding each other and crying, Tony feeling glad to finally know what happened, even if it is painful, and Melinda realising that as hard as it was to tell Tony what happened it was the right thing to do.

"Daisy, Peter?" Melinda asks, as she looks up from Tony, but doesn't move away from him, something which Tony notices, and is glad about.

"I called Rhodey, he's looking after them." Tony explains, and Melinda nods, "You haven't been sleeping, Mel, how about we both try to get some sleep before heading back to the City." He suggests, thinking it would be a good idea.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod,

"Oh." Tony says, realising something, and he pulls the rings out of his pockets, "These belong to you, even if you're not ready to put them back on." Tony admits, putting the ring flat on his hand, and clearly giving Melinda the choice about whether or not she puts them on.

For a few moments Melinda just stares at the rings before she takes them and puts them back on, and once she has both Melinda and Tony both head back upstairs.
Before long both Melinda and Tony are lying in bed in one of the bedroom, and for the first time in six months there isn't a huge amount of space between Melinda and Tony, in fact they are holding each other, and not long after they lay down they both fall asleep.

For a few hours both Melinda and Tony manage to sleep well, but just like every night in the past six months that Melinda has attempted to sleep, she has nightmares, which wakes Tony to.

"Mel." Tony says, sounding concerned, "JARVIS..." Tony starts to say, but then he realises that this house doesn't have JARVIS, "MEL, WAKE UP." Tony says, loudly, not wanting to shake Melinda awake as he doesn't want to scare her, "MEL WAKE UP." Tony says, raising his voice louder, and seconds after he does Melinda bolts upright in tower, "It's okay Mel, you're okay, you're not there anymore."

"Tony… Tony." Melinda says, puffing like she just ran a marathon, sounding afraid.

"Yeah, I'm here. You're not back there." Tony tells his wife, "You're okay." Tony once more says, and even though he wants to reach out and hug Melinda he stops himself, as he can see the look he's become all too familiar with in recent months, the look which tells him Melinda wants to run, "Can I hug you?" Tony asks, needing to believe that Melinda meant it when she said she wasn't going to push him away anymore, and finally he sees Melinda nods, and so Tony puts his arm around her, "I got you, Mel." Tony says, kissing Melinda's head.

"How… how can you love me… accept what I've done?" Melinda asks, her voice quiet.

"What you did doesn't change who you are, you're a good person, who had to make a horrible decision." Tony explains to his wife, "Knowing what you did doesn't change how much I love you, nothing could, you're the love of my life Mel, my best friend, always." Tony says, and once he does Melinda leans forward and kisses them, before they break apart, "If you don't think you can go back to sleep, how about we just lay together." Tony suggests.

"Okay." Melinda confirms, and the two of them lay back down, holding each other as they do.

After spending the night, and part of the next day at the Farm Safe House Melinda and Tony headed back to the city, and Tony called Rhodey to tell him that they are going to pick up Peter, and Daisy. As it's still a little while before the two youngest Stark-May children finish school Melinda and Tony are just sitting together in Tony's car, having returned Melinda's motorbike to their apartment.

"They're going to hate me." Melinda admits, not looking at Tony but looking out of the window, "And after the way I've been acting I wouldn't blame them." She admits.

"Mel, no." Tony says, forcing himself not to reach out and take Melinda's hand, which is exactly what he would have once done before Bahrain, "Peter and Daisy, more than anything, just miss you." He admits, "They'll be happy if you stop avoiding them and be their mother again." Tony admits, not realising that he is being harsh until after he speaks, "Mel…"

"It's okay. You're right I haven't been their mother recently." Melinda admits, "And what about Bobbi? You said it yourself, she's been avoiding coming home."

"Because it hurts her to see you so hurt." Tony admits, "I think the best thing to do is talk to Bobbi." Tony admits.

"She's at the Hub." Melinda reveals, having used her new Job in admin to keep track of Bobbi so
that she knows where her daughter is, what kind of missions she's been doing, "Tonight, once I talk to Daisy and Peter, I think I'm going to go there to talk to her."

"That would be a good idea." Tony says, taking notice of the time, "We should go wait with the other parents." He realises, Melinda nods, and the two of them get out of the car.

For a few minutes Melinda and Tony wait for their kids and finally they see Daisy and Peter walking towards Tony and Melinda.

"Dad!" Peter says, looking glad to see him.

"Mom?" Daisy says, sounding surprised, and slightly hesitant.

"Hey Daisy, Peter." Melinda says, looking between her children.

"You guys ready to go home?" Tony says, looking between his kids.

"Yeah." Daisy confirms.

"Yep." Peter confirms, and the four of them head back to the car, both Daisy and Peter wondering what happened between their parents.

A little while after Melinda and Tony picked up Daisy and Peter from school all four of them arrive back home, and as they walk out of the elevator Daisy and Peter start to go left, clearly heading up to their rooms.

"Daisy, Peter." Melinda says, causing both of them to stop walking, and turn around and look at their mother, "Can we talk?"

"Sure." Peter says, as Daisy just nods, and both of them and Melinda head over to the couches, while Tony stays back a little, but is still clearly in the room, as Daisy and Peter sit down on the couch, and Melinda sits down in front of them.

"I'm sorry about the way I've been lately." Melinda tells her children, "I'm sorry that I haven't been there for the two of you."

"Why? Why have you pushed us away?" Peter asks, looking hurt.

"That mission in Bahrain something bad happened." Melinda explains, "After what happened I thought that the two of you, your Dad, and your sister deserved better. I pushed you away because I was struggling, because I thought it was better. I was struggling to deal with what happened and didn't want the people I love most to be brought down with me." Melinda explains, not wanting to go into too many details with Daisy and Peter but wanting to help them understand.

"You shouldn't have pushed us away, we can help." Daisy tells her mother.

"We've missed you." Peter says.

"I've missed you too." Melinda admits, as her feeling like her children deserve better doesn't mean she hasn't missed them.

"Can I hug you?" Daisy asks her mother, and Melinda nods, seeing her mother nod Daisy leans forward and hugs her mother, "I love you Mom." Daisy tells her mother.
"I love you too." Melinda responds, as Peter moves forward and hugs his sister and mother too, and so Melinda puts her arm around Peter as well, "I love you both." Melinda says, as she hugs her kids, as Tony watches on with a smile, feeling like things aren't going to be perfect, because Melinda still isn't okay, but maybe they are going to be better.

After spending some time with Daisy and Peter Melinda has flown to the Hub, as she feels like she needs to talk to Bobbi. Knowing the office that Bobbi works out of, thanks to the fact that she has been keeping track of her, Melinda heads straight there, but when she walks in she finds Sharon, but no sign of Bobbi, or Trip who Melinda knows shares the office too.

"Sharon." Melinda says, and Sharon looks up in surprise.

"Aunt Melinda?" Sharon asks, sounding surprised as the last thing she was expecting was for Melinda to walk into The Hub, especially considering what she knows about what has been going on thanks to Bobbi.

"Yeah, is Bobbi still around?" Melinda asks her niece.

"Um yeah, she and Antoine are in the gym, I lost a bet and got stuck with the paperwork." Sharon explains, looking less than happy, as she thought for sure that she had that bet in the bag.

"Okay." Melinda says, "It's good to see you Sharon." Melinda says, before turning to leave.

"Aunt Melinda?" Sharon asks, before Melinda can leave, and she turns back around, "Are you okay?" Sharon asks clearly concerned.

"I'm getting there." Melinda admits, before leaving, knowing that she may not be okay for a very long time, but she is getting there.

A few minutes later Melinda walks into the gym and as she does she finds Bobbi and Antoine sparing, it being clear that Bobbi isn't using her powers, and so Melinda just stands back and watches for a few minutes, until Bobbi knocks Antoine onto his ass.

"Bobbi, Antoine." Melinda says, walking towards them, as Bobbi helps Trip back onto his feet.

"Aunt Melinda?" Antoine says, sounding surprised.

"Mom?" Bobbi asks, sounding just as surprised.

"Antoine can I talk to Bobbi alone." Melinda requests, as she walks towards her daughter and nephew.

"Sure." Antoine answers, "I'll go help Sharon with the paperwork." He says, before leaving the gym.

"What's going on, Mom?" Bobbi asks, her voice having an edge to it, as she isn't sure how to act after the way her mother's been acting.

"I here to apologise to you, for the way I've been acting for the past six months," Melinda explains, knowing she is going to be more open with Bobbi than with Peter and Daisy.

"Mom are you afraid of me?" Bobbi asks her mother needing to know, "Because that woman had the same powers as me? Do I make things harder for you? Should I stay away?" she asks, as she
knows that her mother and Phil were trying to bring in a women with the same powers as her, but she doesn't know more than that.

"God Bobbi, No." Melinda tells her daughter, feeling horrified that Bobbi would ever be afraid of her, "There are things I'm reacting to, that cause me to remember things, but I promise you I am not afraid of you, I never could be, and I certainly don't want you to stay away, I could never want that." Melinda tells her daughter, "I sorry that I made you think so, I love you." Melinda assures her daughter, hating that she even thought so.

"Love you too." Bobbi tells her mother, "You don't have to tell me what happened, but if you ever want to I'm here."

"I can't talk about it, not again, I told your Dad." Melinda admits.

"Good… that's good." Bobbi says, looking relieved, as she knows that if her mom told her dad then she is finally opening up, "Mom, please stop pushing us away."

"I'm going to try to." Melinda admits, "You've heard the rumours, haven't you?" she asks, wondering just how much Bobbi knows.

"Yeah, but I know better than listening to them." Bobbi admits, but from what she knows she suspects she knows some of what happened, "Like I said, if you want to talk, I'm here, if not I get it." she admits.

"Thank you." Melinda tells her daughter, walking closer to Bobbi, "I love you Bobbi, I'm going to try to do better than I've been doing in the last few months, but I can't promise that I'll always do better."

"I get that." Bobbi admits, "I know whatever happened on the mission, whatever you had to do, must be what is effecting you, but did something else happen?" she asks concerned.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "I had a miscarriage because of the mission." Melinda admits.

"Oh Mom." Bobbi says, looking shocked, "Does Dad…?"

"I just told him." Melinda admits, tears coming to her eyes.

"I'm going to hug you now, if that's okay." Bobbi says, and Melinda nods, slightly, once she sees her mothers nod Bobbi walks forward and hugs her mother, "I love you Mom, and you need to stop blaming yourself for the miscarriage, and whatever else happened." She says, as she hugs her mother tightly, wondering if her words will have any effect at all.

After hugging Bobbi in the gym of The Hub, the two of them, Sharon, and Trip went out for dinner together, before Melinda left and headed home, which took basically a full day because of the travel time.

When Melinda arrives back home it's night and as she walks out of the elevators and into the living room she finds Tony, Daisy, and Peter, all sitting on the couch, watching a movie.

"Mom!" Daisy says, sounding happy.

"We're watching Harry Potter, come watch with us?" Peter asks, expecting her to say no as that's what she's been saying over the past couple of months. 
"Sure." Melinda says, and she walks over to her children, and Tony, and sit down with them. She and Tony sitting on opposite ends of the couch, with Daisy and Peter in the middle, and together four of the five members of the Stark-May family watch the movie together.
About two months has passed since Tony managed to get through to Melinda and get her to stop pushing him and their kids away. While it is clear that Melinda isn't okay, and she is still pushing away people, though not Tony or her kids, when she is around them she seems to be doing better. Something else that has happened, that seems to help not just Melinda but Bobbi too, is Melinda starting to teach Bobbi to fly. In the last two months not only has Melinda stopped pushing her kids and Tony away but Peter has celebrated his eight birthday a birthday he truly enjoyed.

It is a little before lunch on a Monday and Melinda is sitting at her table in her cubical, doing work. As Melinda does her work she hears someone walking towards her, even though the person, who's footsteps she recognizes as Natasha's, is trying to walk quietly, and as she looks up Natasha places a piece of cake on her desk.

"It's Yasmin in HR's birthday, you know they always have good cake, I thought you'd like some." Natasha explains, as she leans against the cubical, remembering the days when she, Clint, and Melinda would crash HR birthday parties to get free food, to Phil's annoyance, and slight amusement.

"Thanks." Melinda says, but she doesn't look up from what she is doing.

"Okay, I should go." Natasha says, after a few moments and realising that Melinda isn't going to talk, something which doesn't surprise her, "I'm meeting Clint in the gym to spar, he's not as good of a partner you, but I make do." She says, before leaving, meaning that solely about sparing as Clint is a great partner in every other sense, but as their different body types sparing is better with Melinda, as they can both learn more.

"Nat." Melinda says, once more not looking up from what she is doing, and as she speaks Natasha pauses, and turns back around, "I miss sparing with you too." Melinda admits, it being the closet she has been to opening up to Natasha to Bahrain.

"Good to know." Natasha admits, smirking slightly, before leaving.

Hours later Melinda is getting ready to leave for the night, and as she packs up, Melinda pauses for a second, and hesitates, before she writes a note saying,

*If you want to spare, not talk, you know were to find me.*

And she plans to leave it in a place, where she knows Natasha, and only Natasha, will find it, before she flies back home to spend the evening with Tony and her kids.

Many hours after Melinda left the note for Natasha she has spent several hours with Peter, and
Daisy, both of whom have gone to bed, and has gone to the apartment gym rather than heading to bed herself as she knows she will have nightmares if she does, even with Tony lying next to her, though he is currently in the lab.

As she does her usual tai-chi Melinda hears the door open, Natasha walk in and over to the mats, doing so without a word, and seeing that Melinda stands up, and walks over to Natasha too, doing so without speaking either, and once Melinda and Natasha are both on the mats they start to spare without either of them saying a single thing.

A little while after Natasha arrived at the Stark-May apartment Tony is in the lab working on something.

"Okay, that should be done." Tony says as he connects something, and checks to make sure everything is working, "Good." Tony says, looking relieved, "J? Is Mel in bed yet?" Tony asks, as for the last couple of months he tries to be there when Melinda goes to bed so that he can try to help her when she has nightmares.

"No Sir. Mrs Stark-May is in the gym with Agent Romanoff." JARVIS explains.

"Natasha's here?" Tony says, sounding surprised.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Huh." Tony mutters, sounding a little surprised, and so puts what he was working on away before heading out of the lab.

Not long after Tony walked out of the lab he walks into the gym where he finds Melinda and Natasha sparing, neither of them speaking. For a few minutes Tony just stands and watches as his wife and Natasha spar, and as he does he realises that this might actually be something that is good for Melinda, and so he leaves, leaving them alone.

About an hour after Tony walked into the lab he is lying in his and Melinda's bed, working on something on a laptop, when Melinda walks in, and so he closes his laptop and puts it on the bedside table.

"How was sparing with Romanoff?" Tony asks curious.

"Kind of exactly what I needed." Melinda admits, as she walks over to hers and Tony's bed, as she is trying to be more open with him, and their kids, she actually answers his question, "It's like flying with Bobbi, it's familiar." Melinda says, as she sits down on the bed, near Tony.

"Good familiar, or bad?" Tony asks curious, as he leans forward.

"Good." Melinda admits, "There's a lot of things I don't want to do anymore, but sparing with Natasha, flying with Bobbi, aren't two of those things." She reveals.

"That's good, right?" Tony asks, as he suspects so.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, before leaning forward and kissing Tony, "I'm going to have a shower." Melinda says, once they break apart, and she gets up and heads to the bathroom, and even though he would like to join Melinda he knows not to without a clear invitation, especially lately.
March 6th 2008

A couple of months have passed since Melinda admitting that sparing with Natasha and teaching Bobbi to fly helps her and since then she has continued to do both things. Giving Bobbi lessons frequently and having, late night, silent, sparing sessions with Natasha, the Stark-May apartment gym, about once a week, sometimes more.

It is mid-morning on a Friday and both Daisy and Peter have a day off school. Due to this fact Lian May has come to spend the day with them while Tony had to go into Stark and Melinda had to go to the Triskelion.

Even though she should be working on some of her school work Daisy is in her room hacking, having made more connections as 'Skye' and so she is learning fast, managing to pull of even more things.

"Daze." Peter says, as he walks into Daisy's room, without knocking.

"Don't you know how to knock?" Daisy asks, sounding annoyed.

"Your door was open." Peter says, in his defence, "Are you hacking something you shouldn't be again?"

"Depends on your definition of shouldn't." Daisy admits, "What's up?"

"Grandma wants both of us in the gym." Peter explains.

"Why didn't she just ask JARVIS to get us?" Daisy asks confused, as she locks and moves her computer.

"She didn't want to talk to a machine." Peter explains.

"Of course." Daisy says, looking amused, as while she loves her grandmother she can be a little anti tech, "Lead the way Little Bro." Daisy says, smirking slightly.

"Don't call me that." Peter says, giving Daisy an annoyed look, as the two of them head out of Daisy's room and down to the gym.

Not long after Daisy and Peter walked out of Daisy's room they walk into the gym where they find that their grandmother has set up manikins, with jackets, as well as a table with several weapons.

"Grandma? What's going on?" Daisy asks, looking confused.

"I'm going to teach you both a few things." Lian reveals, as she looks between her two younger grandchildren, "I'm going to teach you both how to pick pockets, and a few other things, then Daisy, I'm going to teach you how to get a gun of someone." Lian explains, honestly thinking that Melinda and Tony should have taught Daisy how to do that already.

"Seriously?" Daisy asks, looking surprised.

"Yes." Lian confirms, "It's something you need to know." She reveals, "Peter I will teach you when you're older."

"Okay." Peter says, not sure if he even wants to know.

"Good, let's get started." Lian says, looking between Daisy and Peter, both of whom nod and
become interested in what exactly their grandmother is going to teach them.

**May 1st 2009**

A few weeks have passed since Lian spent a day with her two youngest grandchildren, teaching them things, and as neither were sure how their parents would react neither Daisy or Peter have informed their parents what their grandmother taught them.

It is a Friday afternoon and Melinda is packing up her stuff for the evening, about to leave to fly back to New York.

"May." Phil says, walking towards her, honestly glad that he caught her before she left, and in response Melinda just gives him a look, "I was hoping we could go get a drink, catch up." Phil suggests, as the truth is he misses his best friend.

"I have to get home." Melinda tells Phil.

"I know, but you have time for one drink." Phil says, looking at Melinda, wanting to spend time with his friend.

"I don't. Daisy and Peter are expecting me." Melinda explains, picking up her stuff, and walking past Phil.

"May please!" Phil requests, "I miss spending time with you." He admits.

"Maybe another time." Melinda says, before leaving.

"That's what you keep saying." Phil mutters to himself, as he watches Melinda go, wondering whether she will ever stop pushing him away.

**July 4th 2009**

A couple of months have passed since Phil asked Melinda to go for a drink, and since then he has asked several more times to get Melinda to go for a drink with him, so that he can spend time with her again, but every single time he asks Melinda finds an excuse not to. Something else that has happened in the past few months is Bobbi turning twenty-two, and Daisy turning thirteen.

It's a Saturday morning, and as they have both finished school for the year both Daisy and Peter are doing what they can to enjoy their summer break, which has involved the two youngest Stark-May sibling informing their parents that they want to spend time with their Uncle Clint and Aunt Natasha, something which they agreed to, and so while eating breakfast it is clear that they both can't wait for their Aunt and Uncle to arrive.

"When will Aunt Nat and Uncle Clint be here?" Peter asks curious.

"Soon." Tony answers, honestly feeling a little amused about how much Daisy and Peter are looking forward to spending time with their uncle and aunt.

"Try now." A voice says, and Tony turns to see Natasha and Clint walking into the room.

"Uncle Clint." Peter says, sounding happy.

"Aunt Nat." Daisy says, grinning slightly.

"Hey you two." Natasha greets, smiling at both of them, "Linda, Stark." She says, looking between
Melinda and Tony.

"Barton, Romanoff, do you want breakfast?" Tony asks curious, as there is more than enough for them.

"I'm never one to turn down free food." Clint says, before sitting down.

"Help yourselves." Melinda says, looking between her two friends, who she has been mostly avoiding for the last year, and Natasha sits down too, and proceeds to join four of the five Stark-May’s for breakfast.

A little over an hour after Natasha and Clint arrived at the Stark-May apartment the two of them, Daisy and Peter have all left, leaving Melinda and Tony alone. Even though they have the place to themselves both Melinda and Tony are in the lab, while Tony is working on something Melinda is sitting on her bench working on paperwork, though Tony notices that she isn't so much working as looking like she is deep in thought about something, and as he knows her so well Tony has a pretty good idea what she is thinking about.

"You miss them, don't you?" Tony asks, walking over to her, "Coulson, Barton, Romanoff, even Hill."

"They're better off without me." Melinda comments.

"You know that's not true." Tony says, as he sits down on the bench, with Melinda, "And you know they miss you just as much as you miss them, maybe more."

"I don't want to talk about what happened, I can't… but you're right about missing them." Melinda admits.

"How about a drink, I'll send a message to all four of them, and Rhodes and Pepper, too, that way when Barton and Romanoff get back we can open a bottle of scotch and each have a couple of glasses. I'll make sure no one asks about what happened." Tony promises, "But it's your call." He admits, as he doesn't want to push Melinda into something she doesn't want to do, even though he thinks it might be good for her.

"A drink." Melinda repeats, doing so to give herself a bit more time to answer, "I think I can handle that."

"Good." Tony says, reaching out and placing his hand on Melinda's leg, which he gently squeezes, having watched her carefully for signs of fear, which he didn't see any of, and the two of them drift into silence.

Hours later Natasha, Clint, Daisy, and Peter are arriving back at the Stark-May apartment, and as they hurry into the elevator they find Coulson, Maria, Pepper and Rhody inside.

"Uncle Phil!" Daisy says happily, before hugging him.

"Uncle Rhody, Maria, Pepper." Peter says, looking between them, "What are you guys doing here?" he asks, sounding glad to see them.

"Your Dad invited us." Maria explains, as Rhodey and Natasha exchange looks, both knowing what Tony's message said and knowing that this could either be a very good thing or a bad thing.
"Cool." Daisy says, with a grin, as the elevator doors open, "I'll be in my room." She says, heading to the left, so that she can head upstairs.

"Same." Peter says, before following his sister.

"JARVIS, we're are Tony and May?" Rhodey asks.

"Mr and Mrs Stark-May are in the study." JARVIS answers

"Thanks JARVIS." Pepper says, and the six of them head to the study, going in the same direction as Peter and Daisy went but heading to a door to the right before they get to the stairs.

Walking into the study Natasha, Clint, Phil, Maria, Pepper, and Rhodey find Melinda and Tony sitting on the couch and a bottle of scotch open on the desk with several glasses around it.

"Help yourself." Tony says, and Phil pours glasses for everyone. Once everyone has their glasses Pepper sits down in an arm chair, Rhodey sits down next to Tony, Natasha and Clint sit down on the desk, while Phil and Maria sit down in actual chairs, "Cheers." Tony says, raising his glass and once they all drink the group drift into silence all of them knowing that it is a long way from how things used to be, but it is a step in the right direction.

September 19th 2009

About two months have passed since Daisy and Peter spent a day with Natasha and Clint, and since Melinda, Tony, Phil, Maria, Rhodey, Clint, Natasha and Pepper had drinks together and since then they have had drinks a couple more times together, but it is basically always silent, or very little talking, and even though everyone except for Natasha and Tony would like to know what happened in Bahrain none of them have asked about what happened as they know it would make things so much worse.

It is a Saturday evening and Daisy is on her computer in her room, doing what she spends most her time doing, hacking.

"Okay, I've probably got about two minutes until Dad realises what I'm doing." Daisy mutters to herself, "Let's see if I can do it." Daisy mutters to herself as she starts the timer, and starts to hack, wanting to see if she can do what she's planning, but more than that she wants to know if she can pull off what she wants to do without JARVIS alerting her father.

While Daisy is up in her room Melinda, and Tony, who have just gotten off a video chat with Bobbi, are down in the lab Tony working at his bench, while Melinda is sitting on another bench watching Tony work.

"Mr Stark-May Ms Daisy has accessed her school's internal system." JARVIS reveals.

"What is she up to?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony, suspecting that he would know.

"I'm not sure." Tony says, standing up, "Let's go find out too." he says, and Melinda stands up too. Once Melinda and Tony are both standing up they head out of the lab, heading upstairs.

Up in Daisy's room she is hacking, as she watches the timer she set carefully she hears a knock on her door.

"Come in." Daisy says, knowing exactly who it is and the door opens and both her parents walk in.
As her parents walk in the room Daisy closes what she is doing and faces them, "If it helps I wasn't trying to do anything I wanted to see if I could." Daisy explains, as she looks between her parents.

"You hacked into your school system just to see if you could?" Melinda asks her daughter, wanting to make sure she heard right.

"Yep." Daisy confirms.

"That is exactly the kind of thing you would have done." Melinda comments, looking at Tony.

"Really is." Tony confirms, looking amused, as he walks over to Daisy, "Look, I get it Tiny Toni, you want to see what you can do, but don't hack your school system again, the administration won't be as kind as us."

"Even if I didn't do anything?" Daisy asks.

"Even then." Melinda confirms, "I'm glad you've found something that you're passionate about, and you're clearly an amazing hacker, but you have to be careful, okay, don't hack things you can get in serious trouble for." Melinda explains.

"I won't." Daisy assures her mother, "Promise." She says, looking between her parents.

"Good, you're doing great, Tiny Toni." Tony assures his daughter, and he and Melinda both leave Daisy's bedroom, once they leave Daisy goes back to what she was doing, but this time rather than continuing to hack into her school's system she hacks into something different.

November 20th 2009

A couple of months have passed since Daisy hacked into her school's system and it has become clearer to her parents that she is more interested in hacking than anything else, including her actual school work.

It is a Friday evening, and Bobbi is home for the weekend, because it happens to be her mother's fortieth birthday. Up until a year ago Tony would have planned a big surprises party for Melinda, with all of their friends and family, but now he knows that that would be a bad idea and so he planned something for just the two of them.

As he is waiting for Melinda to finish getting ready Tony is in the living area with Bobbi, Daisy and Peter, all five of them having had their birthday tradition of birthday cake for breakfast.

"So, where are you and Mom going?" Bobbi asks her father curious.

"That's a surprise." Tony admits, "But we'll both have our phones if you three need anything." Tony explains, looking between his kids.

"We'll be fine Dad." Daisy assures him.

"We really will be." Peter says, "You and Mom have fun."

"Thanks Peter." Melinda says, walking into the room, wearing a simple red dress.

"I would say don't worry about us, but I know better, so I'm going to say have fun, and don't rush. We'll be fine." Bobbi says, looking between her parents.

"We'll see you later." Tony says, and both he and Melinda hug all three of their kids before leaving.
"So, now that they're gone." Bobbi says, as she pulls something a couple of cans out of a bag she hid on the couch, and gently throws at her siblings, which both of them catch.

"Silly string?" Daisy asks, looking amused.

"Yep, catch me if you can." Bobbi says, spraying both of her siblings before running off, it being clear that she isn't using her powers, and after exchanging looks both Daisy and Peter start to spray each other as they run.

A little while after Melinda and Tony left their apartment the arrive at Melinda's favourite restaurant, and as they walk in they find the place completely empty.

"Mr Stark, your table is right this way." One of the employees at the restaurant says and leads Tony and Melinda to a table in the centre of a restaurant.

"You brought out of the restaurant." Melinda says, looking at Tony.

"I thought it would be better if it was just us." Tony admits, as he and Melinda sit down, "I gave everyone who missed out on work a good bonus though." He reveals.

"Of course, you did." Melinda says, smiling slightly, "Thanks Tony, this is perfect." Melinda admits.

"I'm glad you think so." Tony responds, glad he made the right choice, and the two of them drift into a comfortable silence as they browse the menu.

**December 5th 2009**

A little over two weeks have passed since Melinda's fortieth birthday, where Melinda and Tony's dinner went extremely well. In the couple of weeks since Melinda's birthday Daisy has been hearing stories, mainly due to eavesdropping on her parents, about the amazing feats that her sister has been pulling off. Due to that fact, for the first time ever, Daisy isn't thrilled about the fact that her sister is coming home, with Trip and Sharon, something which she's made no secret off, and so she has shut herself in her room.

As Daisy lies on her bed she hears a knock and she is pretty sure she can guess who it is.

"Go away." Daisy says, and just like she was expecting the door still opens.

"Daisy?" Bobbi's voice says.

"Didn't you hear me say go away?" Daisy asks curious.

"I did." Bobbi says, as she walks over to her sister, "But I wanted to talk to you." She admits, as she sits down on the edge of her sisters' bed, "Is that okay?"

"Would it matter?" Daisy asks curious.

"Daze, what's going on?" Bobbi asks her little sister curious, and Daisy doesn't answer, "Please talk to me." She requests, and because Daisy knows her sister won't drop it, she just sighs.

"I'm never going to be able to do what you do. No matter what I do I'm not going to be like you." Daisy explains.

"What makes you think you have to?" Bobbi asks her sister confused.
"I heard Mom and Dad talking about what you've been doing lately." Daisy admits, "They're so proud, and I figure if I'm not like you then they're going to be disappointed." Daisy admits.

"Okay, two things, one you should talk to Mom and Dad." Bobbi admits, "And two, that's not going to happen." Bobbi tells her sister, "Daisy-Lin who you are is amazing." Bobbi says, "Mom, and Dad, would never want you to be something you're not, I know that for a fact. You're not me Daisy, and you shouldn't want to be, because you're special and amazing because of who you are." Bobbi explains, "Our parents are already proud of you because who you are." Bobbi explains and as she does Daisy leans up and hugs her.

"Love you Bobbi." Daisy tells her sister.

"Love you too, Daisy, always." Bobbi promises her.

"But you know I wouldn't mind your powers." Daisy admits, as they break apart.

"They're not all they're cracked up to be." Bobbi admits, knowing that there is a chance that Daisy could develop powers, even though she has shown no signs of that, though Daisy doesn't know that, and no one knows enough about Cal's powers to be able to say, with certainty whether or not Daisy will develop powers one day.

"Yeah right." Daisy says, looking disbelieving.

"You know I was the first one, after Mom, and Dad too actually, to hold you after you were born." Bobbi reveals, knowing that technically Tony held Daisy first even if he was handing her to Melinda.

"Really?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised as she never knew that.

"Really." Bobbi confirms, "And I was terrified I was going to break you, hurt you, and I still am, same with Peter." Bobbi admits, admitting something to her sister that she has never admitted before, "These powers I have can be useful, and I may have control over them, but that doesn't change the fact that every second of every day I'm worried I'm going to accidently hurt someone I love with them, and that's something I wouldn't wish on anyone." Bobbi admits.

"But you've never hurt me, or Mom, or Dad, or Peter, or anyone else we know." Daisy points out, and as she does Bobbi can't help but think about Cal, but because Daisy doesn't know what her father did she doesn't say anything.

"But I could, and that terrifies me." Bobbi admits and not sure what else to say Daisy just leans forward once more and hugs her sister.

"I'm not afraid you'll hurt me, and I never will be." Daisy promises her sister as the two of them embrace.

"Thanks Daze." Bobbi says, feel amazed, "Now, Sharon, Peter, and Antoine are downstairs, want to come have some fun?" she asks curious.

"Yeah, I do." Daisy says, and both she and Bobbi get up and head downstairs, to have fun with their brother and cousins.

April 13th 2010

About four months have passed since Daisy admitted she was jealous of Bobbi and in that time Peggy has had to move into a care home due to her Alzheimer's advancing, and because of that
every Friday Tony flies with Peter and Daisy to DC after school so that the three of them, and Melinda can visit with her.

It is a Tuesday evening, a lovely spring night in Dubai and Bobbi is on a mission with an Agent by the name of Alphonso Mackenzie, someone who has become a friend to her, but doesn't know about her powers or family. As she has to get some intel off of SAS agent, who believes they will be working together, she is standing on a pier, facing the outer bank, and just waiting.

Even though she hears footsteps Bobbi doesn't turn around, she just lets the footsteps get closer, knowing that she could still react if it's not who she is expecting.

"Agent Morse?" A voice asks, and Bobbi turns around to face a man.

"Lieutenant Hunter?" Bobbi asks.

"Yes Ma'am." Hunter says, looking Bobbi up and down, "Got to say, I'm looking forward to working with you even more now."

"Of course, you are." Bobbi says, a little amused, "Let's go, we've got work to do."

"What kind of work?" Hunter asks confused.

"You'll see." Bobbi says, looking amused, and the two of them start to walk side by side.

**Four days later**

Since meeting Lance Hunter he and Bobbi, along with Mack, completed a mission together, and Bobbi stole the intel she needed.

"So, does this mean you're not mad about me stealing the intel?" Bobbi asks curious, as she looks over at Hunter, who she is in bed with, the both of them completely naked.

"Not at the moment." Hunter admits, "Got to say, this hasn't been a bad way to end a mission." He admits.

"Glad you think so." Bobbi says, before leaning forward and kissing Hunter. As the two of them kiss things quickly heat up, and they start, even if they don't admit it, a relationship.
Chapter 29

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Here we are, the start of Iron Man 1. It's going to seem very familiar, but there are also some changes, hope you like. Thank you for the support. PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW.

May 6th 2010

A little under a month has passed since Bobbi met Lance Hunter and ever since they met the two of them have started a pretty casual relationship and Bobbi is with him, Sharon and Trip celebrating her twenty third birthday, having talked to her family a few hours earlier.

Due to work commitments, Tony is in Vegas, rather than celebrating his daughter's birthday, but instead of getting the award he is supposed to be getting he is gambling.

"You are unbelievable." Rhodey says, as he walks up to Tony not at all surprised to find his friend gambling.

"Oh, no! Did they rope you into this?" Tony asks, sounding surprised.

"Nobody roped me into anything!" Rhodey informs his friend.

"I'm so sorry." Tony says, actually meaning that.

"But they told me that if I presented you with an award, you'd be deeply honoured." Rhodey explains.

"Of course, I'd be deeply honoured, and it's you, that's great. So, when do we do it?" Tony asks curious.

"It's right here, here you go." Rhodey says, handing Tony the award he was supposed to present to him.

"There it is, that was easy, I'm so sorry." Tony says.

"Yeah, it's okay."

"Wow! Would you look at that? That's something else. I don't have any of those floating around." Tony explains, "We're going to let it ride." He says, picking up the dice, "Give me a hand, will you?" Tony asks, presenting the dice to a women of his left, a women who Rhodey knows would be very interested in doing a hell of a lot more than talking with Tony, but who he wouldn't look twice at, and she blows on the dice, "Okay, you too." Tony says, presenting the dice to Rhodey.

"I don't blow on dice." Rhodey informs his friend, looking more annoyed than he actually is.

"Come on, Honey Bear." Tony says, to his best friend, and as he does he knocks Tony's hand away, causing the dice to roll, "There it is. Lieutenant Colonel Rhodes roll." Tony says, "And…"

"Two craps, line away." The Dealer says.
"That's what happens." Rhodey admits.

"Worse things have happened. I think we're gonna be fine." Tony admits, "Colour me up, William." He says, to the dealer, and once he does he and Rhodey walk away from the table.

A while after Tony walked away from the table he has sad goodbye to Rhodey, handed a random person the award that Rhodey gave him, and is walking outside of the casino, with Happy.

"Mr Stark!" A voice calls as Tony goes to get into his car, "Excuse me, Mr Stark! Christine Everhart, Vanity Fair Magazine, can I ask you a couple of questions?" Everhart asks, and as she does Tony gives Happy a look, as he has a method for dealing with these kinds of thing.

"She's all right." Happy informs Tony.

"Hi." Tony says, turning around, "Okay, go." Tony says to her.

"You've been called the Da Vinci of our time, what do you say to that?" Everhart asks.

"Absolutely ridiculous, I don't paint." Tony comments.

"And what do you say to your other nickname? The Merchant of Death?" Everhart asks.

"That's not bad." Tony admits, "Let me guess, Berkeley?" Tony asks, looking at Everhart.

"Brown, actually." She corrects.

"Well, Ms Brown, it's an imperfect world, but it's the only one we've got." Tony says, having heard Melinda, Natasha, Clint, Phil, and Maria have that conversation a few times, "I guarantee you, the day weapons are no longer needed to keep the peace, I'll start making bricks and beams for baby hospitals." Tony reveals.

"Rehearse that much?" Everhart asks.

"Every night in front of the mirror before bedtime." Tony explains.

"I can see that." Everhart comments, "But what I really want is a serious answer." She admits.

"Okay, here's serious." Tony says, pulling his sunglasses off, "My old man had a philosophy, 'peace means having a bigger stick than the other guy.' He reveals, as while he disagrees with his father about basically everything that is something he might have had a point about.

"That's a great line coming from the guy selling the sticks." Everhart says.

"My father helped defeat the Nazis. He worked on the Manhattan Project. A lot of people, including your professors at Brown, would call that being a hero." Tony says, there being an edge to his voice.

"And a lot of people would also call that war profiteering." Everhart says, and hearing that Tony starts to feel a little annoyed.

"Tell me, do you plan to report on the millions we've saved by advancing medical technology or kept from starvation with our intelli-crops?" Tony asks, "All those breakthroughs, military funding honey." Tony comments.

"You ever lose an hour of sleep in your life?" Everhart asks.
"Many, with my wife." Tony says, before getting into the car and heading back to the LA house for the night.

**May 7th 2010**

After driving back to his LA house Tony got a couple of hours sleep before going downstairs where he started working on some of his cars, which he has been doing for hours. As he work on his cars Tony notices the time and realises what the time is in New York, and so he heads over to the computers and makes a call.

"Dad?" Peter asks, answering the call, on one of the computers in the lab back home.

"Peter, what are you doing in the lab?" Tony asks, as the truth is he expected JARVIS to get Melinda, and he and Melinda prefer Peter not to be in the lab without him as he could get hurt by something.

"I need a small screwdriver for something I'm working on." Peter explains.

"Draw to the right, behind you." Tony tells his son, and Peter reaches over and gets what he wanted.

"Thanks Dad, I'll show you when you get home." Peter says, "You're going away, aren't you?" Peter asks curious.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "But I'm going to be back in a few days." He explains.

"Cool, can you bring me back something?" Peter asks curious.

"I'll see what I can do." Tony says, looking amused, "You should be getting ready for school, do you want to go get your sister." He requests.

"Sure, love you Dad." Peter says.

"Love you too, Kid." Tony says, and once he does Peter heads out of the lab.

For a few minutes Tony waits until Daisy comes into view and sits down in front of the screen.

"Hey Dad." Daisy greets.

"Tiny Toni." Tony responds, "So you know I'm going to be away for a few days."

"Yeah, I know." Daisy confirms.

"While I'm going don't make things too hard on your Mom, look out for your brother." Tony requests.

"I will." Daisy assures her father, "And I always do." She says, clearly speaking about looking out for Peter, and once she speaks she looks slightly nervous, "Dad, you do know that Afghanistan is dangerous, right?" Daisy asks her Dad, looking worried for him.

"How do you know where I'm going?" Tony asks as he knows that he and Melinda decided not to tell Daisy and Peter where he was going, so that they wouldn't worry, and as he asks Daisy looks awkward.

"Daisy?" Tony asks, drawing out the word.
"I hacked your schedule." Daisy reveals, resisting the urge to look very proud of that fact.

"That's not easy to do." Tony says, clearly proud, "And no one says hacked anymore."

"You don't, everyone else does." Daisy informs her father.

"If you say so." Tony says, looking amused, "I think we need to talk about this when I get home." Tony admits.

"Seriously?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised, "I cannot be in trouble, when you were my age you hacked the Pentagon because Mom dared you too." Daisy points out, and as she does she gets an idea, realises something she wants to achieve, a challenge she wants to set herself.

"Daisy, don't even think about hacking the Pentagon." Tony warns, "That would be one of those shouldn't hack systems that your Mom and I talked to you about."

"What…" Daisy starts to say.

"Daisy, I'm serious about this." Tony says, knowing all too well how much trouble Daisy would get into for hacking the Pentagon, and so he doesn't want that for her.

"I won't, promise." Daisy says as her idea, the challenge she's set herself, has nothing to do with the Pentagon, "But Dad, seriously, Afghanistan, it's not exactly the safest place to go." Daisy says, looking concerned.

"I'm just going for a weapons demonstration, Tiny Toni, I'll be fine, I'll see you in a few days." Tony promises his daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, after a moment of hesitation, "I'll get Mom, I love you." Daisy tells her father.

"Love you too." Tony confirms.

"Mainly lost, but won a bit." Tony explains.

"Sounds about right." Melinda admits, "Are you ready to go?"

"Yeah." Tony confirms.

"Be careful Tony, okay." Melinda requests, honestly she is used to be the one going to dangerous places, what she isn't used to is staying behind while Tony goes into a war zone.

"I will." Tony says, as Pepper walks into his workshop, "I should go, Pepper's giving me that 'hurry up you're supposed to be somewhere' look," Tony admits, "I love you."

"Love you too." Melinda responds and the call ends.

"You are supposed to be halfway around the world right now." Pepper informs Tony.

"Why are you trying to hustle me out of here?" Tony asks.

"Your flight was scheduled to leave an hour and a half ago." Pepper explains to Tony.

"That's funny, I thought with it being my plane and all, that it would just wait for me to get there."
Tony comments, as he stands up.

"Tony, I need to speak to you about a couple of things, before I get you out of the door." Pepper admits.

"Doesn't it kind of defeat the whole purpose of having your own plane if it departs before you arrive?" Tony asks.

"Larry called, he's got another buyer for the Jackson Pollock in the wings." Pepper explains.

"Do you want it? Yes or No?" Pepper asks.

"Is it a good representation of his spring period?" Tony asks curious.

"No, The Springs was actually the neighbourhood in East Hampton where he lived and worked, not 'spring' like the season." Pepper explains.

"So?" Tony asks.

"I think it's a fair example. I also think it's incredibly overpriced." Pepper admits.

"I need it. buy it, store it." Tony says, and Pepper isn't at all surprised by that responds.

"Okay. The MIT commencement speech..." Pepper starts to say.

"Is in June, please, don't harangue me about stuff that's way, way, way down..." Tony says despite the fact that it is only a month away.

"They're haranguing me, so I'm gonna say yes." Pepper reveals.

"Deflect it, and absorb it, don't transmit back to me." Tony requests.

"I need you to sign this before you get on that plane." Pepper says, handing Tony a pen, and he signs.

"What are you trying to get rid of me for?" Tony asks, "What, you got plans?" Tony asks.

"As a matter of fact, I do." Pepper confirms.

"I don't like it when you have plans." Tony says.

"I'm allowed to have plans on my birthday." Pepper informs him.

"It's your birthday?" Tony asks, sounding surprised.

"Yes." Pepper confirms.

"I knew that, already?" Tony asks.

"Yeah, isn't that strange? It's the same day as last year." Pepper explains.

"Got yourself something nice from me." Tony suggests.

"I already did." Pepper says, as that's what usually ends up happening as Tony is so focused on Bobbi's birthday that he forgets that hers is the day after.

"And?" Tony asks curious.
"It was very nice." Pepper admits.

"Good." Tony says, sounding glad about that.

"Very tasteful, thank you Mr Stark." Pepper says.

"You're welcome, Miss Potts." Tony says, and Pepper walks out. After Pepper walks out of the workshop he pulls out his phone to call someone he can't call on video call, and after a few moments the person on the other end picks up the phone.

"Hey Dad." Bobbi answers.

"Hey Bobbi." Tony says.

"Shouldn't you be on your way to Afghanistan?" Bobbi asks her father curious, knowing where he is going.

"I'm about to leave." Tony admits.

"Good, General's don't like being kept waiting." Bobbi reveals.

"I've heard rumours to that effect." Tony says, looking amused.

"It's true, not a rumour." Bobbi admits, "And you know if you have time on your way back we could meet in Rome for some pizza." Bobbi explains, as she is near that area, and could meet her father for some time if needed.

"I definitely think we can do that." Tony confirms, "I'll call you when I finish the demonstration."

"Sounds good." Bobbi responds, "I love you, Dad."

"Love you too." Tony responds and the two of them end their phone call.

Once Bobbi and Tony end their phone call he grabs his stuff and leaves his LA house heading to the airport.

May 8th 2010

After talking to his daughter, and making plans with her, Tony flew, with Rhodey, to Afghanistan; the two of them having had quiet an enjoyable flight.

"Is it better to be feared or respected?" Tony asks, standing in front of a group of soldiers, and Rhodey, who are watching on, watching his presentation.

"I say, is it too much to ask for both?" Tony asks, looking around, "With that in mind, I humbly present the crown jewel of Stark Industries' Freedom line." Tony says, "It's the first missile system to incorporate our proprietary repulsor technology." Tony explains, "They say the best weapon is one you never have to fire, I respectfully disagree, I prefer the weapons you only have to fire once." Tony explains, "That's how Dad did it, that's how America does it, and it's worked out pretty well so far." Tony explains, "Find an excuse to let one of these of the chain, and I personally guarantee you the bad guys won't even want to come out of their caves." Tony says, as he waves at the person who is controlling the machine, "For your consideration, the Jericho." Tony says, as he sticks out his hands, and everyone watches as the Jericho is demonstrates.

Over the next few minutes Tony talks shows a caller, grabs a drink, and makes a phone call to Obadiah Stane who was a close friend of his father and helps him with the company, before he gets
into one of the Humvees.

"Hey Tony." Rhodey greats as Tony gets into the Humvee.

"I'm sorry, this is the fun-vee, the hum-drum-vee is back there." Tony says, in a joking tone of voice.

"Nice job. See you back at base." Rhodey says, before heading to another Humvee, and within a couple of minutes the driver of the Humvee starts to drier.

A little while after Tony got in the Humvee he is starting to feel rather awkward as the mood in the Humvee is very tense.

"I feel like you're driving me to a court-martial. This is crazy." Tony says, "What did I do? I feel like you're going to pull over and snuff me." Tony admits, "What, you're not allowed to talk?" he asks.

"We can talk, Sir." One of the soldiers' answer.

"Oh, I see, so it's personal?" Tony asks.

"No." The soldier who is driving, a female, "You intimidate them." She reveals.

"Good god, you're a woman." Tony says, sounding surprised, knowing that the women he knows are some of the best fighters in the world, so he isn't surprised by that, what he is surprised is that he didn't realise, "I honestly, I couldn't have called that." Tony admits, "I'd apologize, but isn't that what we're going for here? I thought of you as a soldier first." He admits.

"I'm an airman." The women corrects.

"you have, actually excellent bone structure, there." Tony comments, trying to make light of the situation, "I'm kind of having a hard time not looking at you now. Is that weird?" Tony asks, as several people around Humvee start to laugh, and chuckle, but stop, "Come on, it's okay, laugh." He says.

"Sir, I have a question to ask." One of the soldiers asks.

"Yes, Please." Tony says.

"Are you really married or is that just one big lie?" The soldier asks as he has heard so many rumours about Tony Stark that he would love to know which are true.

"That's an excellent question, yes I am," Tony confirms, "My wife is a solider, a great one." Tony says, knowing that while Melinda is a S.H.I.E.L.D agent she has described herself as a solider before, "Anything else?" he asks and the solider who is sitting next to him raises his hand, "You're kidding me with the hand up, right?" Tony asks.

"Is it cool if I take a picture with you?" the Soldier asks.

"Yeah, it's very cool." Tony confirms, and the solider next to him pulls his camera out and hands it to the Soldier in the front seat.

"I don't want to see this on your MySpace page." Tony says, as the solider puts up a peace sign for the photo.
"Please, no gang signs." Tony says, and as he does the soldier puts down the sign, "No, throw it up. I'm kidding. Yeah, peace, I love peace, I'd be out of a job with peace." Tony says.

"Come on, hurry up, just click it, don't change any settings." The soldier requests, and as the picture is about to be taken the Humvee in front of them is hit, and blows up. Seconds after the Humvee in front of them blows up there are gunshots and the side of their Humvee is hit.

"What's going on?" Tony asks.

"Contacts left!" One of the soldiers says.

"What have we got?" Tony asks, wanting to know what is going on so that he can help, as the driver steps out to go into combat and is shot down.

"Jimmy, stay with Stark." The other soldier in the front says, before getting out of the Humvee,

"Stay down!" Jimmy yells, pushing Tony down a little, trying to protect him.

"Yeah." Tony says, as the Soldier who was in the front is shot down too.

"Son of a bitch." Jimmy says, and he goes out to fight as well.

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, give me a gun!" Tony yells, desperately wishing that that Melinda was with him as he knows, without a doubt, that she would protect him, though he hates the idea of her being in danger.

"Stay here!" Jimmy yells, as he turns around and is gunned down as well. As gunshots pierce the vehicle.

Due to everything that is going on Tony finds his hearing and senses are dulled a bit, but he still gets out of the vehicle, stumbling a bit in the chaos, but quickly he gets some of his hearing back and so he runs and dives behind a rock for cover.

Once he is behind a rock Tony pulls out his phone, and tries to call Melinda, the person he wants most right now, but before he can make the call a bomb, with 'Stark Industries' on it lands next to it. after a few seconds of shock Tony tries to get up, to get away, but he doesn't in time as the bomb explodes, and makes him fly through the air a little.

Seconds after the bomb explodes Tony lands on the ground, hard, and his senses are once more dulled as he feels pain in his chest. Opening his shirt Tony sees blood pooling under his shirt, coming through his body armour, and as he looses consciousness his last thought is of Melinda and his kids.

Far away from Afghanistan, in hers and Tony's bed in New York, Melinda is actually asleep when she is woken up by her phone ringing.

"May." Melinda says, answering it without even checking the caller ID.

"Melinda." The voice on the other end says, and the second she hears it Melinda is wide awake, so she bolts upright.

"Rhodey? What's happened?" Melinda asks, knowing, without a doubt, that it is something bad.

"Its Tony…" Rhodey says, and those two simple words fill Melinda with overwhelming dread.
"What happened? Is he okay?" Melinda asks.

"I don't know." Rhodey admits, "We were on our way back from the weapons demonstration and the convoy was attacked, Tony was taken." Rhodey explains.

"Was he taken alive?" Melinda asks, needing the answer to be yes.

"I don't know." Rhodey says, wishing he did, "We've got everyone looking for him, we're going to do everything we can to find him." Rhodey promises.

"I know." Melinda says, knowing without a doubt that Rhodey won't give up until Tony is found, "I'll make some calls, reach out to some old connections, see if I can get any leads."

"Okay, I'll keep you updated." Rhodey says.

"Same." Melinda responds, "Find him, Jim." Melinda requests.

"I'll do my best." Rhodey responds, before hanging up.

"JARVIS, anything you can do to find Tony, do it." Melinda requests, trusting JARVIS because she trusts Tony, and knowing that if there is a way to find Tony then JARVIS will find it.

"Yes, Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers, as Melinda's phone rings again.

"May." Melinda answers.

"Mom? What's happened to Dad?" Bobbi asks, sounding worried.

"I just got a call; how do you know something happened?" Melinda asks her daughter, being pretty sure that Rhodey wouldn't have called Bobbi before her.

"I'll explain when I get home." Bobbi says, as she knows she can't, and shouldn't explain over the phone, "What's happened with Dad?" Bobbi asks, needing to know.

"He's been taken." Melinda reveals, "Rhodey just called, he was taken on the way back from the weapons display." Melinda explains, pain clear in her face.

"He's still alive." Bobbi says.

"I hope so." Melinda admits, being so worried that she actually admits that.

"No Mom, he's still alive, for sure." Bobbi corrects, knowing that without a doubt.

"How..." Melinda starts to say, feeling confused.

"I'll explain when I get home." Bobbi informs her mother, "I love you." Bobbi says, feeling the need to say it.

"I love you too." Melinda responds, before hanging up with her daughter, once she hangs up with Bobbi Melinda dials another number and waits for the other end to pick up, "This is Agent Melinda May, Alpha 078634." Melinda says, "I need to speak to Director Fury, it's urgent." Melinda says.

"Of course, Agent May connecting you now." A voice responds, and after a few rings the other end picks up.

"May..." Fury starts to say.
"Please tell me you know something." Melinda requests.

"Not yet." Fury tells her, "I know what happened, but I don't know more. As soon as I do I'll let you know." Fury promises.

"You better, we need to find him, Nick." Melinda tells her boss, not caring if she is being rude.

"I know. I'll send through anything we find." Fury says, actually meaning that.

"Thank you, Sir." Melinda says, before hanging up, "JARVIS, anything?"

"No Mrs Sark-May." JARVIS answers, and because she knows JARVIS so well she can hear the pain in his voice.

"I can't do nothing." Melinda says, "JARVIS, turn on my computer in the study, log me in remotely into my S.H.I.E.L.D account user name is Agent M_May." Melinda explains, not sure if she would be able to log in remotely, but she knows JARVIS can, especially with her username and password, "Password is PTM79-02." Melinda tells JARVIS.

"Yes Ma'am." JARVIS responds, and once he does Melinda gets dressed and heads downstairs, knowing that she may not be able to do much from across the world to find Tony, but she is going to do everything she possibly can.
Chapter 30

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support. PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW.

About an hour after Melinda talked to Rhodey, Bobbi, and Fury, she is in her study which she now has papers covering large puts of the wall as she uses S.H.I.E.L.D info, and JARVIS to try and figure out who has taken Tony, and where he is.

"Mrs Stark-May Agents Coulson, Romanoff, Barton, and Hill along with Ms Potts are on the elevator on their way up." JARVIS explains.

"Thanks JARVIS, tell them where I am when they get up here." Melinda says, as she takes what she just printed out of starts to stick them on an empty space on one of the walls, forming a map of Afghanistan.

"Yes Ma'am." JARVIS responds, as Melinda continues to stick things onto the wall, and about a minute later Phil, Natasha, Clint, Maria, and Pepper walk in.

"Okay, I was going to ask how you are, but this pretty much answers that." Clint comments, looking around.

"It would be a stupid question anyway." Melinda says, as she marks on her map where Tony was taken.

"Fury said to tell you that he is giving you access to anything related to Tony." Maria reveals, as Fury realised Melinda is using JARVIS to remotely access her S.H.I.E.L.D account so he figured If he didn't give her access then she'd find a way to get it anyway.

"Good." Melinda says, looking relieved, "JARVIS, add any info Fury sends to what you are creating." Melinda requests.

"Yes Ma'am." JARVIS answers.

"May, take a moment, breath." Phil says, walking over to Melinda, "Do the kids know yet?" he asks, trying to be helpful.

"Bobbi does, she's on her way home." Melinda explains, "I didn't want to wake up Daisy and Peter and tell them." She admits, as she thought they both deserved one more night of peace before their feet are knocked out from under them.

"That's fair." Maria comments, as Clint and Natasha carefully read what Melinda has stuck to the wall.

"What can I do?" Phil asks, wanting to help.

"Just help me find him." Melinda requests, as she cannot lose Tony.

"Okay." Phil says, with a nod, "Why don't you explain what you're tracking." He suggests, as he's
worked with Melinda long enough, knows her well enough, to know that she will have her own 

system of everything, and it will be easier for Melinda to explain it to him than for him to try and 

figure it out on his own.

"Looks like every armed group in Afghanistan." Natasha comments.

"Just the ones S.H.I.E.L.D and/or JARVIS know about." Melinda explains, and once she does she 

starts to explain exactly what she is doing, exactly what her system is.

A few hours have passed since Phil, Clint, Natasha, Maria, and Pepper arrived at the Stark-May 
apartment and since then they have basically been watching as Melinda learns everything possibly 
can about various groups in Afghanistan.

"Mom." Bobbi says, as she hurries into the study, with Sharon, and Antoine right her.

"Bobbi." Melinda says, hurrying over to her daughter, and hugging her, something which surprises 
everyone in the room as it's something Melinda hasn't done since Bahrain.

"He's Alive Mom, Dad's alive." Bobbi assures her mother, as they break apart.

"You said that on the phone, how do you know?" Melinda asks her daughter, wondering how 

Bobbi can be so sure.

"Two years ago, when you were In Bahrain, I got a feeling that told me, as clear as day, that you 

went okay, that something was really wrong." Bobbi explains, knowing that everyone in the room 

knows about her powers so she doesn't have to hold anything back, "I called Dad and you had 

already called him, so we knew I wasn't just imagining what I was feeling." Bobbi explains, "Dad 

and I suspect, though we're not exactly sure how, that my powers have somehow grown so I can 
sense people I have connections with; you, Dad, I'd assume Daisy and Pete." Bobbi explains, "I 

knew you weren't okay, and now I know Dad's still alive."

"Are you sure?" Pepper asks, hoping the answer is yes.

"Positive." Bobbi answers, and in response Melinda just hugs her daughter.

"I'm sorry that you didn't think you could tell about being able to do this." Melinda admits, as she 
tells her daughter, and the two of them break apart, "Can you sense anything else?" Melinda asks 
her daughter.

"Um, give me a second." Bobbi says, closing her eyes and focusing on the feeling that is telling her 

that Tony is alive, "He's hurt." Bobbi answers, pain in her voice, as while she cannot feel the pain 
her father is in she hates that he is in pain, "Badly.... Scared, but alive." Bobbi answers, opening 
her eyes and looking at her mother, who is controlling her reaction very carefully.

"Do you know where he is?" Natasha asks, as that would be pretty useful right now.

"No, it doesn't work like that." Bobbi admits, "I don't understand a lot about how I can do this, and 

there is a lot I don't know, but I know I can't do that." Bobbi explains, "Sorry Mom." She says, 
feeling bad that she can't tell her mother more.

"You can tell me that he's alive, that's more than enough." Melinda says, feeling beyond relieved to 
know that he is alive, even though she hates that he is hurt.
Far away from his family, in a cave in Afghanistan, Tony is waking up, and as wakes he pulls a tube out of his nose, and reaches over to grab some water, but he quickly finds he is connected to a car battery, thanks to something that has been implanted in his chest.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." A man says and Tony turns to see a man, a man he met in Switzerland a decade ago but doesn't remember, Ho Yinsen, shaving, and so he stops trying to disconnect the wires.

"What the hell did you do to me?" Tony asks, sounding shocked.

"What I did?" Yinsen asks, "What I did is to save your life." He explains, "I removed all the shrapnel I could, but there's a lot left, and it's headed into your atrial septum." He explains, as Tony sits up, "Here, what to see?" He asks, showing Tony a vial with shrapnel pieces inside, "I have a souvenir, take a look." He says, as Tony zips up the hoody he is wearing and Yinsen hands over the vial, "I've seen many wounds like that in my village, we call them the walking dead, because it takes about a week for the barbs to reach the vital organs." He explains.

"What is this?" Tony asks, looking around.

"That is an electromagnet, hooked up to a car battery." Yinsen explains, "And it's keeping the shrapnel from entering your heart." He reveals, and as he does Tony notices a camera in the corner.

"That's right, smile." Yinsen says, "We met once, you know, at a technical conference in Bern." he explains.

"I don't remember." Tony admits.

"No, you wouldn't." Yinsen admits, "If I had been that drunk, I wouldn't have been able to stand, much less give a lecture on integrated circuits." He admits.

"Where are we?" Tony asks, knowing that Melinda would be looking for him, but before Yinsen can answer people, with weapons, bust into the room.

"Come on, stand up, stand up." Yinsen says, pulling Tony up to his feet, "Just do as I do." He says, as he puts his hands up, "Come on, put your hands up." Yinsen says.

"Those are my guns. How did they get my guns?" Tony asks, sounding shocked.

"Do you understand me? Do as I do." Yinsen says, and a she does the leader of the men starts to speak in a language that Tony doesn't understand, "He says, 'Welcome, Tony Stark, the most famous mass murdered in the history of America, he is honoured.'" Yinsen explains, and the men show Tony and Yinsen papers, "He wants you to build the missile. The Jericho missile that you demonstrated, this one." Yinsen explains.

"I refuse." Tony says, and the second he refuses the men start to torture Tony, waterboarding him as well as other methods, and the entire time he is being tortured he thinks of Melinda, and his kids, he holds onto them.

Meanwhile, in New York, Melinda, Phil, Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Natasha, Clint, Maria, and Pepper are still in Melinda's study, all of them using connections they can think of to try and get more info on the groups who might have taken Tony.

"Mrs Stark-May, Miss Daisy and Mr Peter are both on their way to the kitchen." JARVIS reveals.
"Thank you, JARVIS." Melinda says, realising that it is time to do what she has been dreading, and that's tell Daisy and Peter that their father is missing.

"Do you want me to tell them with you?" Bobbi asks her mother, wanting to do something to help.

"No, I'll talk to them." Melinda says, "JARVIS, tell Bobbi once I've told Daisy and Peter what's happened to Tony." Melinda requests, knowing that Daisy and Peter will need their sister, before exiting the study, and just as she exits the study Daisy, and Peter, walk down the stairs.

"Mom?" Daisy asks, sounding confused.

"Let's go to the living room, we need to talk." Melinda explains to her two youngest children.

"I know that tone." Daisy says, stopping dead as she looks at her mother, "It's the same tone Dad would use when something happened on one of your missions." Daisy says, knowing that well, "Is Dad okay?" Daisy asks, fighting back tears.

"Let's go sit down." Melinda tells her kids.

"Mom? Is Daisy, right? Has something happened to Dad?" Peter asks, sounding worried, making no effort to move.

"Yes." Melinda confirms, realising that she isn't going to get Daisy and Peter to move to the living room, "Your Dad was on his way from his weapons demonstration when the convoy was attacked." She explains, "Dad was taken." Melinda explains.

"Is he okay?" Daisy asks, needing to know.

"He's alive, we know that, but we don't know where he is." Melinda explains.

"No!" Peter says, looking horrified, and Melinda leans forward and hugs her son.

"I got you, Peter." Melinda says to her son, as she kisses the top of his head, and Bobbi walks out from the study.

"People are looking for Dad right? He'll be found?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and older sister.

"Uncle Rhodey and several teams are looking." Bobbi assures her sister, as she puts an arm around her, "And Uncle Phil, Uncle Clint, Aunt Nat, Maria, Pepper, Sharon and Antoine are all here and we're working to find anything that can help." she explains.

"This isn't fair." Daisy says, before running upstairs.

"DAISY!" Melinda calls after her daughter, as she and Peter break apart, "Stay with your sister, Okay." Melinda tells Peter, who nods, and as Melinda heads upstairs, Bobbi walks over to his little brother and puts his arm around him.

"Bobbi, Dad's going to be okay, right?" Peter asks, looking worried.

"I hope so." Bobbi admits, as she just pulls her brother in closer.

About a minute after Melinda left Peter and Bobbi Melinda walks into Daisy's bedroom where she finds her daughter hugging a pillow and crying.
"Daze." Melinda says, as she sits down on her daughter's bed.

"Dad has to be okay, Mom, he has to be." Daisy says to her mother, turning around to look at her, "This shouldn't have happened, Dad should be safe, he's a CEO, an inventor, a mechanic, not an Agent."

"I know." Melinda tells her daughter, "This shouldn't have happened." Melinda admits, as she has been thinking the same thing.

"How do you know Dad's alive?" Daisy asks, "Has there been a ransom or something?" Daisy asks, assuming that considering how rich her father is money could be a motivation.

"No." Melinda admits, knowing that that is an angle that she should look into, "Bobbi, she can tell that your Dad is alive, she can tell that, and she also knows he is hurt and afraid, but he is alive." She explains.

"I'm not even going to try to understand how Bobbi knows that." Daisy admits, "But if she can tell Dad is alive then that's great." She says, feeling a little bit better about that, "But we have to find Dad."

"We do." Melinda confirms, as she leans forward and hugs Daisy, tightly, knowing that her and her children need Tony to be found and brought home to them.

After hours of torture, where the only thing that kept him going is thoughts of his wife and children, Tony is taken out of the cave, and outside where he sees supplies of weapons.

"He wants to know what you think." Yinsen informs Tony.

"I think you got a lot of my weapons." Tony admits, as the man once more speaks in another language.

"He says they have everything you need to build the Jericho missile." Yinsen explains, "He wants you to make a lift of the materials." He explains, "He wants you to start working immediately, and when you're done, he will set you free." Yinsen says.

"No, he won't." Tony knows.

"No, he won't." Yinsen confirms.

A few minutes later Tony is back in the cave with Yenin, the both of them sitting around, the small table that is in the cave.

"I'm sure they're looking for you, Stark, but they will never find you in these mountains." Yinsen explains.

"You don't know who's looking for me." Tony comments, thinking of Melinda and even Rhodey, Coulson, Barton and Romanoff, knowing that if anyone could find him in an impossible situation it would be them.

"Whoever they are they won't find you here." Yinsen informs Tony, "Look, what you just saw, that is your legacy, Stark." He says, "Your life's work in the hands of those murders, is that how you want to go out?" he asks, "Is this the last act of defiance of the great Tony Stark? Or are you going to do something about it?"
"Why should I do anything? They're going to kill me, you, either way." Tony points out, "And if they don't I'll probably be dead in a week." He admits.

"Well then, this is a very important week for you, isn't it?" Yinsen asks, and as he does Tony realises that he has to do whatever he can to get back to Melinda and their kids, which means he has to make it seem like he is doing what the men want, while doing something very different.

**May 12th 2010**

Three days have passed since Tony went missing, and ever since Rhodey, in Afghanistan, has been doing everything he can to try to find Tony while Melinda is doing what she can from New York, while Daisy and Peter have been staying home from School and Bobbi, as well as Sharon and Trip, are staying in New York, at least for a little while.

It's late at night and Melinda is in her office, where she has been for most of the last three days, working on trying to find Tony. As Melinda continues to try to narrow down possibilities of where Tony could be when her phone rings, and when she sees the caller ID she quickly answers.

"Rhodey?" Melinda asks, as she answers.

"Hey May." Rhodey says, "We've still got nothing, we're going out again soon." He explains.

"Okay." Melinda says, looking over at her maps, "Where are you going today?"

"Um, starting with D3." Rhodey says, as he and Melinda both have maps with corresponding grids so that they can both know where the teams are looking.

"Rough terrain." Melinda realises.

"Yeah, you've been over here May, know what it's like." Rhodey comments.

"I know." Melinda comments.

"I know." Rhodey assures her, "is B…. the contact still saying the same thing?" He asks, stopping himself before he says Bobbi as while he and Melinda talked on a secure channel about Bobbi and some other things, they currently aren't on one, and he isn't alone, so he doesn't want to mention Bobbi, or her powers, in case the wrong person hears.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "He's alive, but hurt." Melinda explains, sounding worried.

"That's something." Rhodey admits, though he would much rather Tony just be okay, "We're about to move out May, I'll call in a few hours, let you know what we find."

"Thanks, Rhodey." Melinda says, before hanging up, "Okay, JARVIS. Open the files on all groups we know who have worked in grid D3."

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers, "But may I point out that you haven't slept in ninety-six hours."

"I'm fine." Melinda says, knowing that she has gone longer without sleeping, usually on stake outs.

"Mrs Stark-May I disagree with that statement. With this much sleep deprivation there you are likely to start to experience delusional episodes." JARVIS informs Melinda.

"I can't sleep when Tony is missing." Melinda tells JARVIS.
"You also can't help Mr Stark-May if you're experiencing delusions." JARVIS informs Melinda, who gives an amused laugh at that, thanks to being so tired.

"How much of your attitude was programmed by Tony, and how much have you learnt over the years?" Melinda asks curios.

"I am unsure." JARVIS answers, and Melinda just shakes her head.

"I miss him, JARVIS, I need to do something." Melinda admits, feeling like talking to JARVIS makes her a bit closer to Tony.

"And I repeat that you cannot help Mr Stark-May in your current state." JARVIS informs Melinda, "I will continue to run the Algorithms, and wake you up when Lieutenant Colonel Rhodes call back." JARVIS explains, "But I recommend that you attempt to sleep."

"You are so much like your namesake." Melinda informs JARVIS.

"I understand that would be a compliment." JARVIS assumes.

"The biggest one." Melinda answers, with a sigh, "Okay, you win, I'll get some sleep." Melinda finally says.

"Good, I believe that is the right decision." JARVIS says, and Melinda gets up and heads out of her study.

Once Melinda is upstairs she goes to Bobbi's room, to check her, then Daisy, then Peter, then across to Sharon and Trip's bed rooms to make sure they are both okay as well, and once Melinda is sure that all three of her kids, her niece, and nephew are all okay, Melinda heads to bed herself, and the second she lays down she is fast asleep.

May 15th 2010

A few days have passed since JARVIS managed to get Melinda to get some sleep, and since then Melinda has been sleeping a couple of hours a day, usually at JARVIS's insistence. It's a Saturday evening and Melinda, Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip are in Melinda's office.

"Okay, let me know, Rhodey." Melinda says, before hanging up the phone.

"Anything?" Bobbi asks, hoping the answer is yes, and hating the fact that she knows her Dad is alive, but she doesn't know anything more, and is nothing she can do.

"No, there's a possible lead that Rhody is looking into tomorrow, but he doesn't have high hopes." Melinda says, as she marks something on the map she has stuck to the wall, "It's been a week and we've got nothing." She says, hating that fact.

"Aunt Melinda, you know these searches can take a while." Antoine points out, "But the fact that Bobbi knows Uncle Tony is alive and that's a good thing."

"I know." Melinda says, looking at her nephew, "I just need to keep working, keep doing what I can." She says, causing Bobbi, Trip and Sharon to exchange looks.

"I get that Aunt Melinda, and I want to find Uncle Tony too, so badly, but Aunt Peggy called this morning, she's worried about you." Sharon admits, "Especially considering you, Daisy and Peter didn't come to see her this week." Sharon points out, feeling worried that her Aunt is going to disappear into trying to find Tony and as a result for Daisy, Peter, and even Bobbi, it will feel like
they lost two parents.

"I know. She called me too." Melinda admits, "I'm going to go see her next week." Melinda reveals, having already decided that, "And on Monday I'm going to send Daisy and Peter to school." She reveals.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, sounding a little surprised.

"It's better for them to be at school, where they can be around other people, and distracted with other things, then spending all their time here with nothing else to think about." Melinda reveals, as she has thought about it in the last few days.

"That will be good for them." Trip says, feeling like even if Melinda, Daisy, and Peter fight about it it will be good for them.

"Are you going back to S.H.I.E.L.D Monday?" Sharon asks curious.

"No, not yet." Melinda admits, "I have to keep looking, keep helping Rhodey from here." Melinda admits, "But maybe you three should think about going back." Melinda says, looking between her daughter, niece and nephew.

"No, not yet." Bobbi answers, clearly speaking for her, Sharon, and Trip, as she knows she can't go back to work, not yet, not when it's only been a week.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, having known that going back to S.H.I.E.L.D has to be Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip's choice, and the three of them drift into silence.

May 19th 2010

A few days have passed since Melinda informed Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi that she was sending Daisy and Peter back to school, something which they have both done, after some resistance. It is a Wednesday night and Bobbi is in her room using connections of hers to try and figure out who could be holding her father, when she hears a knock on her door.

"Come in." Bobbi says, looking up, and after she speaks the door opens and Daisy and Peter walk in. "Hey you two." Bobbi says, as her siblings walk over to her, "Do you want to talk?" she asks curious, as her siblings climb into the bed next to her.

"You can tell Dad's okay, right?" Peter asks, looking at his sister.

"I know he's alive." Bobbi corrects, looking between his siblings, "I know this sucks guys, I miss him too."

"I just want Dad to come home." Daisy says, looking upset, "He promised me he'd see me in the few days," Daisy explains, "Dad's never broken a promise before." She says, sadly.

"I know." Bobbi confirms, "And if he had a say in the matter he wouldn't have broken this one." Bobbi assures her sibling, "Pete? You're being quiet." She asks concerned.

"I don't remember what it felt like to lose my biological parents." Peter admits, "But I know I don't want to lose Dad." He says, sadly.

"Oh Pete." Bobbi says, hugging both her siblings, and for a while Bobbi just holds her siblings, until they break apart, "JARVIS, Mom in her room?" Bobbi asks.
"Yes Miss Bobbi." JARVIS answers.

"Okay, come on, I have an idea." Bobbi says, looking between her siblings, and the three of them get up and head out of Bobbi’s room.

About a minute later Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter walk into Melinda and Tony's bedroom.

"Mom?" Bobbi asks, and Melinda sits up and turns on the lamp.

"Bobbi, what's going on?" Melinda asks concerned.

"I think we all need to be together tonight." Bobbi explains, giving her mother a look.

"I think that's a good idea." Melinda says, and once she does Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter walk over and climb into the bed as well, with Daisy and Peter in the middle and Bobbi and Melinda are on either side, and before long four of the five members of the Stark-May family are asleep in Melinda and Tony's bed.

**May 29th 2010**

It has officially been three weeks since Tony went missing, and with every day that passes it is clear that Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are struggling even more. While Daisy and Peter are back in school, and Melinda has made sure to continue their visits with Peggy, neither Bobbi nor Melinda have gone back to work, though Sharon and Trip have.

It is a Saturday evening and Melinda is in her study, where she spends most of her time, trying to find something that will lead to where Tony is being held, as Bobbi is positive that he alive, and Melinda trusts her daughter.

"So many places." Melinda mutters to herself, as she looks at the places where Rhodey has looked, and all the places where Melinda could be.

"Mrs Stark-May Miss Bobbi, Miss Daisy, and Mr Peter are in the kitchen, they would like to see you." JARVIS explains.

"Thanks JARVIS." Melinda says, making where she is up to before she heads out of her office, and heads to the kitchen.

Less than a minute Melinda walks into the kitchen where she finds Daisy, Bobbi, and Peter standing around the table, which has a cake with candles on it on the table.

"What's this?" Melinda asks.

"A birthday cake." Daisy answers, like it should be obvious.

"Daisy." Bobbi says, in a warning tone of voice, "Pete had an idea, want to tell Mom?" she asks, looking at her brother.

"Dad's not here, but it's still his birthday, we should celebrate for him." Peter reveals, as it is Tony's fortieth birthday, "And save him some cake for when he gets home."

"I think that's a great idea." Melinda says, and she walks over to her kids. Once Melinda is standing by the table the four of them proceed to have a very solemn fortieth birthday celebration for Tony.

**May 30th 2010**
Far away from his family, having had no idea that it was his fortieth birthday the day before, Tony is working on the invention that isn't only his key to getting out of captivity, but his key to surviving.

"That doesn't look like a Jericho missile." Yinsen notes, noticing what Tony is doing.

"That's because it's a miniaturized arch reactor." Tony reveals, feeling like there are details he can share with Yinsen, if not everything, "I've got a big one powering my factory at home." Tony reveals.

"But what could it generate?" Yinsen asks, feeling amazed.

"If my math is right, and it always is, three gigajoules per second." Tony explains.

"That could run your heart for fifty lifetimes." Yinsen realises, looking amazed.

"Yeah, or something big for fifteen minutes." Tony says, placing paper designs on the table, "This is our ticket out of here." Tony reveals, being sure to use his body to block the camera.

"What is it?" Yinsen asks, feeling confused.

"Flatten them out, and look." Tony says, and once he does Yinsen does as Tony says, and sees what Tony has designed.

"Oh, wow, impressive." Yinsen says, and Tony just stares at the design knowing that this is his one chance to get home to Melinda, and his kids, and so he is going to do whatever he has to do to achieve it as he will get home to them.
June 3 rd  2010

A few days have passed since Tony's birthday and the piece of cake for him, just like Peter suggested is sitting in the fridge, waiting for Tony to eat it, and everyone who lives in the house, and everyone who visits, knows not to touch it.

As usual, or what has been usual since Tony went missing, Melinda is in her study, working to find something, anything, that could help find Tony.

"Mrs Stark-May, I would once again like to point out that it has been thirty-six hours since you have slept." JARVIS reveals.

"JARVIS, I appreciate the worry, but I'm fine." Melinda says, honestly, in the past few weeks she has enjoyed talking to JARVIS more as it helps her feel close to Tony.

"I disagree." JARVIS answers, "Mrs Stark-May, Mr Peter has gone into Mr Stark-May's lab." He reveals, as Melinda has asked to be informed if someone goes into the lab, as that is Tony's place and she is pretty sure that he is the only one who knows what is dangerous and what isn't.

"Thanks JARVIS." Melinda says, before getting up and heading out of the lab.

About a minute later Melinda walks into the lab where she finds Peter just standing in the lab.

"Peter?" Melinda asks, walking towards him, "What are you doing in here?"

"This is Dad's lab." Peter says, "Everything has it's place, his system, I want to feel close to him." Peter admits, looking sad, "I miss Dad, Mom."

"I know, I miss him too." Melinda admits, walking over to her son.

"After Easter I came up with a project I wanted to do with Dad, but I don't want to do it alone." Peter admits, looking upset, "I just want Dad to come home!" He says sadly.

"I want that too." Melinda admits, putting her arm around her son, "Let's go upstairs Pete."

"Okay." Peter says, with a nod, and the two of them head upstairs, Melinda closing the door and turning off the light to the lab as they go.

A few minutes later Peter is lying in his bed and Melinda tucks him in,

"I know it's not easy, and I miss Dad so much, but try to get some sleep." Melinda tells her son, as she stands up.

"Mom." Peter says, before Melinda can even take a step away, "Can you stay for a while?"
"Sure." Melinda says, walking over to Peter and her son moves a little so that Melinda can sit down next to him, and puts an arm around him, "I love you Pete, get some rest." Melinda says, placing a kiss on the top of his head.

"Love you too, mom." Peter responds, and the two of them drift into silence, and before long Peter is fast asleep and Melinda just sits next to her son, with her arm around him.

**June 8th 2010**

A few days have passed since Melinda sat with her son while he slept and ever since Melinda has been, between obsessively trying to help find a way to find Tony, checking in on all three of her kids more as she knows they are struggling.

It is late on a Tuesday evening and Daisy, Bobbi, and Peter are all in bed while Melinda is sitting in her study trying to find anything that will help find Tony, when Phil walks into her office.

"Hey." Phil says, as he walks over and sits down across from Melinda.

"What are you doing here?" Melinda asks, sounding a little surprised to see him.

"I wanted to check in on you." Phil reveals, as it has been exactly a month since Tony went missing and so he wanted to check in on how Melinda is doing, "If you want to talk, I'm here." He says, knowing it's not likely, but he wants to help his friend, even if she keeps pushing him away.

"Every single one of my instincts are telling me to pack a bag, fly to Afghanistan, and go find him myself." Melinda reveals.

"Why don't you?" Phil asks, honestly feeling surprised that Melinda hasn't gone yet.

"My kids." Melinda admits, "They need me, Daisy and Peter especially." Melinda says, as she knows Bobbi needs her to, but Daisy and Peter need her a little more, "And as much as I want to go I know Tony would rather I stay here with them than try to find him." Melinda explains.

"But that doesn't make staying behind any easier." Phil realises.

"No, it doesn't." Melinda says, looking over at a picture of hers and Tony's wedding day of the two of them together, "Going would be easy, but that doesn't mean it's the right thing to do." Melinda admits, as she and Phil drift into silence Phil being able to tell that his best friend is in a lot of pain, even though she is trying to hide how much.

**June 18th 2010**

About ten days have passed since Melinda admitted to Phil that she wants to go to find Tony and since then every time she thinks about how much she wants to go find Tony she thinks about her kids, about how much they need her to stay.

It's a Friday night, the last day off school for the year, and as the only got home about an hour ago from visiting Peggy, who was having such a good day that you wouldn't be able to tell that she is sick, and Melinda and Bobbi are in Melinda's study, trying to see if they can find anything, while Daisy and Peter are in their respective bedrooms.

As she has been doing since she got home from DC Daisy is in her room, on her computer, as hacking has become even more of a distraction of late. While she works Daisy hears a knock on her door.
"Come in." Daisy says, and Peter walks in, "Hey Pete." Daisy greets as he brother walks over and climbs onto the bed next to her, where he sits next to her, "What's up?" Daisy asks, knowing better than asking 'you okay' these days.

"I thought this summer was going to be great." Peter admits, "Mom's been doing better, the rest of our family had been around more, I thought we just going to have fun together, now I just wish I could keep going to school." Peter explains, as school has been a great distraction, and because he doesn't want to work on his project without his Dad it means he has a long summer of just thinking about how much he wants his dad to come home.

"Same." Daisy admits.

"You hate school." Peter tells his sister, looking at her in surprise.

"Yeah, but it's better than thinking about the fact that Dad missed my junior high graduation." Daisy explains, looking hurt, as that was earlier in the day, and it is the first, ever important thing of hers that her Dad has missed as while her mother has missed things her Dad never has… until now.

"That sucks." Peter says, sounding sad, "Dad's going to be home when we start school again, right? He can't be gone for that long, it's already been so long."

"I hope so." Daisy admits, not being able to imagine starting high school without her father around, and the two siblings drift into silence as they sit side by side, both thinking about how much they miss their Dad.

June 23rd 2010

A few days have passed since Daisy and Peter finished school, and even with Bobbi, Melinda, Pepper and other members of their extended family doing what they can to try to distract them it is clear that both of them miss their father a hell of a lot.

It's late at night and as JARVIS has been bugging her about sleeping for the last hour Melinda is finally heading to bed, but first she checks on each of her kids to make sure that all three of them are alright.

After checking to make sure all three of her kids are okay Melinda heads to hers and Tony's bedroom. As Melinda walks into their room the first thing she sees is the picture that is above their bed, a picture that was taken exactly nine years earlier, on hers and Tony's wedding day, of their and their entire family.

"You should be here." Melinda says, sounding both angry and heartbroken, as she collapses onto her knees and starts to cry, allowing herself to truly lose control for the first time since Tony went missing.

For a couple of minutes Melinda is on her knees crying, letting out everything she has been trying so hard to hold in, until she hears her door open,

"Mom." Bobbi says, walking in, and Melinda quickly tries to pull herself together, so that Bobbi doesn't see her fall apart, "It's okay Mom, JARVIS told me, you don't have to try and hold it together." Bobbi assures her mother, honestly, she has been waiting for her mother to fall apart, as she squats down next to her, "It's okay to let it out, I've got you." Bobbi assures her mother, as she puts her arms around her, something which Melinda doesn't flinch away from.

"I miss him, Bobbi, I miss him so much." Melinda says, as her oldest daughter holds her while she
cries, honestly Melinda is so tried, and misses Tony so much, that she is actually allowing herself to fall apart, even though it is usually what she would protect her daughter from.

"I know, Mom, I know." Bobbi tells her mother as she feels the exact same way, and she just holds her mother as she completely falls apart, in a way Bobbi has never seen before, so which makes her feel beyond helpless, as she wishes she could help her mother.

Far away from where his wife is being held by their oldest daughter, and falling apart, Tony is in a cave in Afghanistan, doing what she has been doing for a while, working on a way for him and Yinsen to get out, so that he can get back to his family.

As he has managed to figure out what date it is Tony is just sitting in a corner, working on a small part of his escape method, thinking about Melinda, and how this is their first anniversary that they have ever spent apart and it's their ninth.

"Stark? Are you alright?" Yinsen asks, as he has noticed that Tony has been quieter than normal.

"Sure, I'm fine, just trapped in a cave, hoping to survive." Tony says bitterly, as he thinks about Melinda and how much he wishes he could see her.

**July 2nd 2010**

A little over a week has passed since Melinda and Tony's anniversary and even though Bobbi hasn't seen her mother fall apart again she knows that she is close to doing so. It is early morning on a Friday and Daisy is fast asleep, or she her door is open, the light goes on, and her mother, Bobbi, and Peter walk into the room her mother carrying a birthday cake.

"Mom? Bobbi? Peter?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and siblings.

"Happy Birthday, Daisy." Melinda tells her daughter, as she, Bobbi, and Peter all sit down on Daisy's bed, the three of them having decided not to sing.

"Right, I'm fourteen today." Daisy comments, not sounding all that happy as what she wants most is her for her father to come home, so she isn't really in much of a mood to celebrate her birthday.

"Yeah, you are." Bobbi tells her sister.

"Which means it's your choice about what we do today." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Can we just go see Aunt Peggy earlier today, that's all I want to do." Daisy reveals.

"Are you sure?" Melinda says, not really surprised that Daisy doesn't want to do much.

"Yeah, I'm sure." Daisy assures her mother.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod.

"Can you blow out the candles now, we're getting wax on the cake." Peter tells his sister.

"Sure Pete." Daisy says, before blowing out the candles.

A while later Melinda has flown herself, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter to DC, and the four of them have spent a while with Peggy who seems to be having a good day. As it is a nice day all five of them are sitting outside, on outdoor chairs, enjoying the sunshine.
"Wow, you really did that?" Peter asks, looking amazed, as Peggy is telling stories of things she used to do.

"Of course." Peggy answers, noticing that Melinda is just sitting back and watching while she, Peter, Daisy, and Bobbi talk, "You know, the vending machine inside and down the hall to the left just got new snacks." Peggy says, as she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a little big of cash, giving some to Daisy, some to Peter, and some to Bobbi, "Why don't you three go get a little something."

"Sure."

"Okay."

"Why not."

Peter, Daisy, and Bobbi say together, all three of them recognizing a polite dismissal when they hear one.

"We'll be right back." Bobbi says.

"Take you time." Peggy informs her, and Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi all get up and head inside. As the three of them head inside Peggy gets up and walks over to Melinda.

"Melinda." Peggy says, as she sits down next to Melinda, "Has there been any leads?"

"Nothing concrete." Melinda admits, "Bobbi can tell he's alive, but not where he is, if he's okay in other ways... I hate this, you have no idea what it's like to wonder..." Melinda says, but then she realises what she said, and who's she's talking too, "Aunt Peg, I'm sorry..."

"It's alright." Peggy assures her niece, "I know what you're feeling, I know that what you want most is for Tony to come back to you, and that you feel like the waiting is going to destroy you."

"I just want him back." Melinda admits, "I miss him, Aunt Peg, so much."

"I know." Peggy says, leaning forward and hugging her niece, "Melinda as much as you miss Tony that's how much he misses you, and we both know that he won't give up trying to come home to you." She admits.

"I know." Melinda says, as she and Peggy break apart, "Peter, Daisy, Bobbi, all miss him so much, and I'm trying to be strong for them, but...."

"You feel like you're falling apart and every day you struggle a little more to hold the pieces together." Peggy says, knowing the feeling well.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "I just feel so helpless...." Melinda admits, and as she knows how Melinda reacts to people taking, or trying to take, her hand Peggy reaches over and puts her hand on Melinda's leg, and the two of them drift into silence until Peter, Daisy, and Bobbi come back.

**July 7th 2010**

A few days have passed since Daisy's fourteenth birthday and ever since Melinda has been struggling more to hold it together, even though talking to Peggy helped, as she can tell how hard it is for Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi.

Far away from his family, where Tony would much rather be, as it has been two months since he's
seen his family, Tony and Yinsen are continuing to work on their way out, and as they the two of them have worked the two of them have become closer.

"You still haven't told me where you're from." Tony comments.

"I'm from a small town called Gulmira." Yinsen admits, "It's actually a nice place."

"Got a family?" Tony asks.

"Yes, and I will see them when I leave here." Yinsen reveals, "And you Stark?" he asks curious, "You got a family?" Yinsen asks and for a couple of seconds Tony debates what to do.

"Yeah, a wife and three kids." Tony reveals, having spoken lower even though he knows that the men watching don't have sound, "I'd be nothing without them." Tony admits.

"Yes, you would be." Yinsen confirms, and the two of them drift into silence as they continue to work, both wanting to see their families again, but each of them will achieve that in a different way.

July 13th 2010

A little over two months have passed since Tony went missing and for the first time Bobbi is going on a mission, a mission that she doesn't want to be doing but has to as the contact will only work with her.

So, on a Tuesday afternoon Bobbi is in a London pub, even though she would much rather be home with her mother and siblings, waiting for her sort of boyfriend, Lance Hunter to arrive.

"Hey there Beautiful." Hunter says, as he kisses her cheek and sits down across from her, "You're not drinking, I'll get us a couple of beers."

"I don't want a drink, I want to know what is going on." Bobbi says, as what she wants is to go home to her family.

"Okay." Hunter says, feeling confused, as Bobbi so isn't acting like herself, "A contact of mine has something, the kind of something that would interest you."

"Okay, lead me to where I can find this guy." Bobbi requests, as she stands up.

"It's a couple of hours away, and there a few things you need to know." Hunter explains, wondering why Bobbi is acting the way she is right now.

"Tell me on the drive." Bobbi requests, as she heads out of the pub, and still feeling confused Hunter follows behind her.

After a couple of hours of driving together Hunter has explained to Bobbi what to expect, while Bobbi has been mainly quiet, the two of them have arrived at a warehouse.

"So, this guy is former SAS. After his discharge he has struggled, made a few bad choices…" Hunter starts to explain, as they get out of the car.

"He's selling high tech illegal, stolen, weapons I'd say he's done more than bad a few bad choices." Bobbi admits.

"Okay, what's going on with you?" Hunter asks, needing to know, "You're not acting like yourself."
"You don't know me that well, Hunter." Bobbi tells him.

"Actually, I kind of thing I do." Hunter admits, "I know you love Star Wars and cactus cooler, that you twirl your batons when you're thinking something through, and that you're protective of people you work with, especially Sharon and Trip who are more than just friends to you, which is probably why they don't like me that much, and I know about your powers, so yes, I think I know you pretty well." Hunter reveals, "So, I know that something is up with you, so what is it?" He asks, and honestly Bobbi is a little surprised by how much Hunter has realised.

"My Dad's missing, so right now I rather be with my Mom, brother, and sister than on this mission." Bobbi reveals.

"I'm sorry, how long has he been missing for?" Hunter says having not been expecting that.

"Nine weeks, three days." Bobbi answers, without even needing to think about it.

"Nine weeks, huh, isn't that how long Tony Stark has been missing." Hunter realises, and as he does Bobbi avoids looking at him, so he realises something, "Bloody Hell, Tony Stark is your father." Hunter says, sounding shocked.

"Yeah." Bobbi confirms, "So let's just get this over with." Bobbi says, walking away from Hunter, towards where the connection of his is.

Two days later

Since Bobbi has told Hunter about her father the two of the have taken down a cell of former SAS members who had obtained and sold illegal, high tech, weapons, something which has made both S.H.I.E.L.D and the SAS very happy.

As Bobbi is about to fly back home she is at an Airfield, but as she got a message from Hunter she is waiting for him.

"Hey, sorry for holding you up." Hunter says, walking towards Bobbi.

"It's okay. Weather is also delaying me." Bobbi admits.

"I'm sorry your Dad's missing, and one day I would love to hear the whole story of your family, I mean do you have your mom's name or something…?" Hunter starts to ask.

"Morse is the name of my biological family, I use it publicly." Bobbi explains, "I'm not getting into the story right now, but the people I call Mom and Dad have been that to me since I was six, and Stark-May is the name I prefer." Bobbi explains, feeling like she owes Hunter that explanation after the bomb she dropped two days ago.

"Good to know." Hunter says, with a nod, "I don't know if this will help, but I reached out to some friends I have who are currently in Afghanistan. I don't know if these are the people who have your Dad, but it could be something." Hunter says, handing a file to Bobbi.

"Thank you." Bobbi says, leaning forward and kissing him.

"You're welcome Bob." Hunter says, once they break apart, "If there's anything I can do to help, let me know." He requests.

"Thanks Hunter." Bobbi says, before heading into the plane, hoping that Hunter's lead leads to her father.
July 23rd 2010

A little over a week has passed since Bobbi came back from her mission with Hunter and as soon as she did she gave the information to her mother, who gave it to Rhodey, and only time will tell whether it helps find Tony.

It is a Friday night and Melinda is in her study while Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are in their respective bedrooms.

"Okay, JARVIS, realistically, all the mountains in Afghanistan, how long will they take to search?" Melinda asks.

"I cannot answer that, it is impossible to determine." JARVIS answers.

"Great." Melinda mutters.

"Mrs Stark-May Miss Daisy is currently accessing high level US government systems." JARVIS reveals.

"Damn it Daisy." Melinda mutters, as she stops what she is doing and heads upstairs.

About a minute after Melinda left her study she gets to Daisy's room and so she knocks on the door.

"Come in, Mom." Daisy says, and Melinda walks in, "Let me guess, JARVIS told you what I was doing?" Daisy asks form where she is sitting on her bed.

"Yeah, he did." Melinda confirms, as she sits down near Daisy, "Daisy what are you doing? You know there are systems you shouldn't hack, and you know that US Government systems are some of those systems."

"Yeah, I know." Daisy confirms, "But I thought if I could get into systems I could find something to help find Dad." She reveals.

"Then if Bobbi is so sure Dad's alive why hasn't he been found? It's been over two months." Daisy says, looking hurt.

"Afghanistan is a big place, Daisy. There a lot of places where they people who have him could be holding him." Melinda explains, "Uncle Rhodey is checking as many places as possible, and I'm trying to help narrow down places, but there are still a lot of places to search." Melinda explains, explaining more to Daisy than she did to Peter because she is older.

"So, what you're saying is that it could be a while before Dad is found." Daisy realises.

"Yeah, it could be." Melinda says, hating that fact, "But as long as Bobbi knows he's alive there's hope." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod, feeling like her mother having hope says a lot, "How much trouble am I in for hacking?"

"None, just please don't try to hack the US Government again, okay?" Melinda asks, honestly not having it in her to punish Daisy for wanting to find something to help find her Dad.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod, and mother and daughter drift into silence as they sit together.
Less than a week has passed since Daisy hacked into US Government systems to try and find out more about her father and ever since she has done as her mother asked not hacked into them again.

It's very late on a Thursday night and Melinda and Natasha are in the gym at the Stark-May apartment, sparing together and even though these sparing sessions are usually done in silence Natasha realises that she cannot be silent any longer.

"You're holding back." Natasha comments as she helps Melinda back onto her feet.

"I can't lose control, not right now." Melinda tells her friend, as lately she has been trying so hard not to fall apart that she knows that if she loses control for a second, she will lose control completely.

"Yeah, you can." Natasha tells her friend, "Linda, you're trying so hard to keep control, and usually your whole epic control thing is great, but it's not now." She says, as she's always admired the way Melinda can stay control, "Let go, I can take it." she says, as she swings out to struck Melinda, but she blocks it.

"I can't, Nat, I can't." Melinda tells her, and as she does Natasha realises a way to get Melinda to finally lose control, something which she believes Melinda needs, but it won't be kind.

"Just because Bobbi knows Tony is alive, doesn't mean he's going to be okay. He's been captured for almost three months, you know what kind of effect that can have on a person." Natasha says, as she and Melinda spar, "He probably never going to be the Tony you love again."

"Shut up, I know what you're doing." Melinda says, trying to ignore the fact that she has been thinking similar things.

"I'm just telling you the truth, of course there's a pretty good chance that Tony won't be found, that you'll never see him again." Natasha says, and as she does Melinda starts to fight back harder, but she knows it is not enough and so Natasha decides to play her final card, one that's cruel, but likely necessary "Of course up until two years ago you would have gone on a trip like this with Tony, maybe even prevented this from happening." Natasha says, and as does she watch as Melinda loses all sense of control and lashes out.

Thanks to how long she has known Melinda, the fact that she knows her fighting style really well, and the fact that she is an incredible fighter Natasha is able to defend against her friend, so she doesn't get hurt, long enough for Melinda to lose all control and basically collapse into as she cries.

"I'm sorry, but you needed to let go." Natasha tells her friend, as she holds her, "Your control is a great thing, but you don't have to keep it now, not when it's just hurting you." She explains, as she holds Melinda and just lets her cry.

Just over a week has passed since Melinda lost control while sparing with Natasha, and while she hated Natasha for what she said, though only for a few moments, she cannot deny that allowing herself those few minutes of losing it, even if it was forced, helped.

It is a Friday night and Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are in the downstairs living room of their apartment, watching a movie, while Melinda is in her study, and feeling concerned about her siblings Bobbi pauses the movie.
"Talk to me Pete, Daze." Bobbi says, looking between her siblings.

"Are you sure Dad's alive, right?" Daisy asks her sister.

"Positive." Bobbi assures her siblings.

"But he's never coming home, is he?" Peter asks Bobbi.

"JARVIS get mom, tell her to come here." Bobbi requests, "Pete, no, Dad's alive so we've got to keep thinking that he'll come home, okay, we have to." Bobbi tells her brother, saying what she has forced herself to believe lately.

"Your sister is right." Melinda says, as she walks over to her children, having heard what Bobbi said, "I know it's hard, but we've got to believe that Dad's going to come home." Melinda says, looking between her children, as she sits down on the coffee table in front of them, "Bobbi knows he's alive, and if there is one thing I know, without a doubt, it's that your Dad would be doing everything in his power to make it home to us." Melinda explains, "And once your Dad sets his mind to something there's nothing that can stop him."

"It's been almost three months." Daisy says.

"I know, I miss him just as much as you three do." Melinda tells her children, "Look, I wish I had more reassuring things to say, but I honestly don't know what to say." Melinda admits, "All I know is your Dad's alive, he's out there somewhere and like I know he's not going to give up on coming home to us, I'm not going to give up on doing whatever I have to do to help him come home." Melinda reveals, meaning that completely and once she speaks Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi all lean forward and hug their mother.

**August 14th 2010**

Eight days have passed since Melinda reassured her children that Tony would be doing whatever he has to do to come home to them, and in Afghanistan, after Yinsen's life being threatened the day before he and Tony have been working even harder and are finally almost ready to make their escape.

As their escape plan is to get out using a suit Tony is inside it while Yinsen is bolting him in.

"Okay, can you move?" Yinsen asks.

"Okay, say it again." Tony requests.

"Forty-one steps straight ahead, then sixteen steps, that's form the door, fork right, thirty three steps, turn right." Yinsen explains.

"YINSEN! YINSEN! STARK!" A voice from the outside yells.

"Say something, say something back to him." Tony requests.

"He's speaking Hungarian. I don't..." Yinsen starts to say.

"Then speak Hungarian." Tony requests.

"Okay, I know..." Yinsen says and he says the single phrases in Hungarian that he knows, which Tony also yells back, as the men who are trying to get inside blow one of the safety measures that Tony set up.
"How'd that work?" Tony explains.

"Oh, my goodness. It worked all right." Yensin says.

"That's what I do." Tony says, "Let's finish this." He says, as Yinsen goes over to the homemade computer, "Initialize the power sequence." Tony requests.

"Okay." Yinsen says, and he does what Tony said, "Now. Tell me! Tell me!" Yinsen requests, wanting to know what happened next.

"Function eleven, tell me when you see a progress bar, it should be up right now." Tony says.

"Yes." Yinsen says, "Talk to me, tell me when you see it." he requests.

"I have it." Yinsen confirms.

"Press control I." Tony instructs.

"I, got it." Yinsen confirms.

"I enter."

"I and enter." Yinsen says.

"Come over here and button me up." Tony requests, and Yinsen comes over and starts to do up the bolts on the metal suit that Tony is wearing.

"Okay, all right." Yinsen says.

"Every other hex bolt." Tony instructs, as Yinsen does as Tony says.

"They're coming!" Yinsen realises.

"Nothing pretty, just get it done." Tony requests, "Just get it done, they're coming." Tony explains, "Make sure the checkpoints are clear before you follow me out, okay?" he asks.

"We need more time." Yinsen realises, "I'm going to go buy you some time."

"Stick to the plan!" Tony yells, "YINSEN, YINSEN!" Tony yells as Yinsen tries to fight some of the men, "WATCH OUT." He yells, as Tony is charged enough that he deals with the men who were trying to hurt him and gets to Yinsen, "Come on, we've got to go." Tony says, to Yinsen who is always leaning against the wall, bleeding, "Move for me, come on, we've got a plan, we're gonna stick to it." he explains.

"This was always the plan, Stark." Yinsen admits.

"Come on, you're gonna go see your family, get up." Tony says.

"My family is dead, I'm going to see them now, Stark." Yinsen reveals, "It's okay, I want this. I want this." Yinsen reveals.

"Thank you for saving me." Tony says, completely meaning that.

"Don't waste it, don't waste your life, hold your family close." Yinsen says, before dying.

As Yinsen dies Tony hears people running and so he puts on the face plate and starts to fight back,
making his way out of the caves and once he is out of the caves he destroys all of this weapons that
the men have obtained.

Far away from Afghanistan Melinda is asleep in her bed, having once again been convinced by
JARVIS to actually get some sleep, when she is woken by the phone ringing.

"May." Melinda answers.

"May, we've got a blip, it could be Tony." Rhodey explains, actually feeling pretty positive about
this lead.

"Really?" Melinda asks, sitting up and feeling wide awake despite her lack of sleep.

"Really, we're moving out now, I'll let you know what we find." Rhodey promises.

"Thanks Rhodes." Melinda says, before hanging up, feeling a glimmer of hope, and so she gets up
and heads down to her study where she proceeds to pace back and forth, waiting for news.

A little while later, in Afghanistan, Rhodey has found Tony, and is taking him back to the
helicopter. As they walk Rhodey is helping his friend to do so as he catalogues Tony's injuries.

"I need a phone, I need to talk to Mel." Tony says, as that's what he wants most right now, what he
needs most right now.

"Sit down, and I'll give you one." Rhodey says, as he helps Tony into a seat in the helicopter and
once Tony is sitting down Rhodey hands him his phone, which Tony quickly uses to call Melinda.

"Rhodey?" Melinda asks, picking up after a single ring.

"No, it's me Mel." Tony says, tears coming to his eyes, honestly never feeling so glad to hear a
voice.

"Tony." Melinda says, feeling beyond happy, "Tony, is it really you?" Melinda asks, there being an
apart of her that can't believe it.

"Yeah, it's me Baby." Tony says, "I love you Mel, I love you so much."

"I love you too."
August 16th 2010

It has been two days since Tony was found and after going to Germany to be checked out he is finally on his way home, but rather than going to New York, he and Melinda talked and decided that he would go to LA rather than New York as the LA house is more private, secluded, and open, which is what Tony needs at the moment, and also has less people around, and there will be harder for the press to harass them.

As Tony will be landing soon Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, and Pepper are all standing together, with Happy, waiting for Tony's plan to land.

"I don't get it, why are we here not home?" Peter asks confused.

"In New York there are a lot of people around, and things are a bit more cramped." Melinda explains, "The Malibu house is more open, which is what your Dad needs right now, and it will be harder for the Press to bother us." Melinda explains to her son, knowing he will understand the second part, even if he doesn't understand the first bit.

"I guess that makes sense." Peter realises.

"Is Dad going to be how you were after Bahrain?" Daisy asks curious, looking at her mother.

"I don't know." Melinda admits, there being a nervousness to her voice that only Bobbi notices.

"Mom." Bobbi says, and they turn to see the ramp of a plan lowering.

"DAD," Peter and Daisy say, both sounding amazed as they watch their dad walk with Rhodey, who he says something to, and before Melinda or Bobbi can stop her Daisy and Peter go running towards their father, and Bobbi is right behind them, having used the smallest amount of her speed to catch up to them, so that she can judge her Dad's reaction, and she, Peter, and Daisy get to Tony at the same time, and all three of them hug him.

"Oh, Little Bird, Tiny Toni, Kid, I've missed you guys so much." Tony says, as he hugs his kids, realising that both Daisy and Peter have grown, "I love you so much." He says, as he places a kiss on each of his children's heads.

"I love you so much Dad." Bobbi tells him.

"Me too." Daisy says.

"Me three." Peter says, and even though he would love to keep holding his kids Tony finally lets go of them, as Melinda gets to them.
"Mel." Tony says, smiling at her.

"Tony." Melinda says, "I love you."

"I love you too, so much." Tony says, before kissing Melinda, and once they break apart, to Tony's surprise, but also his joy, Melinda takes his hand, that is not in a sling, and squeezes, showing him support in a way that he knows is a big deal for her, as the two of them walk over to Pepper.

"Your eyes are red." Tony notes, looking at Pepper, "A few tears for your long-lost boss?" Tony asks curious.

"Tears of joy. I hate job hunting." Pepper reveals.

"Yeah, vacation's over." Tony says, as he, his family, and Pepper head over to a car that looks like a normal town car, but inside has six seats in the back, facing each other, three against the back of the front seats and three in the normal position.

As they get into the car Tony, Pepper and Melinda, with Tony in the middle, while he and Melinda continue to hold hands, sit in the normal back ones, while Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter, with Bobbi in the middle sit in the other ones.

"Where to, Sir?" Happy asks from the front.

"Take us to the hospital, please, Happy." Pepper requests.

"No." Tony says.

"No?" Pepper asks, looking surprised, as Melinda and Bobbi exchange looks, "Tony, you have to go to the hospital."

"No, he doesn't, not if he doesn't want to." Melinda says, knowing that Tony should get to choose things for himself, that that is very important after what he has been through.

"And I don't want to." Tony reveals, "But after three months of captivity there are two things I do want to do." He reveals.

"Good pizza?" Daisy asks curious, "The food must have sucked."

"American cheeseburger." Tony corrects, not addressing Daisy's point, "And Pepper I want you to call for a press conference."

"Really?" Melinda, Bobbi, and Pepper say together, all sounding surprised.

"Yeah." Tony confirms.

"Why?" Peter asks curious.

"You'll see." Tony tells his son, "Hogan drive, cheeseburger first." He requests, and Happy starts to drive, while Melinda, Bobbi, and Pepper exchange looks, all wondering why Tony would want to call for a press conference, especially now.

A little while later, having stopped at Burger King The Stark-May's, Pepper, and Happy arrive at the Stark Industries factory, and while Pepper and Tony get out the car and enter through the front Happy drives Melinda and the kids around the back where they get out.
Once inside Pepper stands back behind everyone and waits for the press conference to begin.

"Pepper." A voice says and she turns to see Phil.

"Phil? What are you doing here?" Pepper says, surprised as she wasn't expecting him, "Melinda didn't say you were coming." She admits, having lowered her voice.

"She doesn't know. Fury sent me." Phil explains, "He wants me to de-brief Tony after what happened." He explains.

"You know we've always been approached by the DOD, the FBI, the CIA…” Pepper starts to say.

"I know, but you know S.H.I.E.L.D.'s different, we need to debrief him and I know that the best way to get Tony to do something is to get you to put something in the Schedule." Phil says.

"Okay, I will." Pepper assures her friend.

"Thank you." Phil says, "It was good seeing you," he says before walking away.

While Phil is approaching Pepper in the room where the press conference is taking place Melinda and the kids are being shown into another room where there is a life feed of what is going on, and where Rhodey is waiting.

"Jim." Melinda says, walking over to her friend, and hugging him.

"Uncle Rhodey." Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter say, all three of them sounding happy to see him.

"Thank you, Rhodey, thank you for bringing him back to us." Melinda says, in a quiet voice as she hugs her friend.

"You don't have to thank me, May, there was no way I was going to do anything different." Rhodey assures his friend as they break apart, "I should get out there, but we should talk later." Rhodey says.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, and Rhodey leaves, having given Bobbi, Daisy and Peter each a quick hug before he left.

"So, any suspicions about what this press conference is about?" Bobbi asks her mother curious.

"No." Melinda answers, as it could be anything.

"Okay, this should be interesting." Bobbi says, as Tony gets the press to sit down on the floor.

"I never got to say goodbye to my father." Tony says, to everyone and Melinda tenses as she knows when Tony mentions his father things are truly bad, "There's questions that I would have asked him." Tony comments.

"Dad never talks about his Dad." Peter says, sounding surprised.

"No, he doesn't." Melinda confirms, wondering where Tony is going with this.

"I would have asked him how he felt about what this company did, if he was conflicted, if he ever had doubts." Tony says, and as he does Melinda and Bobbi exchange looks, both trying to figure where he is going with this, and Melinda has a few ideas, but isn't sure of anything, "Or maybe he was every inch the man we all remember from the newsreels." Tony comments.
"What does that mean?" Daisy asks confused, looking at her mother, as she knows her mother knew Howard.

"That is a complicated question, Daze." Melinda admits, as she avoids answering.

"I saw young American killed by the very weapons I created to defend and protect them." Tony explains, feeling overwhelming guilt as a lot of the weapons he's designed in recent years he did so to protect people like Melinda and Bobbi, and instead he just got people like them killed, "And I saw that I had become part of a system that is comfortable with zero accountability." He says.

"Mr Stark, what happened over there?" One of the reporters asks, as Tony stands up.

"I had my eyes opened, I came to realize that I have more to offer this world than just making things that blow up, and that is why, effective immediately, I am shutting down the weapons manufacturing division of Stark International." Tony reveals.

"Oh my god." Daisy says, sounding shocked, as the press starts to go crazy and Melinda and Bobbi exchange looks, both knowing that people are going to react badly to that.

"Until such a time as I can decide what the future of the company will be." Tony says, as Obadiah quickly starts to cover the microphone, "What direction it should take, one that I'm comfortable with, and is consistent with the highest good for this country, as well." Tony reveals, before being forced of stage, and he goes straight to the room where Melinda and his kids are.

"That was a surprise." Melinda says, as Tony walks over to her.

"A necessary one." Tony reveals.

"I can see that." Melinda admits, giving Tony a look which tells him that she completely supports him, "Let's get out of here."

"I need to go to the factory, talk to Obie. I'll meet you back at the house." Tony says, honestly not wanting leave Melinda and the kids longer than he has to, but he has to talk to Obadiah.

"Okay." Melinda says, before leaning forward and kissing Tony.

A little while later Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are arriving at the Malibu house and as four of them are walking to the door Bobbi realises that her phone is ringing.

"I've got to take this." Bobbi says, staying outside while her family walks inside, as she sees who is on the caller ID, "Hey." Bobbi greats, smiling slightly.

"Hey, I saw the news, you must be so happy." Hunter says.

"I am, I really am." Bobbi admits, "My Dad's finally home." She says, sounding happy and almost like she can't believe what has happened.

"I know, I'm so happy for you Bob, you and your family." Hunter says, glad she is so happy.

"Thanks Hunter." Bobbi responds.

"I should let you go, let you spend time with your family, I just wanted to call and check in." Hunter admits.

"I'm glad you did." Bobbi admits, "I'll call you, okay, a lot of things are up in the air at the
moment, but at some point I'd like to see you."

"I'd like that too." Hunter responds, "Bye Bob."

"Bye Hunter." Bobbi responds, before hanging up, and after she hangs up Bobbi spends a few minutes collecting herself before heading inside.

Hours later Tony has returned home, after talking to Obadiah, and has spent a couple of hours with his family, during which time thankfully none of them asked what happened to him.

It is night in Los Angeles, and even though it is still relatively early Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter have all gone to bed and as it has been something he has been thinking about doing for three months Tony is checking on them.

First, he goes to Bobbi's room, spends a few moments watching her sleep before tucking her in, and kissing her on the head as he says, "I love you.", before spending a few more moments watching her sleep. After Bobbi's room Tony goes to Daisy's room and does the same thing, and then finally goes to Peter's, where he once more does the same thing before leaving.

"J? Is Mel still in the living room?" Tony asks curious, as he closes the door to the room Peter is in.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Thanks J." Tony says, before heading downstairs.

As Tony walks into the living room he finds Melinda sitting on the couch with two glasses of scotch, and so he walks over and sits down next to her.

"They're bigger, Daisy and Peter, and did Bobbi cut her hair?" Tony asks.

"Yeah, she did." Melinda confirms, not mentioning that she did so in June, "We missed you Tony, so much." She admits.

"I missed you guys more than I can say." Tony admits, "But I thought of you all the time, coming home to you is what kept me going."

"You don't have to tell me what happened Tony, but if you do want to I'm here." Melinda says, reaching out and taking his hand, once again surprising Tony, but it is a good surprise, and truthfully Tony is grateful for the fact that Melinda isn't going to push him into talking.

"It was hell." Tony admits, "Three months of hell." He admits, looking pined.

"I'm sorry Tony." Melinda says, knowing her words won't mean much, "Rhodey was looking for you, and I was doing everything I could from here to try and find you, we never gave up, I'm sorry we couldn't find you." She admits.

"You don't have to apologise." Tony assures his wife, "How'd you know I was still alive?" Tony asks curious.

"Bobbi. She knew." Melinda explains.

"Like Bahrain." Tony realises and Melinda nods.

"I knew that as long as you were alive you would be doing whatever you had to come back to us, I focused on that." Melinda explains.
"So, did I." Tony confirms, as Melinda reaches up and touches the arch reactor.

"I read your medical reports from Germany." Melinda reveals, as JARVIS got her those.

"I thought you might have." Tony admits, "This is keeping me alive." Tony says as he reaches up and puts his hand over Melinda's, "At least until I upgrade it." Tony reveals.

"Is it safe?" Melinda asks curious.

"Should be." Tony answers, though he knows he's going to have to run some test to be sure of that, "Mel, I love you, coming home to you, and our kids, is what I've wanted most every day for the past three months."

"It's what we've wanted most too, I love you." Melinda says, before leaning forward and kissing Tony, "Welcome home." Melinda says, once they break apart.

"It's damn good to be home." Tony admits, before kissing Melinda once more, and as they kiss it is clear what is going to happen.

"Are you sure?" Melinda ask, wanting to make sure he is sure.

"Positive." Tony confirms, and the two of them continue to kiss as they head up to their bedroom, or at least the bedroom that is theirs when either of them, or both of them are in this house.

August 18th 2010

Two days have passed since Tony got home and for the most part he has been spending as much time as possible with his wife and kids.

It is early afternoon and Melinda, Pepper, and Bobbi are in the living room watching a TV report about Stark Industries.

"Stark Industries! I've got one recommendation! Ready? Ready.." The man on TV says, pressing a button "Sell, sell, sell." He says, "Abandon Ship! Does the Hindenburg ring any bells? Let me show you the new Stark Industries business plan!" The man says before hitting a mug with a baseball bat and breaking it, causing Melinda, Bobbi and Pepper to all wince, "Look, that's a weapons company that doesn't make weapons." The man says, "Howard, the Nazi Killer, Stark is rolling over in his grave."

"Mom, do you really think Dad's Dad would hate this?" Bobbi asks curious, looking at her mother.

"Hard to say." Melinda admits, knowing that Howard's reactions were hard to predict.

"Mel, I need you." Tony says, through the houses intercom system.

"I'll be right there." Melinda says, before heading downstairs.

Less than a minute later Melinda walks into the workshop where she finds Tony lying on a table, connected to a monitor, holding another arch reactor in his hand, with several of his robots around him.

"Guessing you've finished the replacement." Melinda realises, as she walks towards him.

"Yep, but I hit a speed bump." Tony admits.

"I really don't like the sound of that." Melinda admits.
"It's not a big deal." Tony assures his wife, who he is sure knows he is lying, "There's an exposed wire under the device, and it's contacting the socket wall and causing a little bit of a short." Tony says as he pulls out the old arch reactor.

"A painful short?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Not really." Tony answers, as he hands Melinda the old arch reactor, "Put it on the table."

"A little warning would be nice." Melinda says, as she puts the arch reactor down and turns back to Tony, "What do you need?"

"I want you to reach in, and you're just gonna gently life the wire out." Tony explains.

"I don't know if I can do that." Melinda admits, as while she has done worse things in the field it is very different when the person is the love of her life.

"You've disabled bombs." Tony points out.

"This is a little different." Melinda argues.

"Nah, it's not. Think of it as disarming a bomb." Tony says, trying to be helpful, and Melinda gives him an annoyed look, before she proceeds to do exactly what Tony needs her to do.

Over the next couple of minutes Melinda manages to swap out the arch reactor, without a trouble,

"Are you okay?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Yeah, you did great, Mel." Tony says, and once he does Melinda leans forward and kisses him.

"I love you." Melinda says.

"Love you too," Tony says, as Pepper and Bobbi walk in.

"Um, Mom, Daisy and Peter want to swim I said I'd make sure it's okay with you." Bobbi explains.

"Okay, thanks." Melinda says, "What do you want to do with this?" Melinda asks, referring to the old arch reactor.

"Destroy it, incinerate it." Tony requests.

"Okay." Melinda says, picking it up and walking over to Pepper and Bobbi, "Pepper can you destroy this while I go talk to Daisy and Peter." Melinda requests, handing her the arch reactor.

"Sure." Pepper says, though she has another idea, and Melinda heads out of the workshop while Bobbi heads over to her father.

"You okay Dad?" Bobbi asks concerned.

"Now that I'm home, yeah Little Bird, I am." Tony assures his daughter as he puts his arm around her and kisses her head.

August 22 nd  2010

Four days have passed since Melinda helped Tony replace the Arc Reactor in his chest, and since then it has become clear to at last Melinda and Bobbi that Tony has issues even though he is trying to be okay for his kids, and Melinda too.
It is late at night and Melinda wakes up in bed and realises that Tony isn't in it.

"JARVIS, where's Tony?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Mr Stark-May is sitting on the roof." JARVIS answers.

"Thanks JARVIS." Melinda responds, and she gets up, and heads there.

About a minute after JARVIS told Melinda where Tony is Melinda walks out onto the roof and sits down next to Tony.

"It's open out here, clear." Tony says, it being clear that that is something he needs right now, "JARVIS tell you were I am?" Tony asks, as that's what he assumes.

"Yeah, we've become friends in the last few months." Melinda reveals.

"Really?" Tony asks, sounding surprised, as while Melinda has never had an outright problem with JARVIS she has never called him a friend.

"Yeah." Melinda says, "Talking to JARVIS made me feel close to you." Melinda admits, "Though his bugging me about how much I sleep got annoying quick." She admits.

"Oh, I know." Tony confirms, "When do you have to go back to S.H.I.E.L.D?"

"I haven't been working since you went missing." Melinda explains "I'm in no rush to go back." Melinda explains, though it is clear to Tony that she will go back.

"Okay." Tony confirms, and the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side, and after a while Tony puts his arm around Melinda, who leans against him.

**September 5th 2010**

Two weeks have passed since Melinda and Tony talked about JARVIS and Melinda going back to S.H.I.E.L.D and ever since then Tony, Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter have been spending all their time together, all five of them just enjoying the fact that they are together again, while Tony has also been making plans for something, but hasn't actually started making it.

It's early evening and Tony is in his workshop, working on one of his cars a way to help distract him from everything that has happened, when Melinda walks in and over to him.

"Tony, there's something we've got to talk about." Melinda says, as she sits down near Tony on a stool.

"What is it?" Tony asks, as he turns to look at Melinda.

"School starts again this week." Melinda informs Tony, "Mortia's called, he's principle of Midtown now, so after saying he's glad you're okay, he told me that Daisy can start later if needed, but I don't know if starting school late is something that will be good for Daisy and Peter." Melinda explains.

"I didn't even realise it was already September." Tony admits, as he has been so focused on spending time with his family that he's lost track of the days, "I know Bobbi's planning on going back to work this week." He reveals.

"Yeah, she told me that too." Melinda says, honestly she has been thinking about going back too, but she isn't sure when.
"Daisy and Peter shouldn't miss any more school." Tony says, already knowing that they missed some school when he first went mission, "The three of you should go back to New York."

"What about you?" Melinda asks, having noticed Tony's specific words.

"I need to stay here, a little while longer." Tony says, having two reasons for that, the first is that he isn't quite sure he's ready to be in New York apartment, even with how open theirs is, and the second is there is something he wants to work on that he can't do in New York.

"Okay." Melinda says, being able to tell that this is something Tony needs, "Daisy, Peter and I will come back here on weekends, and call all the time, and you can come to New York when you're ready." Melinda explains, honestly a part of her just wants Tony to come home with her, but another part of her knows that she shouldn't force him to do something he isn't ready to do, she knows that she has to be supportive.

"That sounds good." Tony admits, and as he does Melinda reaches out and takes his hand, as the two of them drift into silence.

**September 6th 2010**

The following afternoon Melinda, Daisy, Peter, Bobbi, and Tony are at a private airfield together, Melinda is about to fly herself, Bobbi, Peter, and Daisy back to New York, stopping in DC to drop Bobbi at the Triskelion on their way.

"I don't get it, why aren't you coming home?" Daisy asks, looking at her father in confuse.

"I need to stay in LA a little longer, Tiny Toni." Tony explains, looking at his daughter.

"Why though? Why don't you just come home?" Peter asks, sounding more confused than his sister.

"Pete, your Dad needs to stay in LA for a little while longer, it's just something he needs to do right now." Melinda admits, "But we're going to call, and come to LA a lot."

"Can't we just stay until Dad's ready to come home?" Daisy suggests.

"You have school Daisy." Bobbi points out.

"So?" Daisy asks, looking like it isn't a big deal.

"So, you need to go to school. You're in high school now." Tony tells his daughter, "it's going to be great, and like your Mom said we're going to talk all the time, and I'll come home when I can." Tony explains, it being clear to Melinda and Bobbi that that means when he is ready, "Okay Tiny Toni? Kid?" he asks, looking between his two youngest children.

"Okay." Peter says, with a nod.

"I guess." Daisy comments.

"I love you guys." Tony says, before hugging his two youngest kids and kissing both of their heads, and when they break apart he walks over to Bobbi, "Be careful Little Bird, okay, and make sure you call too." Tony tells his oldest child.

"I will." Bobbi assures her dad, "I love you Dad."

"Love you too." Tony says, before hugging Bobbi, and kissing her cheek as she is too tall for him
to kiss the top of her head.

After Tony and Bobbi break apart, she, Daisy, and Peter head inside leaving Melinda and Tony outside.

"I know this makes things harder on you, but I can't...." Tony starts to say.

"It's okay. You don't have to explain." Melinda assures Tony, "Takes as long as you need." She assures him.

"Thanks Mel." Tony says, feeling like he has the most supportive wife in the world, "Did you decide about S.H.I.E.L.D?" He asks curious.

"Yeah. I'm going to start back next week." Melinda explains, "I'll start after I drop Daisy and Peter at school and finish before I have to pick them up." Melinda explains, as she knows she can't leave all together.

"Okay." Tony says, with a nod, "I love you Mel." He says, before leaning forward and kissing her.

"I love you too." Melinda says once they break apart, and after a few moments of standing together Melinda finally heads into the plane while Tony watches as his family flies away, knowing he will join them soon, just not yet.

After saying goodbye to his family Tony heads back to his Malibu house where he heads straight to the workshop.

"JARVIS, you up?" Tony asks, as he walks in.

"For you, sir, always." JARVIS answers.

"I'd like to open a new project file, index as Mark Two." Tony explains.

"Shall I store this on the Stark Industries central database?" JARVIS asks.

"Actually, I don't know who to trust right now." Tony says, though he knows he can trust Melinda, Rhodey, and Pepper, but the reason why he has waited until Melinda left to get started on this is because he didn't want Melinda to have to lie to S.H.I.E.L.D for him, which is something he knows she would do, "Till further notice, why don't we just keep everything on my private server." Tony requests.

"Working on a secret project, are we, sir?" JARVIS asks.

"I don't want this winding up in the wrong hands." Tony admits, "Maybe in mine it can actually do some good." He comments, as he gets to work on making something very new.
November 16th 2010

Ten weeks have passed since Melinda, Peter, and Daisy went back to New York, while Tony stayed in Los Angeles, and ever since they left the four of them have called a lot and visited most weekends, while Tony has been working on his invention, a metal suit which he has put on.

"JARVIS are you there?" Tony asks, once the suit is fully covering him, as he puts the face place on.

"At your service, Sir." JARVIS says.

"Engage Heads Up Display." Tony requests.

"Check." JARVIS says, after doing so.

"Import all preferences from home interface." Tony requests.

"Will do, Sir." JARVIS confirms, and Tony waits a few moments.

"All right, what do you say?" Tony asks.

"I have indeed been uploaded, Sir. We're online and ready." JARVIS reveals, "Importing preferences and calibrating virtual environment."

"Do a check on control surfaces." Tony requests.

"As you wish." JARVIS responds, and Tony waits a few moments, as different parts of the armour is tested, "Test complete, preparing to power down and begin diagnostics." JARVIS says.

"Ahh yeah, tell you what, do a weather and ATC check." Tony requests, "Start listening on ground control."

"Sir, there are still terabytes of calculations needed to be done before an actual fight…" JARVIS starts to argue.

"JARVIS, sometimes you got to run before you can walk." Tony says, "Ready? In three, two, one." Tony says, before he goes flying out of his house.

After flying out of his house Tony flies around for a while, around LA, and then sees how high he can fly. As he flies higher Tony discovers an icing problem, which causes power problems, and after managing to break the ice with flares he is able to fly back home, and crash through several levels to land, destroying one of his cars.
After landing, and getting sprayed by a fire extinguishers by one of his robots, Tony manages to get out of the suit. Once he is out of the suit Tony puts an ice pack on his shoulder, which has been slightly injured, and opens a present from Pepper which turns to be a clear case with his old arch reactor, the one he asked Melinda to destroy, on a mounted stand which has 'proof that Tony Stark Has a Heart' on it.

Once he opens Pepper's present Tony grabs a drink of green juice and sits down in front of his monitors.

"Notes. Main transducer feels sluggish at plus forty altitude." Tony comments, "Hull pressurization is problematic. I'm thinking icing is the probable factor." Tony comments.

"A very astute observation, Sir." JARVIS says, "Perhaps, if you intend to visit other planets, we should improve the exosystems." JARVIS suggests.

"Connect to the, have it reconfigure the shell metals, use the gold titanium alloy from the seraphim tactical satellite." Tony instructs, "That should ensure a fuselage integrity while maintaining power to weight ratio, got it?" Tony asks.

"Yes. Shall I render using proposed specifications?" JARVIS asks curious.

"Thrill me." Tony says, and as he does his attention is drawn to the TV which he left on.

"Tonight's red-hot red carpet is right here at the Disney Concert Hall, where Tony Stark's third annual benefit for the Firefighter's Family Fund, has become the place to be for LA's high society."

"JARVIS, we get an invite for that?" Tony asks curious.

"I have no record of an invitation, Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Tony stark hasn't been seen in public since his bizarre and highly controversial press conference, some claim he is suffering from posttraumatic stress and has been bedridden for weeks." The reporter says, "Whatever the case may be, no one expects an appearance from him tonight." The reporter says, and Tony is pretty sure that is a challenge.

"The render is complete." JARVIS says, and Tony sees a suit that is completely gold.

"A little ostentatious, don't you think?" Tony asks.

"What was I thinking? You're usually so discreet." JARVIS says, as Tony looks over at his cars, as he pours himself another drink.

"Tell you what, throw a little hot-rod red in there." Tony requests.

"Yes, that shall help you keep a low profile." JARVIS says, as he does what Tony wanted, "The render is complete." JARVIS says, as a design comes on the computer, one Tony really likes.

"Hey, I like it. fabricate it. paint it." Tony instructs.

"Commencing automated assembly." JARVIS says, "Estimated completion time is five hours."

"Don't wait up for me, Honey." Tony says, before leaving the workshop, putting his watch on as he goes.

A while after leaving his workshop Tony, who is now in a tux, has crashed his party, and the
second he arrived he got a warning from Obadiah to take things easy. Looking around the party Tony heads straight to the bar.

"Give me a scotch, I'm starving." Tony request.

"Tony." A voice says, and he turns to see Phil.

"Seriously?" Tony asks, looking amused, "What, did you Barton, Romanoff and Hill draw straws on the off chance I'd be here?"

"Not quiet, I just got told to come." Phil admits, "We need to debrief you, Tony, Fury's orders." He explains, causing Tony to just roll his eyes.

"I'm surprised he didn't just order Mel to question me." Tony admits, as he wouldn't put that past Fury.

"Nah, he knows how she'd react to that." Phil admits, as Tony's phone starts to ring, "Look Tony, how about we just get this over with, put something on the books, say the 24th seven pm at Stark Industries?" Phil suggests, as Tony sees who is on his caller Id.

"Sure, whatever, let's do it." Tony says, before walking away so that he can answer his phone, "Hey, Hold on." He says, into the phone before walking away, walking outside, onto the roof, "Hey." Tony says, once he is on the roof.

"Hey." Melinda responds, "So you decided to crash your own party?" Melinda asks curious.

"How do you know that?" Tony asks, being pretty sure that Coulson wouldn't have time to call her.

"I'm in the study, I have the TV playing, it was news flash." Melinda explains.

"Huh, good to know." Tony says, then realises something, "Hang on, isn't it really late in New York right now?"

"Technically it's early." Melinda reveals, "What made you decide to go to the party?"

"People thought I wouldn't." Tony explains, and Melinda is sure that she is missing something, as while she knows that is something Tony would do the tone of voice he is using makes her suspect something else is going on.

"Tony…" Melinda starts to say.

"I'm not going to see you this weekend am I?" Tony asks curious as now that he has the suit ready he has a few things he wants to do.

"No. It's Ned's birthday on Saturday and Peter doesn't want to miss his party." Melinda explains.

"Okay. I'll miss you guys." Tony says.

"There's no pressure Tony, you can come home whenever you're ready but have you given any more thought about when that will be?" Melinda asks curious, as she knows both Daisy and Peter want their father to come home and they are less understanding than her.

"No, not yet." Tony admits.

"Okay. We'll be here whenever you're ready to come home." Melinda says, feeling like there is something that Tony is saying, but she doesn't want to push him.
"I know, I love you, Mel." Tony says.

"Love you too," Melinda responds.

"Get some sleep Mel." Tony says, before hanging up.

After Tony hangs up with Melinda he stands outside, for a little while before heading back inside.

Once he is back in the party tony heads to the bar where he orders another drink, and as he is waiting for it someone he recognizes as the reporter who talked to him the night before he left for Afghanistan walks up to him.

"Wow, Tony Stark." Everhart comments.

"Oh hey." Tony says.

"Fancy seeing you here." Everhart says, "You have a lot of nerve showing up here tonight." She comments, "Can I at least get a reaction from you?"

"Panic, I would say panic is my reaction." Tony says, only joking slightly.

"Cause I was referring to your company's involvement in this latest atrocity." Everhart says.

"Yeah, they just put my name on the invitation. I don't know what to tell you." Tony says.

"I actually almost brought it, hook, line, and sinker." Everhart says.

"I was out of town for a couple of months, in case you didn't hear." Tony says.

"Is this what you call accountability?" Everhart asks, as she shows Tony pictures. Pictures that show death, and his weapons, "It's a town called Gulmira, heard of it?"

"When were these taken?" Tony says, as he looks through the pictures, and thinks about Yinsen.

"Yesterday." Everhart says.

"I didn't approve any shipment." Tony says.

"Well, your company did." Everhart says.

"Well, I'm not my company." Tony says, before walking away.

After walking away from Everhart Tony goes looking for Obadiah, who he finds outside.

"Have you seen these picture?" Tony asks, showing them to Obadiah, "What is going on in Gulmira?" Tony asks, needing to know.

"Tony, Tony, you can't afford to be this naïve." Obadiah tells him.

"You know what? I was naïve before, when they said, 'here's the line, we don't cross it, this is how we do business.'" Tony explains, "If we're double-dealing under the table... are we?" Tony asks, but instead of answering Obadiah gets a member of the press to take a picture of them.

"Tony, who do you think locked you out?" Obadiah asks, "I was the one who filed the injunction against you. It was the only way I could protect you." He says, before walking away.

After watching Obadiah go Tony is truly shocked, and horrified, and after he gets over the shock
he heads home, and over the next two days uses the suit to get rid of all the weapons in Gulmira as well as dealing with the members of the ten rings who were in the town.

**November 19th 2010**

Over the last day or so Melinda has seen the news reports about the Battle of Gulmira, and considering she knows it's close to where Tony was being held, and her suspicion is only heightened when Rhodey is the one giving the press conference with a line she knows is usually a cover.

"JARVIS, what happened in Gulmira, did Tony have anything to do with that?" Melinda asks.

"I am unable to answer that." JARVIS answers.

"That's a yes." Melinda mutters, but she is also sure that she isn't going to get any answers from JARVIS and so she has to talk to Tony herself, in person, but there is something she has to arrange to be able to do that, and so she picks up her phone and dials a number.

"Hey Mom." Bobbi answers, answering after a few rings, "What's up?"

"Is there any chance you could come home for a couple of days?" Melinda asks her daughter, "I need to go to LA and talk to your Dad, and I think it would be best if Daisy and Peter stayed in New York why I did that." Melinda explains.

"Is everything okay?" Bobbi asks concerned.

"I'm not sure." Melinda answers, "Can you come?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yeah, but it will be a couple of days before I can get away." Bobbi admits, honestly the fact that her mother wants her to come home makes her want to get home as quickly as possible, but she knows even doing that will take a few days.

"That's fine, just come when you can." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Will do." Bobbi responds, "Love you, Mom."

"Love you too." Melinda responds, before hanging up, "What are you up to?" Melinda mutters, looking at one of the pictures on the desk.

**November 24th 2010**

A few days have passed since the battle of Gulmira and in that time both Pepper and Rhodey have found out what Tony has been up to, and Tony is planning what he is doing next, knowing that soon he will have to tell Melinda what he's been doing, but he wants to protect her for as long as he can, not that she needs his protection, and wants to give her deniability in case Fury...
"And what do you plan to do with this information if I bring it back here?" Pepper asks, not wanting to be apart of something that will get Tony killed.

"Same drill." Tony reveals, "They've been dealing under the table, and I'm going to stop them." Tony says, "I'm going to find my weapons and destroy them."

"Tony, you know that I would help you with anything, but I cannot help you if you're going to start all of this again." Pepper says.

"There is nothing except this. There's no art opening. There is no benefit, there is nothing to sign." Tony says, his back to Pepper as he looks at a screen, "There is the next mission and nothing else." Tony says, Turing around, knowing perfectly well that he sounds like Melinda, which is he is pretty sure is a very good thing, and finally realising that he understands the way she used to be a bit more.

"Is that so?" Pepper asks, "Well, then, I quit." Pepper reveals, as she puts the lock chip Tony gave her back on the bench.

"You stood by my side all these years, while I reaped the benefits of destruction, and now that I'm trying to protect the people that I put in harm's way you're going to walk out?" Tony asks, sounding surprised.

"You're going to get yourself killed Tony, and I'm not going to be apart of it, not going to be apart of what will cause your kids to lose their father." Pepper says, knowing it might be a low blow but it is an argument that she needs to make.

"I shouldn't be alive." Tony admits, as he sits down, "Unless it was for a reason, I'm not crazy, Pepper. I just finally know what I have to do." He reveals, "And I know in my heart that it's right." He says, clearly meaning what he is saying.

"Okay." Pepper says, picking up the lock chip and heading out of the workshop.

A little while after her conversation with Tony Pepper has gone to the Stark office, like he asked, and while there she found out who was behind Tony's kidnapping, Obadiah. Shortly after she discovered that information Obadiah walked into the office and so Pepper quickly left.

As she quickly leaves she realises that Obadiah is following her.

"Pepper." Phil says, from where he is sitting.

"Oh god Phil, I've never been so happy to see you." Pepper reveals, as she hurries past him.

"What's going on?" Phil asks concerned, as he gets up and hurries to catch up with Pepper.

"I'll tell you everything, but not here, your office." Pepper explains.

"Okay." Phil says, as he and Pepper hurry out of the building, and as they do Phil looks around for signs of danger, knowing he will do whatever he has to do to protect Pepper.

Away from Stark Tony is in the living room of his Malibu house when the phone rings so he sits down to answer it, seeing Pepper on the caller ID but before he can say anything his whole body becomes paralysed.
"Tony? Tony are you there? Hello?" Pepper's voice asks, as Obadiah reaches out and takes the phone out of Tony's hand.

"Breathe, easy, easy." Obadiah says as he lowers Tony's head down to the couch, "You remember this one, right?" Obadiah says, showing Tony an invention, "It's a shame the government didn't approve it. there are so many applications for causing short-term paralysis." He says, as he walks around so that he is in front of Tony, taking out his earplugs out as he does, "Tony, when I ordered that hit on you, I worried that I was killing the golden goose." Obadiah says as he gets a device out of his bag which he puts against the Arch reactor in Tony's chest, and despite being paralysed Tony feels the pain, "but, you see, it was just fate that you survived that, you had one last golden egg to give." Obadiah says as he extracts the Arch reactor from Tony's chest, but the wires are still attached, "Do you really think that just because you have an idea, it belongs to you?" Obadiah asks, "Your father, he helped give us the atomic bomb. Now, what kind of world would it be today if he was as selfish as you?" Obadiah asks as he pulls the Arch reactor, completely detaching it from Tony, "Oh, it's beautiful. Tony, this is your ninth symphony, what a masterpiece, look at that. This is your legacy." He says, sitting down next to Tony, "A new generation of weapons with this at its heart. Weapons that will help steer the world back on course, put the balance of power in our hands. The right hands." Obadiah explains, as he puts the arch into the case, "I wish you could've seen my prototype, it's not as.. conservative as yours." Obadiah admits, as he closes the case, "Too bad you had to involve Pepper in this I would have preferred that she lived." Obadiah says before leaving, leaving Tony dying on the couch.

A little while after Pepper tried to call Tony she is walking out of a S.H.I.E.L.D facility with Phil and some agents as she calls Rhodey, who is driving.

"What do you mean, he paid to have Tony killed?" Rhodey asks, sounding shocked, and Pepper hurriedly tries to explain, "Pepper, slow down. Why would Obadiah..." Rhodey starts to ask and Pepper explains, "Okay, where's Tony now?"

"I don't know. He's not answering his phone." Pepper explains, "Please go over there and make sure everything's okay." Pepper requests.

"Of course." Rhodey responds.

"Thank you, Rhodey." Pepper responds, after hanging up with Pepper Rhodey does a hurried u-turn and makes another phone call.

"Rhodey?" Melinda asks, answering after a couple of rings.

"Are you in LA yet?" Rhodey asks, being one of only a few people who knows Melinda is coming to LA.

"Yeah, just landed." Melinda answers, "What's going on?"

"I just got a call from Pepper, it was Obadiah, he paid to have Tony captured." Rhodey explains.

"Is she sure, are you?" Melinda asks, sounding both angry and shocked.

"Yeah, she's with Coulson and some agents, going to the factory to arrest him. I'm heading to the house because we can't get in touch with Tony." Rhodey explains.

"Okay, I'm closer to the factory, I'll go there, back up Coulson and Pepper." Melinda says, having a few questions for Obadiah, and having a few things she would love to say to him, as she runs down the stairs of the plan she flew and over to a waiting motorbike, "Make sure he's okay, Rhodey."
"I will." Rhodey says, before hanging up, and once he does Melinda speeds off on her bike.

Not long after Rhodey hung up with Melinda he finds Tony on the ground of his workshop, with the old arch reactor in his chest.

"Tony, you okay?" Rhodey asks worried, as he gets to his friend.

"Where's Pepper?" Tony asks worried as he remembers Obadiah's threat.

"She's fine, she's with Coulson, Melinda, and four agents. They're about to arrest Obadiah." Rhodey explains.

"They're not going to be enough." Tony says, as he forces himself to quickly get onto his feet, as he knows that even with the amazing fighter Melinda is chances are she won't be able to fight against what Obadiah has.

While Rhodey is getting to Tony Pepper, Phil and four agents have arrived at the section of the Stark Factory where they know Obadiah is.

"My key's not working, it's not opening the door." Pepper says, and as she does everyone hears footsteps so she, Coulson and the agents turn to see Melinda hurrying towards them.

"Stand down its Agent May." Phil says, as Melinda takes a gun from one of the other agents, and walks towards to him, "Really?" he asks, sounding surprised.

"He tried to have Tony killed, I have to be here." Melinda explains, as Phil sticks a device to the door.

"What does that do? Is it going to pick the lock?" Pepper asks curious.

"You should take a few steps back." Melinda says, leading Pepper back and seconds later the door is blown open and everyone enters, Melinda and Phil in the front, both of them with their guns raised, both communicating without words about how they shall proceed.

Over the next few minutes Melinda, Phil, Pepper and several agents make their way through the facility, looking for Obadiah, or they do until Obadiah in a very large suit, starts to come after them, and so Melinda grabs Pepper by the arm and they go running, out of the facility.

Once they are outside the facility Melinda calls Tony, as she is positive that he is the person in the suit now, and so he's probably the only one who could defeat Obadiah, at least without an air strike.

"Mel." Tony says, answering the phone right away.

"Tony? Are you okay?" Melinda asks worried, as she knows there must have been a reason why Rhodey and Pepper couldn't get a hold of him.

"I'm fine." Tony answers, "Are you…" he starts to asks.

"Obadiah's built a suit, it's huge." Melinda explains.

"Get out of there, right now!" Tony says,

"Not going to happen." Melinda says, as she sees Obadiah, out of the ground, towards her and
Pepper and even though she is pretty sure it won't do much Melinda takes a step forward, standing in front of Pepper, and starts firing her gun at Obadiah, aiming for anything that looks important, but before he gets too close Tony crashes into him, in his own suit, and they are propelled away.

Over the next five to ten minutes Melinda and Pepper stand outside the factory, watching bits of the fight, and it almost looks like Tony is going to win, until Obadiah lands on the roof of the factory not long after Tony did.

"Mel, this isn't working." Tony says.

"What do you need?" Melinda asks, assuming that Tony has an idea.

"We're going to have to overload the reactor and blast the roof." Tony explains.

"How?" Melinda asks.

"You and Pepper are going to go to the central console, open up the circuits, when I get clear of the roof I'll let you know." Tony explains, "You're going to hit the master bypass button, it's gonna fry everything up here." Tony explains.

"Okay." Melinda says as she goes running into the factory, while Pepper does so slightly more hesitantly, but once they are inside it is clear that Pepper knows more about what they are doing than Melinda.

"Make sure you wait until I clear the roof, I'm going to buy you some time." Tony reveals, as he continues to fight Obadiah.

"Tony, we're ready, get off the roof." Melinda says, after a couple of minutes, knowing that if it was just her then she wouldn't have been able to pull it off, as she doesn't understand the tech, but thanks to Pepper they did, and as she speaks the glass off the roof is broken and so Melinda quickly acts to cover Pepper, protecting her from the glass.

"MEL!" Tony yells, "Time to hit the button." Tony says, a few moments later.

"You'll die, I can't!" Melinda says, completely meaning that as while she has made some truly hard choices she isn't sure that is one she could make.

"Just do it!" Tony yells and it is clear to Pepper that Melinda can't, "PUSH IT." Tony yells, as he slightly falls off the roof, and realising that Melinda isn't going to Pepper reaches over and presses the button, and once she does they both go running out of the factory.

"TONY!" Melinda yells, in completely horror, once she and Pepper are clear of an explosion that is caused by Obadiah falling into the other large arch reactor and unknown to her that gets the arch reactor working again.

A while later Melinda, Tony, and Pepper have been taken to a nearby S.H.I.E.L.D facility by Phil to be debriefed, Melinda knowing that Rhodey will likely be joining them soon.

"Does this really have to be done tonight?" Tony asks.

"Yes" Melinda, and Phil say together.

"I'll take Pepper through to debrief first." Phil explains, "Stark you should go medical to get checked out, or at least let May use the medical supplies to check you out."
"Option two please." Tony requests.

"You remember the way?" Phil asks, and Melinda just gives him an annoyed look, "We shouldn't be long." He says, and he leads Pepper in one direction while Melinda and Tony go in another.

As Melinda and Tony walk down the corridors he notices that every agent is look at them, something which he is all too familiar with, but he quickly realises that it isn't him they are looking at, in fact it's Melinda.

"Um, Mel, why do I get the feeling people are more interested in you being here than me?" Tony asks curious.

"Because SHIELD agents love to gossip." Melinda says, sounding annoyed, "Get back to work." Melinda says, loudly, and the agents around all quickly scurry off Tony being pretty sure that he heard several of them saying, 'yes Agent May,' and a couple of minutes later they walk into the medical area.

"Agent May." The agent says, looking surprised.

"Agent Anderson." Melinda greets.

"Mr Stark." The agent says, sounding amazed.

"Give us the room." Melinda instructs.

"Agent May I'm not sure...." Agent Anderson stars to say.

"That wasn't a request Agent Anderson." Melinda says, "I outrank you and I am telling you to give us the room." Melinda says,

"Yes Ma'am." Agent Anderson says, before leaving, as Tony watches on very much liking the sight and realising just how little he knows about Melinda's position within S.H.I.E.L.D as the agents he's seen Melinda around are Natasha, Clint, Phil and Maria, who are her team, it didn't even register that she would also be in charge of people.

"You should sit down." Melinda says, as she grabs the supplies to treat the injuries she sees.

"Do you out rank everyone here?" Tony asks curious, wanting to know more and realising that there are questions he should have asked a long time ago.

"Almost." Melinda answers, as she walks over to Tony, "Why didn't you tell me, Tony?" Melinda asks

"I know you don't need it, but I wanted to protect you." Tony admits, "And give you deniability in case Fury started to question you." He explains, "This was something I had to do, Mel. I needed to protect the people I put in danger."

"I get that." Melinda admits.

"I know you do." Tony says, "And I get it now, more than I ever have, why you've spent most of your life protecting people." He explains, "When I realised what was going on I thought about what you would do, and I realised what I had to do."

"You did better than I could." Melinda tells him.

"Nah, I didn't, I just did it with my own style." Tony explains, before leaning forward and kissing
Melinda, "I love you." He says, when they break apart.

"I love you too." Melinda says, and the two of them break apart. "Sit still, we've got to make sure these cuts don't get infected." Melinda explains, as she starts to treat Tony's injuries.

**November 25th 2010**

The next Day Melinda, Tony, Pepper, Rhodey and Phil are all at the Stark Industries facility in LA. While Tony is reading the paper, Pepper is doing his make up to try and cover his bruises, while Melinda is watching and Rhodey is starting to deal with the press before Tony does.

"Iron man, that's kind of catchy, it's got a nice ring to it." Tony admits, "I mean, it's not technically accurate the suits a gold titanium alloy, but it's kind of evocative, the imagery, anyway." Tony says, as Phil walks into the room and hands Tony some cards.

"Here's your alibi." Phil says.

"Okay." Tony comments, as he flicks through the cards.

"You were on your yacht." Phil reveals, "We have port papers that put you in Avalon all night, and sworn statements form fifty of your guests." He explains, and as he does Melinda can see that Pepper is surprised by that.

"See, I was thinking maybe we should say it was just Mel and me alone on the island." Tony suggests.

"That's what happened." Phil tells Tony.

"All right." Tony responds, and Melinda is pretty sure that it's not going to be as simple as that.

"Just read it, word for word." Phil instructs.

"There's nothing about Stane here." Tony notes.

"It's been handled Tony." Melinda says, with a kind voice, knowing that.

"He's on vacation, small aircraft have such a poor safety records." Phil explains.

"But what about the whole cover story that it's my body guard? He's my… I mean, isn't that, that's kind of flimsy, don't you think?" Tony asks, looking between Phil and Melinda.

"This is far from my first rodeo, Tony." Phil says, "Just stick to the official statement, and soon, this will all be behind you." Phil reveals, "You've got ninety seconds." He says, before heading to the door.

"Phil." Pepper says, walking over to Phil as Tony and Melinda exchange amused looks and Melinda walks over to her husband, and helps him put on his jacket.

"You know, it's actually not that bad." Tony reveals, "Even I don't think I'm Iron man." Tony says.

"You're not." Melinda says, giving Tony a look as she helps him with his tie.

"You know, if were Iron Man my wife would know my secret identify and finally understand how worried I've been all these years she's been running head first into danger, being a hero, how proud I've been." Tony comments.
"I am proud, Tony." Melinda assures him, as Rhodey introduces Tony onto the stage, "You've got this." She says, as Tony heads out onto the stage, "He's not going to read from the cards." Melinda says, as she watches Tony walk out, knowing that.

"Should we do something?" Pepper asks, looking at Melinda.

"No, this is his choice," Melinda says, as even though she knows as a S.H.I.E.L.D agent she should, as Tony's best friend and wife, she knows that this is something he wants, and maybe even needs to do, and so she just turns her attention to the TV and watches.

At first it looks like Melinda is wrong, and Tony may actually read from the cards, until finally,

"The truth is." Tony says, before looking up, "I am Iron Man." He says, and the press goes insane, as Melinda watches on with a proud smile on her face.

A while after the press conference, Melinda and Tony are finally arriving back at the Malibu house, both planning on going back to New York the next day.

"JARVIS." Tony Says, as he walks in.

"Welcome home…" JARVIS starts to say, his voice completely distorted before it completely cuts out.

"Mel?" Tony asks confused.

"What do you want, Nick?" Melinda asks, recognizing the signs of Nick Fury wanting to make a statement.

"To talk to Tony." Fury explains, "I am Iron Man, as your wife can attest you're not the only superhero in the world, Tony, you've become part of a bigger universe you just don't know it yet." Fury explains.

"That's doesn't answer Mel's question, what do you want?" Tony asks.

"I'm here to talk to you about the Avengers Initiative" Fury reveals.

"You're really starting that." Melinda says, her voice being hard for Tony to read.

"What is it?" Tony asks, looking at Melinda as it is clear that she knows exactly what is going on.

"A new team." Melinda explains, "An initiative to bring the worlds mightiest together to see if they can be heroes." Melinda says, remembering what Phil told her.

"I'm not interested." Tony says, before heading downstairs.

"Agent May…." Fury starts to say.

"Don't even think about asking me to try and convince him, Director." Melinda instructs, before following Tony downstairs, knowing that by now Fury should know better than trying to use her to get something from a member of her family.
Chapter 34

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you for the support. PLEASE, PLEASE, LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW.

November 26th 2010

It has been a day since Tony announced he is Iron Man and that is news that has spread all around the room. As they were in the area Natasha and Clint showed up at the Stark-May apartment, as they wanted to check in on the kids, and the two of them are with Bobbi in the kitchen while Peter and Daisy are still in bed.

"You guys really think this is a good idea?" Bobbi asks, looking between Natasha and Clint, who have just explained to her an idea they had.

"Considering everything, yeah." Natasha confirms, "Tony and Linda won't be back to this afternoon…”

"With Mom flying, you sure about that one?" Bobbi asks curious

"Your Dad announced himself as a superhero it doesn't matter how fast your Mom flies, they've still got to deal with a few things before they can leave LA." Clint points out.

"We're would we even teach them? We couldn't do it here." Bobbi says, as her phone goes off.

"The Stark property outside the city, it's big enough to practice." Natasha explains, and as she does Bobbi reads the message on her phone which says,

'Saw the news, your family just keeps getting more interesting' and she can't help but smile.

"Bobbi?" Clint asks, as Bobbi is clearly distracted by her phone.

"Sorry, what?" Bobbi asks, looking between Natasha and Clint.

"What's got your attention?" Clint asks, with a teasing look.

"I know this family has boundary issues, but we're spies we should be able to keep a few secrets." Bobbi comments.

"If you want to keep secrets then lie better." Natasha informs her, "Because right your face is telling me that you're seeing someone, and it's serious." Natasha realises.

"Yeah." Bobbi confirms, "I'm thinking about having him join us for Christmas." Bobbi admits.

"Wow, throwing him straight into the lion's den." Clint says, looking shocked, "He must mean a lot to you."

"We'll see." Bobbi says, and once she does Natasha and Clint exchange looks, "Look, I think Daisy will be on board with this idea of yours, but I'm not sure about Peter." She admits.

"That's exactly why we're giving them a choice." Natasha admits.
"Okay." Bobbi says, with a nod.

About an hour after Natasha and Clint gave Bobbi a hard time about Hunter the three of them, Daisy and Peter are at a Stark property together.

"Okay, what are we doing here?" Daisy asks curious.

"We're going to teach you something." Natasha explains, "Daisy, you're coming with Bobbi and I, Peter, you're with Clint."

"Okay." Peter says, looking confused, as Daisy follows Natasha and Bobbi.

"What exactly are you going to teach me?" Daisy asks curious.

"To use a gun, if you want." Natasha tells Daisy.

"Seriously?" Daisy asks, looking shocked.

"Seriously." Bobbi confirms.

"Then yeah, I want to learn." Daisy answers, and as she does Natasha and Bobbi turn to look at her.

"First things first, a gun's not a toy, it's a weapon." Natasha tells Daisy, "Pulling a trigger isn't easy, it shouldn't be, and there's no shame in not being able to do it." Natasha tells Daisy.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod.

"You have to take this seriously Daisy, do what Bobbi and I say or we'll stop." Natasha explains.

"I will, I promise Aunt Nat." Natasha says.

"Good, let's get started." Natasha tells her, and once she does she, Bobbi, and Daisy start to walk again.

Across the yard Clint has lead Peter over to a target, and a bow, and right away Peter realises what is going on.

"I'm not really that interested in learning to use a bow, Uncle Clint." Peter admits.

"That's okay, if you don't want to learn you don't have to, but it could be something you might need to use in the future." Clint explains, "The choice is yours Pete." Clint explains, and as he does Peter ponders Clint's suggestion.

"I guess it couldn't hurt to learn some of the basics." Peter admits.

"Okay." Clint says, with a nod, and he starts to show Peter the basics of how to use a blow.

A few hours alter Clint, Natasha, and Bobbi explained to Daisy and Peter what they were doing, during which time Daisy picked up how to use a gun pretty quickly while it became clear using a bow isn't really something that interests Peter, they all arrive back at the apartment where Tony and Melinda are waiting.

"DAD!" Peter says, sounding thrilled as he runs up to his father, and hugs him, "It's really good to see you."

"It's good to see you too, Kid." Tony says, as he hugs his son.
"The suit? Can you tell me about it? Can you take me for a ride in it?" Peter asks, speaking fast, as he and Tony break apart.

"Of course, I'll tell you about it." Tony tells his son, "And the ride…. Well I think your mom and I have to talk about that one." He admits, being able to feel the look Melinda is giving him.

"Okay." Peter says, with a nod.

"I'm really glad you're okay, Dad." Bobbi says, before hugging him, "That suit's kind of Cool." She admits.

"Thanks, Little Bird." Tony says, kissing Bobbi's head, as they break apart, "Hey Tiny Toni." Tony great, as he walks over to his youngest daughter, who he noticed has been rather quiet.

"You actually home? Or are you just going to stay until you have something better to do?" Daisy asks curious.

"Daisy." Melinda and Bobbi say together, both sounding shocked.

"Whatever let me know when you make up your mind." Daisy says, rolling her eyes, before heading upstairs, it being clear that everyone, including Natasha and Clint, are shocked by what Daisy just said.

"I'll go talk to her." Tony says, before heading upstairs.

"Didn't expect that." Clint comments, as Tony heads upstairs, as that attitude was very unusual for Daisy.

About a minute or so after Tony left the living area he gets to Daisy's room, and after debating for a second, he opens the door and walks in.

"What? You don't knock anymore?" Daisy asks, sounding annoyed, from where she is sitting on her bed.

"Would you let me in if I had?" Tony asks curious.

"Nope, then maybe you would have gotten a clue." Daisy comments, and as she does Tony walks over and sits on the edge of Daisy's bed,

"Talk to me, Daze, what's up?" Tony asks his daughter.

"What's up? Seriously Dad?" Daisy asks I shocked, "Look I get it, whatever happened in Afghanistan must have been horrible, and I get needing time to get used to being back, but Dad you choose LA, not here, you choose to spend almost three months building the…. Admittedly very awesome suit, instead of being with us." Daisy explains, sounding hurt, "Don't you care?"

"Oh Daisy, I love you. You, your brother, your sister, your Mom, mean everything to me." Tony explains, and as he does he internally debates something, before deciding Daisy is old enough that she will understand, "There were days in Afghanistan that I wanted to die…."

"Dad…" Daisy says, looking horrified.

"But what kept me going is you, and your Brother, and your sister, and your Mom." Tony explains.

"Then why didn't you come home?" Daisy asks.
"I needed time Tiny Toni, time to get my head on straight, to fix the horrible things I caused, and I wanted to protect you, Bobbi, Peter, and your Mom from that." Tony explains, "But that doesn't mean that I don't love you or that I could ever stop caring, okay, I promise I never will." He says, stressing his words, and Daisy actually finds herself believing him.

"I love you Dad." Daisy says, before leaning forward and hugging him.

"I love you too." Tony responds, placing a kiss on her head.

"Can you show me the code you use for the suit?" Daisy asks curious.

"Yeah, I think we can arrange that, Tiny Toni." Tony tells his daughter, looking amused, and the two of them drift into silence.

A while after Tony and Daisy's conversation Natasha and Clint have left leaving just the five members of the Stark-May family in their apartment. Having spent the last couple of hours walking around the apartment, trying to see if anything has majorly changed in the last six months, Tony is finally checking the last room, the kitchen and as he opens the fridge he finds himself completely confused.

"Um, J?" Tony asks.

"Yes Mr Stark-May?" JARVIS asks.

"Why is there very old cake in the fridge?" Tony asks, looking confused as the cake is clearly very stale, and quite possibly has bacteria growing on it, and so he knows Melinda would only keep it in the fridge if there was a very good reason.

"I believe you should ask Mrs Stark-May that question." JARVIS answers.

"Okay…." Tony says, still sounding confused, "Where is she?"

"Mrs Stark-May is in the study." JARVIS answers.

"Thanks J." Tony says, and he heads there.

Less than a minute after Tony left the kitchen he walks into the study where he finds Melinda sitting at her desk in her office that looks just like he remembered it, rather than covered in papers like it has been lately, doing a large pile of paperwork.

"Mel." Tony says, as he walks in, and as he does Melinda gives him an annoyed look, "Okay, what did I do now?" Tony asks curious.

"All this paperwork is about the other night." Melinda explains, "As a high-level S.H.I.E.L.D agent I have to fill out an incident report, a threat assessment, a mission report, and Coulson and I split the other paperwork that had to be completed about everything that happened." Melinda explains.

"Ohh…. I'm sorry?" Tony say, as he sits down across from Melinda.

"Not that convincing Tony… and it's okay." Melinda says, looking slightly amused.

"Can I help?" Tony asks, not overly sure if he can do S.H.I.E.L.D paperwork but considering he caused it he would love to help if he can.

"Nah, it actually won't take me that long, it's just annoying repetitive." Melinda admits.
"Fair enough." Tony admits, "So I have a question, why is there ancient cake in the fridge?" he asks curious, and as he does Melinda gets an odd look on her face, "Mel?" he asks concerned.

"Talk to Peter." Melinda answers.

"Okay…" Tony says, sounding confused, "Not going to give me more than that?" Tony asks curious.

"No, talk to our son." Melinda answers, as she knows that Peter needs to be the one that explains about the cake, and she is pretty sure that Tony needs to hear Peter's explanation.

"Okay, I'll go do that." Tony says, before getting up and leaving.

After leaving Melinda's study Tony heads straight to Peter's room, where he knocks on the door.

"Come in." Peter's voice says and Tony walks into his office, "Hey Dad."

"Hey Kid." Tony says, walking over to where Peter is sitting at his desk, "So I noticed something, and your Mom told me to ask you about it." he reveals.

"Is this about the lab? Because I promise I didn't touch anything, I just liked going in there sometimes." Peter explains, speaking quickly.

"No Pete, this isn't about the lab, I didn't notice anything different, and I'm glad you like the lab." Tony tells his son.

"I like it because it made me feel close to you." Peter explains.

"Oh…" Tony says, not sure how to respond to that, but he does feel touched.

"So, then what were you talking about?" Peter asks curious.

"A piece of old cake in the fridge" Tony explains.

"Oh, that." Peter says, looking down at the ground, "You weren't here for your birthday." He explains, "I thought we should celebrate for you, so we got a cake, and we saved you some." Peter explains, "It's been in the fridge ever since, waiting for you to come home."

"Thank you, Peter." Tony tells his son, "That was a really great idea."

"The cake is gross now." Peter comments.

"It's the thought that counts." Tony says, before hugging his son.

After spending a little while with his son Tony decides to check in on Bobbi too and so he heads out of Peter's room and straight over to Bobbi's, where he knocks on the door.

"Come in." Bobbi responds and so Tony walks in, "Hey Dad, what's up?" Bobbi asks curious, from where she is on her laptop in bed.

"I thought I'd check in, make sure you're okay." Tony admits, as he walks over to his daughter.

"I'm good Dad." Bobbi assures him, "I'm glad you're home, actually." Bobbi says as Tony sits down on the edge of his bed, "And…." She starts to say, before trailing off.

"And what, Little Bird?" Tony asks his daughter.
"I'm sorry I couldn't figure out where you were." Bobbi admits, "I knew you were alive, and I spent a lot of time trying to use my powers to figure out where you were, but they don't seem like they work like that, I'm sorry I couldn't do more." Bobbi admits, looking guilty.

"Don't, you have no reason to apologise." Tony assures his daughter, "You were able to assure your Mom, and everyone else that I was alive, that means everything to me." Tony explains as he has times where he didn't know if Melinda was alive or dead and he never wanted that for her, "You have no reason to feel guilty."

"I kind of feel like I should." Bobbi admits, as lately she has been trying to think of all the things she could have done first.

"You don't, I promise Little Bird." Tony says, before leaning forward and hugging his daughter, who hugs back, a little tighter than usual, but Tony doesn't say anything as he likes how it feels.

Hours later, during which time Tony arranged for Pizza and cake for dinner, everyone in the Stark-May apartment are in bed. As she and Tony lay in bed together Melinda can tell that something is wrong with Tony.

"Do you want to talk?" Melinda finally asks, clearly giving Tony the choice.

"I've tried so hard not to be Howard, but since I got back he's exactly who I've been acting like." Tony admits.

"God Tony, no." Melinda says, turning on the light and looking at him, as she sits up, "You are not Howard, not even close."

"I don't know Mel. I stayed away, I hurt Daisy, and Peter, and Bobbi. That seems a lot like being like Howard to me." Tony admits, as he stands up.

"Tony, you took the time that you needed to figure things out, to do what you had to do, and that's okay." Melinda assures him, "When you went missing the kids missed you, we all did, we all just wanted you back, and of course they missed you when you were in LA, but even in LA you were there for them more than I was living in the same apartment after Bahrain." Melinda points out, "You're an amazing Dad Tony, if you were like Howard you wouldn't be beating yourself up right now." Melinda says, and as she does Tony feels, not for the first time, that he doesn't deserve someone as amazing as Melinda.

"I'm going to do better Mel, I promise." Tony says, and even though Melinda wants to reassure him that he doesn't need to make such a promise she knows Tony well enough to know that it is a promise he needs to make, even if she feels like he doesn't have to, "I love you."

"I love you too." Melinda says, before kissing Tony, and once they break apart the two of them lay down together in their bed, both being glad to be truly together again.

November 28th 2010

Two days have passed since Tony returned to New York, permanently, bringing the Iron Man suit with him, and apart from Daisy's reaction the first day it has been clear that all the members of the Stark-May family are glad to have him home.

It's mid afternoon and Tony is in his lab working on an Iron Man suit, working on things he wants to improve.

"Sir, Mrs Stark-May would like to see you in the gym." JARVIS informs Tony.
"Okay, tell her I'll be there in a couple of minutes." Tony says, as there are a couple of things he has to fix before he can leave the suit.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS responds.

After JARVIS speaks Tony continues to work on what he has to get done, and after a few minutes he gets it done, and so he stops what he is doing and heads out of the lab, across the first floor of the apartment, and into the gym.

When Tony walks into the gym he finds Melinda standing in the middle, on maps, in workout gear.

"Um, Mel?" Tony asks, sounding confused, "What's going on?"

"What's going on is if you're going to continue to fight in that suit then you need to learn to fight." Melinda tells Tony, as they walk towards each other.

"Um, I think I've been managing pretty well so far." Tony comments.

"That's so far. What if you ever have to fight out of the suit and its damaged? Or what if you can't use one of the weapons and you have to actually fight?" Melinda asks.

"I'll figure it out." Tony comments.

"This is to help you with that." Melinda admits, as she knows Tony, knows he won't stop, and so if she can teach him a little about fighting, she'll feel better.

"I'm not sure it's needed, or something I'm interested in." Tony admits, and before he can react Melinda has flipped him onto his back, and she is on top of him, with her legs either side of him.

"You sure about that one?" Melinda asks, giving Tony a flirty look that he has not seen on her face for a while, and so he is very glad to see it.

"Okay, you've convinced me." Tony says, flirting back, and he leans forward to kiss him but before he can Melinda has gotten to her feet and sticks out her hand for him to grab, "That's mean." He says, as he takes Melinda's hand and she pulls him to his feet.

"There will be time for that later." Melinda says, as she picks up some sparing gloves, "And you're going to do exactly what I say." Melinda says, as she throws a set at Tony.

"I like this already." Tony says, with a smirk, as he puts on the gloves, being pretty sure he is going to very much enjoy this, even if he wasn't a fan of the idea.

December 7th 2010

A little over a week has passed since Melinda gave Tony his fighting lesson and since then it is something that the two of them have done again on occasion.

It is a Tuesday afternoon and Tony has just finished giving a public presentation about some of the new technology that Stark is creating at the Stark Industries New York office.

"So, what's the verdict?" Tony asks, Pepper as he knows she was monitoring things like their social media response.

"So far pretty positive." Pepper says, and as she does Tony sees someone he hasn't seen for a very long time, "I mean there are the usual negative comments, but they are mostly positive and…. You're not listening to me." Pepper realises, seeing that Tony is staring in an opposite direction,
"Tony?" she asks, putting her hand on his shoulder.

"Sorry, excuse me." Tony says, before walking away and walking over to the person that a bit of him can't believe he is seeing, "Little Hope Pym, got to say this is a surprise." Tony admits.

"It's van Dyne now." Hope responds.

"Good for you." Tony says, with an almost proud look on his face, as while he did know that Hope legally changed her name he wanted to know how she would respond to her old name.

"Look, I'm sorry." Hope admits, "I thought about reaching out when I heard about Richard, but it had been so long, and I knew you and May must have been dealing with a lot, but then after everything that happened I knew I would regret it if I didn't reach out now, so here I am." Hope explains, not really sure if it is much of an explanation, but she felt the need to explain.

"I'm glad."

"Tony." Pepper says, walking up, "Um, sorry, you are?" Pepper asks having never seen the women before, though she does look vaguely familiar, which confuses Pepper.

"Pep, this is Hope van Dyne, an old friend." Tony explains.

"Ex-Girlfriend?" Pepper questions curious, though she is pretty sure that Melinda is the only person he's ever seriously dated.

"No." Hope and Tony say together, both looking horrified.

"Hope's family." Tony explains, something which makes Hope smile, "And if you've got time, I know Mel would love to see you." He explains, looking at her.

"I'd like that too." Hope admits.

"The rest of my afternoon is free right?" Tony asks, looking at Pepper.

"Yeah, but…." Pepper starts to say.

"Great, I'll see you tomorrow." Tony says, "Let's go van Dyne." Tony says, and the two of them leave, leaving Pepper feeling even more confused.

A little while after they left Stark Tony and Hope arrive at the Stark-May apartment and head to the study where JARVIS informed them Melinda was, as she has been working from home,

"Mel." Tony says, as they walk in.

"Hey, I just got a call from Bobbi." Melinda explains, "She, Sharon, and Antoine are going to be here for dinner because they're between mission and in the area, they're also picking up Daisy and Peter from school." Melinda explains, not looking up from what she is doing.

"Little Sharon and Antoine?" Hope asks, sounding shocked, which causes Melinda to look up.

"Hope." Melinda says, sounding surprised, recognizing her as she, Tony, and before he died Richard, all kept tabs on her.

"Hi Melinda." Hope says, sounding nervous and Melinda gets up and walks over to her.

"It's good to see you." Melinda says, before hugging her.
"It's really good to see you too." Hope admits, as she and Melinda break apart.

"You're staying for dinner." Tony says, there being no room for argument in his voice, "You can see Sharon and Antoine again, meet our kids."

"I'd really like that." Hope admits, "But Sharon and Antoine were what…. Five last time I saw them? They're probably not going to remember me."

"You'd be surprised." Melinda says, as the three of them all sit down on the couches, "It's been a long time, we've got a lot to catch up on."

"Do you really expect me to believe you guys didn't tabs on me?" Hope asks.

"Of course we did, but we'd like to hear it all from you." Tony explains.

"Okay." Hope says, and the three old friends proceed to catch up with each other.

A while after Hope and Tony arrived at the Stark-May apartment the two of them, and Melinda are waiting in the living room when the elevators and Bobbi, Sharon, Trip, Daisy, and Peter all walk out.

"Mom? Dad?" Daisy asks confused, as they all work towards Melinda, Tony, and Hope.

"Who's this?" Bobbi asks, clearly referring to Hope, as Sharon and Trip both look at her, finding something familiar and trying to figure out why.

"Oh my god, Hope?" Sharon asks, sounding shocked, and realising why Hope is familiar.

"Yeah, hi Sharon, Antoine, it's good to see you both again." Hope admits.

"Yeah, it is." Antoine says, putting the pieces together.

"I don't understand, who are you?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"This is Hope van Dyne, we've known her her whole life, she's family." Melinda explains.

"Then how come we've never met her?" Daisy asks, looking suspicious, and as she asks, Melinda, Tony, and Hope exchange looks.

"My parents were friends with Tony's parents, with May's parents, and with your Father's parents too, Peter." Hope explains, looking at Peter, having been informed about how much he knows about his biological family, "Tony, Melinda, and Richard were actually my favourite babysitters." Hope says, with an amused look on her face, "When I was seven my Mom died and my Dad, he well…." She says, struggling to find the right way to described him.

"Became difficult." Melinda supplies, "He cut himself off from his old friends, and for the next five years Tony, Richard, Aunt Peggy, and I, along with other members of our family stayed in touch with Hope, but then Hank found out and didn't like that Hope was still in contact with us." Melinda admits.

"He made it impossible for us to contact Hope, and we tried to find a way around it…" Tony starts to explain.

"Wait, what?" Hope asks shocked, and she, Tony, and Melinda turn to look at each other, almost forgetting everyone else in the room, "You did?" she asks, she thought when her father made it impossible for the people she continued family to have contact with her she thought they gave up.
"Of course." Melinda answers, "But, you were twelve, and Hank is your father, so we couldn't, not even Aunt Peggy could talk sense into him." Melinda says, knowing that she tried.

"We were going to reach out when you were eighteen, but we figured if you wanted us to be apart of your live you would." Tony admits.

"Huh, I thought the same thing." Hope admits, "Guess we were all idiots."

"Yeah, guess so." Melinda realises.

"How long has it been since you've seen each other?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Eighteen years." Hope answers, sounding sad.

"Wow, that's a really long time." Peter comments.

"Yeah, it is."

"Wait, if you've known Mom and Dad so long you must have some great stories." Daisy comments, as she loves hearing stories from when her parents were younger.

"Oh, I really do." Hope confirms, "You know I caught them kissing once and they bribed me with ice cream not to tell anyone." She reveals.

"And that worked?" Sharon asks.

"I was six, it was a pretty great bribe." Hope explains, looking amused.

"Wow." Bobbi says, looking amused as she looks between her parents.

"Do you have stories about my father too?" Peter asks, curious.

"Yeah, Peter, I do." Hope confirms, and once she does everyone in the family walk over to the couches where they all sit down, listen to stories and get to know Hope a little better.
December 16th 2010

A little over a week has passed since Hope van Dyne showed up in New York during which time she promised to say in touch and was invited for Christmas. It is a Thursday evening and Tony is just standing on a little road on Long Island, the road his parents died on, just staring, and thinking.

While Tony is on Long Island Melinda is sitting in her study, watching the clock and knowing that if Tony is gone for much longer then she is going to call him as she knows where he is, and what he is doing, which makes her very worried.

"Mom." A voice says, and Melinda looks up to see Bobbi, who is clearly wearing a leather jacket over her S.H.I.E.L.D tactical outfit.

"Bobbi, what are you doing here?" Melinda asks her daughter, leaving out the 'especially dressed like that' which she is thinking.

"I'm on my way back from a mission, and we're having plan troubles, so we had to land here to fix it before heading back to DC, and I quickly ducked out because I wanted to talk to you." Bobbi explains to her mother.

"Is everything okay?" Melinda asks her daughter concerned.

"Yeah, I just wanted to ask you something." Bobbi admits, "It's not a big deal, at least I don't think it's a big deal, but you might, and Dad definitely will and…." Bobbi says, speaking rather fast, which is very odd for her.

"Bobbi, slow down." Melinda tells her daughter, "What did you want to ask?" she asks calmly.

"Would it be okay if I invited someone to join us Christmas Day?" Bobbi asks her mother curious.

"Do you trust them? With everything they'll find out?" Melinda asks her daughter, wounding who it could be.

"Yeah, I do." Bobbi confirms, "It's my boyfriend I want to invite, his name's Lance Hunter, we've known each other seven months." Bobbi explains.

"Oh." Melinda says, not sure how to react, and so she keeps her face blank, "If you would like to bring him to Christmas then you can, but you do realise that the entire family will be there. Sharon's even bringing Aunt Peggy Christmas Eve so that she can stay for a few days." Melinda explains.

"I know." Bobbi says, "That's why I want to bring Hunter, he's already met Sharon and Antoine,
"Okay." Melinda says, already planning on running a background check on Hunter.

"Cool, I should go, thanks Mom." Bobbi says, "Love you." She says, before leaving.

"JARVIS?" Melinda asks.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May?" JARVIS asks.

"Find me anything you can on Lance Hunter." Melinda requests.

"Yes Ma'am." JARVIS responds.

"And do you know if Tony is still on Long Island?" Melinda asks.

"Yes, but his GPS indicates that Mr Stark-May is on his way home." JARVIS explains.

"Good, that's good." Melinda says, looking relieved, as she wonders whether she should hold on telling Tony about their daughter bringing her boyfriend to Christmas.

A while later Tony has returned home and is working in his lab, and as Melinda has read everything she could find about Lance Hunter she decided that she would tell Tony about Bobbi bringing Hunter to Christmas as it wouldn't be fair not to.

"Tony." Melinda says, as she walks into the lab.

"Just a sec Mel." Tony says, as he is working on his suit and is in the middle of working on something that he can't stop doing yet.

"Take your time." Melinda says, as she sits down on one of the benches, and for the next few minutes Tony continues to work on his suit while Melinda waits for him to finish.

"Okay, what's up?" Tony asks, as he walks towards Melinda, about five minutes after she walked into the lab.

"I have to tell you something, and I don't want you to overreact." Melinda informs her husband.

"Okay? Now, you've gotten me worried." Tony admits.

"Bobbi stopped by earlier…" Melinda starts to say.

"Is she okay?" Tony asks, looking concerned.

"She's fine." Melinda assures him, "She was on her way back to DC after a mission and stopped in here as she wanted to know if she could invite someone for Christmas." Melinda explains.

"Who?" Tony asks, looking suspicious.

"Her Boyfriend, Lance Hunter." Melinda explains.

"Her what? Little Bird has a boyfriend? Since when?" Tony asks, looking shocked, and as he speaks his voice raises several octaves.

"I don't know how long they have been dating, but they have known each other for seven months." Melinda explains.
"Right before I went missing," Tony realises, "And she invited him for Christmas? It must be serious…. I need to sit down." Tony says, bracing himself against the bench and then pulling himself up and sitting down next to Melinda, "What do you know about him?"

"I had JARVIS run a background check, he's a Lieutenant in the SAS." Melinda explains.

"So, he's English," Tony realises.

"Yeah, his record is pretty good… but I can't get much from a file." Melinda admits.

"I can't believe it, our Little Bird, is serious enough about a guy to bring him to family Christmas." Tony says, looking shocked, "I don't think I like this."

"I figured you wouldn't." Melinda admits, "Bobbi's an adult Tony, and she's always been a good judge of character, so if she likes this Hunter there must be something good about him."

"I guess." Tony admits, "Doesn't mean I have to like him." He says, and Melinda just shakes her head as the two of them drift into silence.

December 25th 2010

A little over a week passed since Bobbi asked if she could bring Hunter to Christmas and Christmas day has finally come. It is mid-morning and Tony, Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, Sharon, Antoine and Peggy, all of whom are staying at the apartment have been joined by Rhodey, Pepper, Happy, Coulson, Natasha, Clint, Maria, Hope, William, and Lian.

"We can play after lunch, right dad?" Daisy asks her father, as one of the Christmas presents from her father to her and Peter is high tech laser tag for the apartment, with enough for everyone to play.

"Of course." Tony answers as Bobbi's phone goes off.

"Hunter's downstairs, I'll go get him." Bobbi says, after checking her phone.

"Great." Sharon mutters, her voice not that loud but it is still loud enough for others to hear.

"Be right back." Bobbi says, before leaving.

"Okay, what was with that mutter?" Tony asks, turning to look at Sharon.

"I'm not a big fan of Hunter." Sharon admits.

"Me either." Trip confirms, and as he does Tony and Melinda exchange a look, both wondering what Hunter could be like if Bobbi's two best friends don't like him.

While people are talking upstairs Bobbi is downstairs, in the lobby where she walks over to Hunter who is standing holding a bottle of wine and for once is actually wearing a nice jacket instead of his leather one.

"Hey." Bobbi says, greeting Hunter with a kiss.

"Hey you." Hunter responds, once the two of them break apart.

"You ready for this?" Bobbi says, as she leads Hunter over to the elevator that will take them back up to the Stark-May floors.
"Sure." Hunter says, not sounding all that convincing.

"Relax, they may be tough, but no one will actually shoot you." Bobbi admits.

"That was a concern?" Hunter asks, looking shocked.

"Yeah, but just a little one." Bobbi comments.

"BOB!" Hunter says, looking shocked.

"You've been in war zones, you can handle my family." Bobbi assures him, and Hunter isn't too sure of that fact, but before he can make a comment about that fact the elevator doors open, and everyone who is in the living room turn to look at her, and Hunter, as they walk out, "Okay, everyone this is Lieutenant Lance Hunter, my boyfriend, Hunter this is my family." Bobbi introduces, including titles as with her family it just makes sense, "You know Sharon and Antoine of course." Bobbi says, pointing to them, "This is My Mom, Agent Melinda Stark-May, who goes by just May at SHIELD, my Dad Tony Stark-May, my sister Daisy and brother Peter." Bobbi says, pointing at everyone, "Former SHIELD Director Peggy Carter, Agent Phil Coulson, Lieutenant Colonel James Rhodes, Agent Clint Barton, Agent Natasha Romanoff, Commander Maria Hill, Assistant Director of the CIA Lian May, Happy Hogan, Pepper Potts, Hope van Dyne, and William May." Bobbi explains, pointing to everyone.

"It's nice to meet you all." Hunter says, looking around, and strongly enough feeling the desire to salute, but he is pretty sure that won't go down well so he stops himself.

"We'll be the judge of that." Lian comments.

"Grandma!" Bobbi objects, though she isn't overly surprise.

"I think if given the chance I can prove myself, Ma'am." Hunter comments.

"We'll see." Tony comments.

"See, this is why I have no close friends, so I don't have to subject them to this." Daisy comments, walking forward, "Hey Hunter, Daisy. I'm the sane one here." Daisy comments, having decided to be nice to him unless he gives her a reason not to be.

"That's debatable." Sharon says, clearly teasing her cousin, and in response Daisy picks up a pillow and throws it at her.

"Daisy Lin Antonia." Melinda says, in a warning tone of voice.

"What?" Daisy asks, looking innocent as Hunter laughs a little.

"Can we at least eat before fights break out?" Pepper asks curious.

"That will be a first." Clint comments.

"Well, let's try, food should be ready." Phil says, and everyone start to head to the kitchen.

"Five minutes to the first fight?" Natasha asks Rhodey, in a quiet voice.

"Nah, I'll say at least seven." Rhodey responds.

"You've got a bet." Natasha says, and the two of them shake hands as they walk.
"Both of you lose the bet if you start a fight." Maria, who is walking behind the pair, says.

Within five minutes Natasha is proven to be correct as Peggy and Lian get into an argument, about something that happened a long time ago, which turns into a fight where others join in and the fight quickly turns into something it was far from at the beginning.

Even though he is trying to make a good impression on the family Hunter joins in on some of the arguments and is confused when everyone goes back to being perfectly pleasant to each other within a few minutes.

Hours later, during which time it becomes clear that Daisy is the only one, apart from Bobbi, who actually likes Hunter while almost everyone with the exceptions of Sharon, Trip, Tony, and Peter who clearly don't like him, are willing to give him a chance, Bobbi and Hunter on one the main balcony together, both with glasses of some of Tony's expensive scotch, and Bobbi can't help but notice that Hunter is being uncharacteristically quiet.

"Look, I know my family can be a lot," Bobbi admits, "Do you wish you didn't come today?" Bobbi asks, truly curious about that, as she did debate for a while whether she wanted to introduce Hunter to her family.

"No, I'm glad I did." Hunter admits, turning to look at Bobbi, "Bob, everyone in that apartment loves you, you're family, even if most of you aren't related by blood. You die for each other, kill from each other, that's kind of amazing Luv." Hunter admits, "You've got a great family, I'm glad to get to know them."

"I'm glad you're here to." Bobbi admits, smiling at Hunter, and as she smiles at him they both hear footsteps and they turn to see Peter, "What's up, Pete?"

"Daze convinced everyone to play laser tag with our Christmas gift." Peter explains, "Grandpa is going to be the referees, but everyone else is going to play, are you in or not?" Peter asks curious.

"Everyone? Including Aunt Peg?" Bobbi asks, sounding a little surprised as Peggy doesn't move as well as she used to anymore.

"Yep, she and grandma are team leaders." Peter explains, "So, do you want to play?"

"Definitely." Bobbi confirms, and she and Hunter both head inside, with Peter.

Over the next few minutes everyone is divided into teams with Peggy and Lian as team leaders, teams they tried to make as even, skill wise, as possible, Peggy's team being Peggy, Melinda, Peter, Coulson, Clint, Maria, Hope, Sharon and Pepper while Lian's team is Lian, Rhodey, Natasha, Daisy, Tony, Bobbi, Hunter, Happy and Trip and once the team are decided the group proceeds to play laser tag together, all of them having a very enjoyable time, though there are times where things get slightly out of control due to competitiveness.

January 7th 2011

Less than two weeks has passed to Christmas day, and to the dismay of both Tony and Peter Hunter has been around for much of that time.

It's early morning on Peter's tenth birthday and Melinda and Tony are in the kitchen putting the candles on his cake.

"Are you honestly saying you like him?" Tony asks, Melinda, sounding shocked.
"No, I don't have an opinion either way, what I'm saying is that Bobbi likes him, and if you keep trying to push him away all you're going to do is push our daughter away." Melinda tells Tony.

"But he's not right for her, not good enough!" Tony argues, "And Peter doesn't like him." He argues.

"Can you honestly say that you think anyone would be good enough?" Melinda asks curious.

"Well… no." Tony admits.

"Exactly." Melinda says, "And part of the reason why Peter doesn't like him is because he knows you, Sharon and Antoine don't like him." She explains, "Look, I'm not saying like the guy, I'm just saying that you should think about not being so outright hostile to him." Melinda explains, and Tony pulls a face at that, "Do it for me, and our daughter." Melinda requests.

"Fine." Tony says, looking slightly annoyed, but realising that it's for the best.

"Good." Melinda says, looking slightly relieved, "JARVIS can you wake Bobbi and Daisy, get them to meet us outside Peter's room." Melinda requests, as she finishes lighting the candles.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS responds, and once he does Melinda and Tony pick up Peter's cake, and both head upstairs.

About a minute later Melinda and Tony walk into the upstairs corridor and as they do they find Daisy and Bobbi waiting, and once all four of them are outside of Peter's room they walk in together, singing,

"Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear Peter, happy birthday to you."

As they do, and once they are close enough Peter blows out the candles as everyone sits down on Peter's bed.

"Happy Birthday Pete." Daisy says to her brother, giving him a hug.

"Thanks Daze." Peter responds, as she returns his sisters hug.

"So, what do you want to do for your birthday?" Bobbi asks her brother.

"I want to taken for a ride in the Iron Man suit." Peter says, looking between his parents, and as he does Melinda and Tony exchange looks, clearly having a conversation.

"Okay." Melinda finally says.

"Really?" Peter asks, sounding excited, as he looks between his parents.

"Really." Tony confirms.

"YES!" Peter says, looking glad.

"I know it's Peter's birthday but can I get a ride too?" Daisy asks curious.

"Oh, that would be cool if we do it together." Peter admits, as he wants to share something this awesome with his sister.

"Sure." Tony says, "Little Bird, do you want in on this too?" Tony asks curious.

"Nah, I'm good." Bobbi comments, as what she wants is to be able to fly the Iron Man suit alone,
but she isn't sure how to convince her father to let her do that, and the family of five proceed to eat Peter's birthday cake together.

A while later Daisy, Bobbi and Peter are in the living room while Melinda and Tony are in the lab, Tony about to put one of the Iron Man suits on.

"I'm not sure this is a good idea." Melinda admits, looking concerned.

"I'll keep them save Mel." Tony assures his wife.

"Tony, I'm not doubting you." Melinda says, not at all surprised that that is his first reaction, though she wishes it wasn't, "I know you always put our kids first, that you wouldn't do this if you thought it was dangerous for them."

"Then what's your concern?" Tony asks, assuming Melinda has one.

"How people are going to react when they see Iron Man flying around with two kids." Melinda admits.

"They'll speculate about me having kids, just like they do every few months, but I'll make sure that I hold Daisy and Peter in a way so that it's impossible for people below to see their faces, and I'll make sure they can't let go." Tony assures Melinda.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod.

"Okay." Tony confirms, and he proceeds to put the suit on.

After about a minute Tony is in the suit and once he is he and Melinda walk out into the living room, and while Tony walks over to Daisy and Peter Melinda hangs back with Bobbi.

"Okay, here's what we're going to do, Daisy you're going to be on my left side, Peter, you'll be on my right, what I want you to do is each give me a one arm hug and the hold each other's hands both in the front and back, that way you'll be secure." Tony explains to his kids.

"Yes Dad." Peter and Daisy say, and once they do they proceed to do what their father told them to do, and once they are doing what they told Tony looks over to Melinda, who nods, before he flies out of the apartment, through the open balcony door, and as he does Melinda and Bobbi walk out onto the balcony to watch.

February 11th 2011

A little over a month has passed since Daisy and Peter got to fly with Iron Man for Peter's birthday and just like Tony suspected the public, and media speculated for a little while if Daisy and Peter were in fact 'Tony Stark's secret kids' but after getting no conformation they moved on, just like they always do.

It's a Friday night and Tony is in his lab, having made sure that everyone else, including Melinda, was asleep.

"JARVIS, are these results right?" Tony asks concerned, as while he knew this was a possibility, he was assuming, if it was, that it would start for a while.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS confirms, "Your Blood is becoming toxic, the palladium core is killing you." He explains.
"How long do I have?" Tony asks, needing to know.

"It will take more time to be more arcuate, but the results so far would indicate months." JARVIS explains.

"Right…" Tony says, trailing off and honestly not sure how to feel about that, "Okay JARVIS, start to search for a suitable replacement for palladium." Tony instructs.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers, and as he does he looks at the picture of him, Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter that was taken on Peter's birthday.

"And JARVIS, you are not to tell anyone about this, about the palladium poisoning, about what it is doing to me, about what will happen if we don't find a replacement, none of it." Tony instructs.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"And that includes Mel, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter, you're not to tell them any of this." Tony instructs.

"Yes Sir." Jarvis responds, it being more than clear that he sounds less than happy about that particular order.

"Good, they can't know about this." Tony says, knowing what this news would do to Melinda, and not being able to help but wonder if this will be something that Bobbi's abilities alert her to, but as he starts to think about it Tony realises that he doesn't know enough about Bobbi's abilities to know if she'll know he's dying.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS once more speaks.

For a while Tony just sits at his bench, trying to digest everything as he just stares at the picture of him with his family, before finally deciding to get up and head upstairs.

Once he is upstairs Tony quietly opens the door to Peter's room, where he makes sure his son is sleeping soundly, before closing the door and heading to Daisy's room where he does the same thing, knowing that if Bobbi was home he would have done the same with her room.

After leaving Daisy's room Tony heads to his and Melinda where he climbs back in bed, and looks at Melinda who is sleeping soundly, something that doesn't happen much for her.

"I love you, so much." Tony says, to his sleeping wife, "Which is why I can't tell you what's happening." He says, as he won't hurt Melinda like that, he can't, before bending down and placing a gentle kiss on her head, and for a while he just lays and watches Melinda sleep, memorising every detail, until he finally falls asleep himself.

**May 1st 2011**

A little under three months have passed since Tony found out that the Palladium core was killing him, and ever since he has been doing everything he can to find a replacement, a substitute, but as of yet has been unsuccessful.

It is a Sunday evening and Tony is in his lab at the apartment, trying to find something, anything, that will save him, stop him from dying.

"Sir, you are wanted in the living room." JARVIS informs Tony.
"By who?" Tony asks, as he looks up from what he is doing.

"Mrs Stark-May, Miss Bobbi, Miss Daisy, and Mr Peter." JARVIS explains.

"Okay tell them…. Tell them…" Tony starts to say, before trailing off as he debates his option.

"Yes Sir? What would you like Mrs Stark-May, Miss Bobbi, Miss Daisy, and Mr Peter to be told?" JARVIS asks, and as he does Tony debates what to do, debates what would be the right thing to do, as what he is working on is a way to save his life, but he doesn't know how much longer he has to spend with his family, especially all together, "Sir?" JARVIS asks once more.

"Tell them I will be right there." Tony responds, as he finishes what he was doing. Once he finishes Tony heads out of the lab and heads into the living room where Bobbi, Melinda, Daisy and Peter all are, along with a lot of board games, "Games night?" he asks curious

"Yep." Bobbi confirms, "We flipped a coin between electronic and board games and board games won." She explains.

"Interesting system to use." Tony says, looking amused as he sits down next to Melinda, "What are we starting with?" he asks curious.

"Game of Life." Peter answers.

"Then Uno, we've got to play Uno." Daisy argues.

"We will, Daze." Melinda assures her daughter.

"Good." Daisy says, and once she does the five members of the Stark-May family start to play board games, as they do Tony looks around the room, trying to remember every detail as he knows that this very well may be the last time he will get to spend with the four people he loves the most in the world.
Chapter 36

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Here is the first chapter of Iron Man 2, hope you enjoy. I'm sorry that it's been a few days, I've been busy with Law school. I'm not sure when the next chapter will be as there is part of it that is not written even though I have written the next 10 chapters after it.

May 8th 2011

About a week has passed since The Stark-May family board game night and in that time Bobbi has celebrated her twenty fourth birthday. It is a Sunday night and while William is with Daisy and Peter Tony and Melinda are on a plane together, Tony in his iron Man suit while Melinda is flying the plane.

"I don't know, maybe this isn't such a great idea." Tony says, looking at Melinda in worry, as he stands right next to the pilots seat.

"You'll be fine." Melinda assures him, "You're the one who wanted to go big, and begged me to fly, you can do this." Melinda assures Tony, "But if you really don't want to I can land right outside the pavilion." Melinda reveals.

"Seriously? That's not much space." Tony comments, knowing that Melinda is a great pilot, but the plane is big and the area described is very small.

"Seriously." Melinda confirms.

"Ma'am....." The Airforce co-pilot, who was vetted by Rhodey starts to say, as he knows that it would be incredible dangerous to attempt that without an incredible talented pilot.

"The choice is yours Tony." Melinda says, ignoring the co-pilot, "But if you want to go big we're thirty second from the drop zone." Melinda explains.

"Okay...." Tony says, with a nod, "Let's go big." Tony says, picking up his helmet, "I'll see you on the ground." He tells Melinda.

"Yeah, you will." Melinda confirms, and she turns to look at Tony, giving him a supportive smile.

"Thanks Mel." Tony says, before putting on his helmet on and heading to the back of the plane.

"We're directly over the drop zone, this your opening." Melinda says, and once she does Tony jumps out of the plane in his Iron Man suit, heading towards the Stark Expo which he is opening.

For the next couple of minutes or so Melinda and the Air force pilot continue to fly together,

"Okay, I'm transferring control to you Lieutenant." Melinda says, as she does exactly that.

"Are you really going to parachute out?" The pilot asks surprised.

"Yep." Melinda confirms, as she climbs out of the pilots seat and heads to the back of the plane, where she puts a parachute on, "Opening the back." Melinda says, hitting a button.
"Ten second to drop zone." The air force pilot respond, and Melinda heads to the ramp, and once she sees a light go on she parachutes out.

A little while later Tony has given the opening address at the Stark Expo and has been lead through a crowd of people with Happy. As they walk out to the area where Melinda is going to meet them they find a red haired woman standing there rather than Melinda in a new car.

"Who are you?" Happy says, suspiciously, as he stands in front of Tony.

"US Marshal." The woman answers.

"Oh, can I see the badge? I like badges." Tony ask, side stepping past Happy, and the woman shows her badge, "Nice, what are you doing here?"

"Looking for you." The Agent says.

"Well you've found me." Tony responds, "What do you want?"

"To serve subpoenas." The Agent says, and she goes to hand Tony a letter, which he doesn't take.

"Yikes." Tony says, as Happy reaches out and grabs the letter.

"He doesn't like to be handed things." Happy explains, as Melinda arrives in a white car.

"Yeah, I have peeve." Tony says, as Melinda gets out of the car.

"What's going on?" Melinda asks, as she walks over to Tony and Happy.

"Agent Melinda Stark-May?" The Marshal asks.

"Yes?" Melinda confirms, wondering what is going on as even though Stark-May is her legal name when she is called Agent she is always just May.

"You've been served." The Marshal says, handing an envelope over, "Melinda Stark-May, Anthony Stark-May you are both hereby ordered to appear before the Senate Armed Services Committee tomorrow morning at nine am." The marshal says.

"Great." Melinda mutters.

"Do you still like the badge?" The marshals asks, looking at Tony.

"Yep." Tony confirms, and the marshal walks away, "You're a spy, can you be subpoenaed to give evidence at a open committee?" he asks, curious, looking at Melinda.

"I'm going to call Fury and find out." Melinda reveals.

"Happy, go to our apartment, tell William what is going on and stay with him, Daisy, and Peter." Tony requests, as he knows that's one way to assure their safety.

"Of course, Sir." Happy says, before walking away.

"You drive." Melinda tells Tony, as the person on the other end picks up of her phone picks up and she and Tony walk to their respective car seats, "Agent Melinda May, Alpha 078634." Melinda says, as she sits down, "I need to talk to Director Fury, it's urgent." Melinda says, as Tony starts to drive, fast.
The following morning Melinda and Tony are arriving at capitol hill, the two of them having used the entrance with no camera so they weren't seen together.

"I cannot believe Fury was able to quash your subpoena, and not mine." Tony says, looking a little annoyed.

"The only reason he could is because it should have never been issued." Melinda reveals, "Look Tony, you've just got to answer the questions. They're going to grill you, question you, just stick to the facts." Melinda says, knowing that that would be best.

"Not going to warn me about my attitude?" Tony asks curious.

"Nope." Melinda says, with a slight grin, as they arrive at the room where the committee meeting will take place, "Good luck." Melinda says, and they both walk in, as they do Tony heads to where he needs to sit while Melinda sits in a chair near him, but in the audience, taking notice of every single person and camera in the room as she does.

About an hour late the committee meeting has been going on for a while, and it has become clear, at least to Melinda that they want to railroad Tony, and as he has noticed look on Melinda's face Tony leans back to talk to her,

"What's going on?" Tony asks.

"I don't like this." Melinda admits, "The senator in charge is trying to achieve something, I'm just not sure what." Melinda admits.

"Mr Stark, could we pick up now where we left off? Mr Stark, please." The Senator in charge, Stern, asks, and Tony turns around, facing the committee once more.

"Yes Dear?" Tony asks.

"Can I have your attention?" Stern asks.

"Absolutely." Tony responds.

"Do your or do you not possess a specialised weapon?" Stern asks.

"I do not." Tony answers.

"You do not?"

"I do not. Well, it depends on how you define the word weapon." Tony admits.

"The Iron Man weapon." Stern answers.

"My device does not fit that description." Tony reveals.

"Well, how would you describe it?" Stern asks.

"I would describe it by defining it as what it is, Senator." Tony admits.

"As?"
"It's a high-tech prosthesis." Tony says, and several people give amused laughs at that, "That is, that's actually the most apt description I can make of it." Tony admits,

"It's a weapon, Mr Stark." Stern says.

"Please, if your priority was actually the wellbeing of the American citizens…." Tony starts to say.

"My priority is to get the Iron Man weapon turned over to the people of the United States of America." Stern says, and as he does Melinda closes her eyes and braces herself as she knows how Tony is going to react to that.

"Well, you can forget about it. I am Iron Man. The suit and I are one." Tony says, "To turn over the Iron Man suit would be to turn over myself which is tantamount to indentured servitude or prostitution, depending on what state you're in. you can't have it." Tony says.

"Look, I'm no expert…." Stern starts to say.

"In prostitution? Of course not. You're a senator, come on." Tony says, and as he does he turns to look at Melinda who is a little amused by what Tony said, but doesn't let it show as she knows that if this goes badly here it could put their kids in danger and so she gives him a disapproving look. Seeing the look, and knowing Melinda well enough to know that there would be a part of her that would be amused, Tony turns back around to the senator.

"I'm no expert in weapons. We have somebody here who is an expert on weapon. I'd now like to call Justin Hammer, our current primary weapons contractor." Stern says.

"Let the record reflect that I observed Mr Hammer entering the chamber, and I am wondering if and when any actual expert will also be in attendance." Tony says.

"Absolutely. I'm no expert." Hammer says, as he stands up, "I defer to you, Anthony. You're the wonder boy." Hammer says, "Senator, if I may. I may well not be an expert, but you know who was the expert? Your dad. Howard Stark." Justin says, pointing at Tony, and as he speaks Melinda turns her complete attention as she knows how he may end up reacting to that, "Really a father to us all, and to the military-industrial age. Let's just be clear, he was no flower child. He was a lion. We all know why we're here. In the last six months, Anthony Stark has created a sword with untold possibilities. And yet, he insists it's a shield." Hammer says, and Melinda can't help but smirk a little at that description, "He asks us to trust him as we cower behind it. I wish I were comforted, Anthony, I really do. I'd love to leave my door unlocked when I leave the house, but this ain't Canada. You know, we live in a world of grave threats, threats that Mr Stark will not always be able to foresee. Thank you. God bless Iron Man. God bless America." Hammer says, before sitting down.

"That is well said Mr Hammer. The committee would now like to invite Lieutenant Colonel James Rhodes to the chamber." Stern says, to the surprise of both Melinda and Tony.

"Rhodey? What?" Tony asks standing up, and as Rhodey walks past Melinda the two of them exchange looks.

"Hey Buddy. I didn't expect to see you here." Tony says, as he and Rhodey shake hands.

"Look, it's me, I'm here, deal with it. let's move on." Rhodey says.

"I just…" Tony starts to say.

"Drop it." Rhodey requests.
"All right, I'll drop it." Tony says, as he and Rhodey both sit down.

"I have before me a complete report on the Iron Man weapon, compiled by Colonel Rhodes. And, Colonel, for the record, can you please read page 57, paragraph four?" Stern requests.

"You're requesting that I read specific selections from my report, Senator?" Rhodey asks, clearly surprised, which Melinda picks up on and realises that her suspicion of people trying to railroad Tony is correct.

"Yes, sir." Stern confirms.

"It was my understanding that I was going to be testifying in a much more comprehensive and detailed manner." Rhodey says, reaching the same conclusion as Melinda.

"I understand. A lot of things have changed today, so if you could just read…." Stern starts to request.

"You do understand that reading a single paragraph out of context does not reflect the summary of my final…." Rhodey starts to argue.

"Just read it, Colonel." Stern instructs.

"Very well." Rhodey says, sounding reluctant, and he starts to read, "As he does not operate within any definable branch of government, Iron Man presents a potential threat to the security of both the nation and to her interests." Rhodey reads, "I did however, go on to summarise that the benefits of Iron Man far outweigh three liabilities and that it would be in our interest…." Rhodey starts to explain.

"That's enough, Colonel." Stern says.

"To fold Mr Stark…." Rhodey says, continuing to speak.

"That's enough." Stern says, a bit more sternly.

"Into the existing chain of command, Senator." Rhodey finishes.

"I'm not a joiner, but I'll consider Secretary of Defence, if you ask nice." Tony says, causing people to laugh, "If we can amend the hours a little bit." He adds.

"I'd like to go on and show, if I may, the imagery that's connected to your report." Stern requests.

"I believe it is somewhat premature to reveal these images to the general public at this time." Rhodey says.

"With all due respect, Colonel, I understand, and if you could just narrate those for us, we'd be very grateful. Let's have the images." Stern requests, and as he does Rhodey waves his hand and images start to play on the screen.

"Intelligence suggests that the devices seen in these photos are, in fact, attempts at making manned copies of Mr Stark's suit. This has been corroborated by our allies and local intelligence on the ground…" Rhodey explains, and as he does Tony starts to do something on his Stark device, "Indicating that these suits are quite possibly, at this moment, operational." Rhodey explains.

"Hold a second, Buddy, let me set up something here." Tony says, connecting his device to the screens showing the pictures having purposely programmed it so it says 'welcome Mr Stark' and
not 'Stark-May', "Boy, I'm good. I'm commandeering your screens. I need them. Time for a little transparency. Now, let's see what's really going on."

"What is he doing?" Stern asks.

"If you will direct your attention to said screens, I believe that's North Korea." Tony says, as image of a very badly made suits plays.

"Can you turn that off?" Stern asks, as Hammer stands up and attempts to do so.

"Iran." Tony says, before another clip, this time of a suit that flies for about five seconds before crashing and catching fire, "No grave threat here. Is that Justin Hammer? How did Hammer get in the game?" Tony asks, as a clip with Hammer with a very bad suit plays, "Justin, you're on TV focus up." Tony says, as Hammer continues to try to turn off the screen, finally managing to pull plugs and turning it off, "Wow. Yeah, I'd say most counties, five, ten years away, Hammer industries, twenty." Tony says.

"I'd like to point out that that test pilot survived." Hammer says.

"I think we're done is the point he's making. I don't think there's any reason…." Stern starts to say.

"The point is, you're welcome, I guess." Tony says.

"For what?" Stern asks.

"Because I'm your nuclear deterrent. It's working. We're safe. America is secure, you want my property? You can't have it, but I did you a big favour." Tony says as he stands up, turns and faces the crowd, "I've successfully privatised world peace." Tony says, as he makes peace signs, "What more do you want?" Tony asks.

"Fuck you Mr Stark, Fuck you Buddy. We're adjourned, we're adjourned for today," Stern says, as Tony heads out of the chamber, he and Stern exchanging a few more words as he goes while Melinda and Rhodey try to hide how amused they are.

A few minutes later Melinda has headed out the chamber and heads to the back exit where she finds Tony waiting,

"You mad?" Tony asks concerned.

"No." Melinda says, before leaning forward and kissing Tony, "Let's go home." She says, when they break apart, and that's exactly what they do.

**May 12th 2011**

Three days have passed since the Armed services committee meeting, and since then Tony has been enjoying time with his family, but as he knows the poisoning is getting worse, and it doesn't seem like there is a cure, he knows what he has to do.

It's early morning on a Thursday and Tony and Melinda are the only ones in the house who are awake, having spent a little while lying in bed and thinking about what he has to do Tony gets up and heads to the gym where Melinda is doing Tai-Chi.

"Mel, I know you hate it when I interrupt Tai-Chi, but can we talk?" Tony asks, as he walks into the gym.
"Sure." Melinda says, as she stops what she is doing and turns to look at Tony, "What's up?"

"I need to go handle some things in LA, and I have that trip to Monaco in a week too." Tony says, "So I might be gone for a little while."

"How long?" Melinda asks concerned.

"A few weeks." Tony says, knowing that in a few weeks he will have either found a cure, or be dead and he doesn't want Melinda to watch him die, he can't do that to her.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, "You're going to have to talk to Daisy and Peter, they may react badly, Daisy especially." Melinda explains.

"I know." Tony confirms, "I've been avoiding this trip for a while, but I have to do it now." Tony says.

"I get that." Melinda confirms, "I'll see you when you get home, I love you." Melinda tells Tony.

"I love you too." Tony says, before kissing and hugging Melinda, and as he hugs her he knows that he never wants to let her go, even though he wants to protect her from what's happened.

A little while later both Daisy and Peter are awake and the two of them, Melinda, and Tony are having breakfast together.

"Daze, Pete, I've got to tell you guys something." Tony says, looking between his kids.

"Is everything okay?" Daisy asks.

"I have to go to LA for a few weeks." Tony answers, purposely avoiding answering Daisy's question.

"You're leaving? Again?" Daisy asks, looking hurt.

"Just for a few weeks. There is business I have to handle with the company." Tony explains.

"So, these are like the trips you used to take." Peter realises.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, "I also have to go to Monaco, but I'll come home as soon as I can." Tony says, knowing he will only come home when he is no longer dying.

"Okay." Daisy says, not liking this much, but realising that this isn't Tony avoiding being with his family there is an actual business reason, and four of the five members of the Stark-May family drift into silence.

Hours after his conversation with his kids, who were harder to leave than ever before, Tony is sitting down in his workshop in LA.

"Wake up, Daddy's home." Tony says, to his systems.

"Welcome home, Sir. Congratulations on the opening ceremonies. They were such a success, as was your senate hearing." JARVIS says, and as he does U who is trying to make a smoothie without a lid on the blender.

"U!" Tony says, as U knocks over the blender, "I swear to god I'll dismantle you. I'll soak your
motherboard, I'll turn you into a wine rack." Tony says, as he starts to pour himself some of the juice and U looks sad, "How many ounces a day of this gobbledegook am I supposed to drink?" Tony asks.

"We are up to eighty ounces a day to counteract the symptoms Sir." JARVIS answers, as Tony downs the liquid.

"Check palladium levels." Tony says, as he puts his finger against a device that looks like a pager, which takes a sample of blood.

"Blood toxicity twenty four percent, it appears that the continued use of the Iron Man suit is accelerating your condition. Another core has been depleted." JARVIS says, and as he does Tony lifts his shirt, revealing blue liens all around the arch reactor, and takes the Arc Reactor out of his chest, as the does the core, which is rusted and slightly smoking, pops out.

"God they're running out quick." Tony comments.

"I have run simulations on every known element and none of them can serve as a viable replacement for the palladium core." JARVIS says, as Tony puts a new core this one silver, into the arc reactor which he puts back in his chest.

"You are running out of both times and options." JARVIS says, "Unfortunately, the device that's keeping you alive is also killing you." JARVIS says, "Miss Potts is approaching, I recommend….." JARVIS starts to say.

"Mute." Tony says as the door opens and Pepper, who came to LA with Tony, walks in.

"Is this a joke? What are you thinking?" Pepper asks, sounding both shocked and angry.

"What?" Tony asks, wondering just what made Pepper angry.

"What are you thinking?"

"Hey, I'm thinking I'm busy and you're angry about something." Tony says, standing up, "Do you have the sniffles I don't want to get sick." Tony says, as his immune system is compromised at the moment so he really can't get sick, as he and Pepper start to walk around the room.

"Did you just donate our entire modern art collection to the…" Pepper starts to say.

"Boy scouts of America." Tony finishes.

"Boy scouts of America?" Pepper asks, sounding shocked.

"Yes. It is a worthwhile organisation. I didn't physically check the crates but, basically, yes. And it's not "our" collection, it's my collection. No offence." Tony says.

"No, you know what? I think I'm actually entitled to say 'our' collection considering the time that I put in, over ten years, curating that." Pepper says.

"It was a tax write-off I needed that." Tony argues.

"You know, there's only about eight thousand and eleven things I really need to talk to you about." Pepper admits, "The expo is a gigantic waste of time." Pepper says.

"I need you to wear a surgical mask until you're feeling better, is that okay?" Tony asks.
"That's rude." Pepper comments, as she coughs.

"Work wise, there's nothing more important to me than the expo, it's my primary point of concern, I don't know why you're..." Tony starts to say.

"The expo is your ego gone crazy." Pepper says, as Tony picks up a painting of Iron Man.

"Wow, look at that. That's modern art. That's going up." Tony says.

"You've got to be kidding." Pepper says, sounding disapproving.

"I'm gonna put this up right now. This is vital." Tony says.

"Stark is in complete disarray, you understand that?" Pepper asks.

"No, our stocks have never been higher." Tony argues.

"From a managerial standpoint..." Pepper starts to say.

"Well, if it's messy then let's double back." Tony says.

"Let me give you an example." Pepper says.

"Let's move onto another subject." Tony requests, as he stands on a cabinet and is about to take down a fancy painting to replace it with the Iron Man one.

"No, no, no, you are not taking down the Barnett Newman and hanging that up." Pepper says.

"I'm not taking it down, I'm just replacing it with this." Tony explains, "Let's see what I can get going on here."

"Okay, fine, my point is, we have already awarded contracts to the wind farm people..."

"Yeah, don't say 'wind farm' I'm already feeling gassy." Tony argues.

"And to the plastic plantation tree, which was your idea by the way, those people are on the payroll."

"Everything was my idea." Tony says.

"And you won't make a decision." Pepper says.

"I don't care about the liberal agender anymore. It's boring, boring. I'm giving you a boring alert." Tony says, as he jumps of the cabinet, "You do it."

"I do what?" Pepper asks confused.

"Excellent idea just figured this out. You run the company." Tony says, realising that now is the perfect time to do something he's been thinking about.

"Yeah, I'm trying to run the company." Pepper argues.

"Pepper, I need you to stop trying to do it and just do it." Tony argues.

"You will not give me the information." Pepper says.

'I'm not asking you to try..."
"...In order too."

"I'm asking you to physically do it. I need you to do it." Tony says,

"I am trying to do it!" Pepper argues.

"Pepper, you're not listening to me!"

"No, you are not listening to me!"

"I'm trying to make you CEO, why won't you let me?" Tony asks.

"Have you been drinking?" Pepper asks shocked, as she tries to smell Tony's breath.

"Chlorophyll. I hereby irrevocably appoint you chairman and CEO of Stark Industries effective immediately." Tony says, "Yeah, done deal. Okay? I've actually given this a fair amount of thought, believe it or not. "He says, as one of his robots bring him a tray with champagne and glasses on it, "A bit of headhunting, so to speak, trying to figure out who a worthy successor would be. And then I realised it's you. It's always been you." Tony says as he pours the champagne while Pepper sits down, looking shocked and confused, as he knew that Melinda and Bobbi, have no interest in being CEO, "I thought there'd be a legal issue, but actually I'm capable of appointing my successor. My successor being you." Tony says, as he hands Pepper a glass which he doesn't take, "Congratulations? Take it, just take it." Tony says, as Pepper takes the glass.

"I don't know what to think." Pepper admits.

"Don't think drink. There you go." Tony says, as he and Pepper tag glasses and drink.

May 20th 2011

About a week has passed since Tony made Pepper CEO of Stark and ever since he has been organizing other things he wanted to make sure are handled for after he dies, including making sure Melinda and his kids would be fine, while making frequent calls back home.

It is a Friday afternoon and Tony and Happy are sparing together in the gym at the Malibu house when Bobbi walks into the gym.

"Dad." Bobbi calls, and Tony turns to look at him.

"Little Bird." Tony says, sounding happy, "Want to have a go?" he asks curious.

"Wouldn't be a fair fight." Bobbi admits, looking amused, as Tony climbs out of the ring and walks over to her,

"What are you doing here?" Tony asks, as he certainly wasn't expecting his oldest daughter.

"I'm between missions, and Mom said you're in Malibu, so I thought I'd come say hello." Bobbi admits.

"I'm glad, it's good to see you." Tony says, as Pepper walks in, honestly glad that Bobbi has come to visit as he wanted a chance to see his daughter before he dies.

"Notary should be here in a minute." Pepper reveals, "Bobbi hi." She greets.

"Hey, what notary?" Bobbi asks confused.
"I've named Pepper CEO of Stark, we've got to do the paperwork." Tony explains.

"Wow, congrats." Bobbi says, feeling a little confused, a confusion that only grows when Natasha walks in, carrying a folder, "Nat?" Bobbi asks, looking confused as Tony and Pepper both say, "Romanoff?" at the same time, looking just as confused as Bobbi feels.

"What are you doing here?" Bobbi asks.

"Fury sent me undercover at Stark to investigate whether there are other security threats besides Obadiah." Natasha explains, and even though Natasha is lying perfectly, there is something about what she is saying that doesn't make sense to Bobbi, "I'm in the legal department, and so this is all completely legal." She explains.

"Okay." Pepper says, as Tony suspects that he knows exactly why Natasha was sent undercover, and because of that he doesn't argue as he doesn't want to risk Bobbi figuring out what is going on.

"You need to initial every box." Natasha says, to Pepper, and that is exactly what she does, "And I need your fingerprint Stark." She says.

"Hey, you're the boss." Tony says, smiling at Pepper, once he does so.

"Will that be all?" Natasha asks, looking between Tony and Pepper.

"Yes, thank you Natasha." Pepper says, and Natasha nods and leaves the gym.

"I'll be back." Bobbi says, before hurrying out of the gym, "NAT!" Bobbi calls and Natasha turns around to face her, "What's going on?"

"I told you Fury…" Natasha starts to say.

"Oh come on, we both know if that was the only reason why you were undercover Dad would have argued." Bobbi says, "What's going on?"

"You should talk to your Dad." Natasha responds.

"Nat… please." Bobbi says, wanting some answers.

"Bobbi, talk to your Dad." Natasha repeats, her voice stern.

"That's not an answer Nat." Bobbi says, and so she can try to get some kind of idea what is going on Bobbi closes her eyes and focuses on her Dad, using her powers which she has pretty great control over now, and after a few seconds she knows what's going on, "Oh my god." Bobbi says, opening her eyes, sounding horrified as tears come to her eyes.

"Go talk to him." Natasha tells her, and Bobbi nods and heads back into the gym where her father, Pepper and Happy are.

"Pepper, Happy, can I talk to Dad alone." Bobbi requests, trying to hide what she is feeling.

"Of course, Bobbi." Pepper says, and she and Happy leave the gym.

"Little Bird…" Tony starts to say.

"No, is it true? Are my powers right?" Bobbi asks needing to know, "Are you dying?" Bobbi asks, her voice breaking.
"Yeah Little Bird." Tony confirms, "I am." He says, as he walks close enough to his daughter to hug her.

"No." Bobbi says, as she hugs her Dad, "You can't die." Bobbi says and those words break Tony's heart, "Why didn't Mom tell me?" Bobbi asks, as Tony just holds his daughter.

"She doesn't know." Tony explains, as he kisses his daughter's head.

"What?" Bobbi asks, surprised, as she and her Dad break apart.

"I can't do that to her, can't break her heart like that." Tony explains, "JARVIS tell Romanoff to stop eavesdropping and come in here." He requests.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS responds.

"That's why you've come to LA, so Mom, Daisy and Peter don't have to watch you die." Bobbi realises, and Tony nods, "We'll I'm staying. I'll use some of my leave time." Bobbi says, as Natasha walks into the room.

"No, I don't want you to watch me die either." Tony tells his daughter.

"I don't care." Bobbi says, "I'm not going to let you be alone, not now." Bobbi says, it being clear that she is going to be talked out of this.

"Bobbi…" Tony starts to say.

"Don't even try, I'm not going anywhere, Dad." Bobbi says.

"Okay." Tony finally says, knowing he will still try to protect his daughter from what is going on, "I take it you and Fury both know what is going on?" he asks Natasha.

"Coulson too." Natasha answers.

"Mel cannot know." Tony says, "I will do whatever Fury wants, but in return no one can tell Mel." He says, it being clear that he is completely serious about this.

"You know this will destroy her." Natasha tells him.

"Which is why she can't know." Tony says.

"So, you're just going to die on her?" Natasha asks, with a frown, sounding disapproving, and Tony knows she is protective of Melinda something which he is very glad about, because he knows that if he doesn't find a cure then Melinda is going to need that support.

"It's better this way." Tony admits, "I don't want Mel to know, she can't know; Daisy and Peter too." Tony says, looking between Natasha and Bobbi.

"Okay." Bobbi and Natasha say, after exchanging looks.

"Good."

"I'm your assistant now. That's what Fury wants." Natasha reveals.

"Fine, you'll know what to do, save me from teaching someone else." Tony says, looking like that isn't a problem, "We're all going to Monaco in three days, be ready." Tony says, before leaving the gym, not planning on telling Pepper about Natasha and Bobbi joining in on the trip.
"S.H.I.E.L.D's working on a cure, right?" Bobbi asks, Natasha, her voice stuttering slightly.

"Yeah, Fury's doing everything he can." Natasha assures Bobbi, knowing that Fury suspects he has something that could lead to a cure, but no more than that, reaching out and putting her hand on her shoulder, as the two of them drift into silence, Bobbi knowing that she will spend as much time as possible with her Dad in the coming days, and weeks.
Chapter 37

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: I am SO SO SORRY that it's been so long since I updated. I've had the week and a half from hell, the second worst week of my life, and so updating and writing have been the last thing on my mind.Hope you enjoy this chapter. Please leave a comment/Review

May 23rd 2011

Three days have passed since Bobbi found out that her father is dying and just like she promised herself she has been spending as much time with him as possible. It's a lovely day in Monaco and Tony and Pepper are walking into a nice hotel, Tony knowing exactly what they will find, while Pepper doesn't.

"You know, it's Europe, whatever happens in the next twenty minutes, just go with it." Tony says,

"Go with it? Go with what?" Pepper asks confused.

"Tony." Natasha says as she Bobbi walk up to the pair.

"Hey." Tony greats

"Hey Pepper." Bobbi greats.

"Bobbi? Natasha? What are you doing here?" Pepper asks, feeling very confused.

"In a minute, we've got one photographer form the ACM, if you don't mind?" Natasha requests, and a photographer takes a picture of Tony and Pepper, Bobbi having made sure she was out of frame.

"Okay, can someone explain what is going on?" Pepper request, looking between Tony, Natasha and Bobbi.

"Fury ordered me to be Tony's assistant so that I was in a better place to assess security threats." Natasha explains, using the lie that she and Tony agreed on.

"I agreed because I want to know if someone else in the company is double dealing." Tony explains.

"And I have some leave I had to use so I tagged along." Bobbi explains.

"We're this way." Natasha says, leading the others in a direction as Pepper tries to digest everything that happened, "What's on the docket?" Tony asks curious.

"You have a nine thirty diner." Natasha reveals.

"Perfect, I'll be there at eleven." Tony says, to Bobbi's amusement.

"Absolutely." Natasha says, as they get to a corner table.

"Is this us?" Tony asks.
"It can be." Natasha responds.

"Great, make it us." Tony says, as Natasha walks away, leaving Bobbi, Tony, and Pepper together, and as she does Pepper recognizes someone so she walks over to him.

"Mr Musk how are you?" Pepper asks.

"Hi Pepper, congratulations on the promotion." Elon Musk responds.

"Thank you very much." Pepper says, as Bobbi unconsciously scans the room for threats.

"Elon, how's it going. Those merlin engines are fantastic." Tony comments.

"Thank you. Yeah, I've got an idea for an electric jet." Elon explains.

"You do?" Tony asks.

"Yeah."

"Then we'll make it work." Tony says, as he, Bobbi and Pepper start to walk away, heading to the bar.

"How are we introducing you?" Pepper asks, Bobbi.

"I'm just Bobbi, don't worry about an explanation." Bobbi assures one of her father's best friends, knowing that between her and Natasha they'll be able to handle things so they aren't suspicious.

"Bobbi, drink?" Tony asks.

"Sure." Bobbi answers, as Tony orders the drink.

"Anthony is that you?" Hammer asks.

"My least favourite person on Earth." Tony comments, seeing Hammer walking towards him.

"Hey Pal." Hammer says.

"Justin Hammer." Tony says, Bobbi being able to tell that her father would like to do anything other than talk to Hammer.

"How you doing? You know you're no the only rich guy here with a fancy car. You know Christine Everhart form Vanity fair? You guys know each other?" Hammer asks as Everhart walks up to them.

"Yeah, we've met a few times." Tony comments, and Bobbi is pretty sure there is a story, a little more than just Everhart being the one who baited Tony into revealing he's Iron Man.

"BTW, big story, the new CEO of Stark Industries." Hammer says, pointing at Pepper.

"I know, I know." Everhart says.

"Congratulations." Hammer says.

"My editor will kill me if I don't grab a quote for our Powerful Women Issue." Everhart says.

"Oh." Pepper says, sounding surprised.
"Can I?" Everhart asks.

"Sure." Pepper answers.

"She's actually doing a big spread on me for Vanity Fair. I thought I'd throw her a bone, you know, right?" Hammer says.

"She did several stories on me last year." Tony reveals.

"They we're very well done." Pepper comments.

"Thank you." Everhart says, sounding surprised by the compliment.

"I'm gonna go wash up." Pepper says.

"Don't leave me." Tony requests, as Pepper walks away.

"Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere." Bobbi comments, side stepping so that she is closer to her father.

"Who are you?" Everhart ask suspiciously.

"Bobbi."

"Bobbi, that's a lovely name." Hammer says, with a flirty, grin, "Justin Hammer, it's a pleasure to meet you." He says, taking Bobbi's hand and kissing it.

"I'm seeing someone." Bobbi says, pulling her hand away from Hammer.

"Excuse me." Tony says, walking away before he accidently gives away the fact that Bobbi is his daughter as he is very close to doing so, even though he knows Bobbi could crush Hammer like a bug, without her powers, if she wanted to.

"And shouldn't you be more worried about the fact that your weapon contract got revoked?" Bobbi ask curious, and as Hammer has to explain the difference between on hold and revoked she is able to slip away and walk over to Natasha.

"Your Dad's table's ready." Natasha informs Bobbi.

"Good Hammer's more a douche than Dad said." Bobbi comments, having made sure that her voice wasn't loud enough for anyone other than Natasha to hear.

"Isn't that your type?" Natasha asks, with a teasing look.

"Nah, Hunter's more of a dick that douche." Bobbi responds, with a smirk, as she sits down.

Over the next few minutes Bobbi is joined by Pepper, and the two of them sit and wait for Tony, and as they wait Bobbi looks over at the TV and her heart sinks,

"Well, what's the use of having and owning a race car if you don't drive it." Tony on the screen says.

"What the hell?" Bobbi asks.

"What is your Dad doing?" Pepper asks, looking shocked.
"I don't know." Bobbi says, very much wishing she did.

"Natasha." Pepper calls, and Natasha hurries over.

"Did you know about this?" Bobbi asks.

"No."

"This cannot happen." Pepper comments.

"Yeah, no kidding." Bobbi comments.

"Where's Happy?" Pepper asks.

"Outside." Natasha answers.

"Okay, get him." Pepper tells Natasha, who nods, "You should stay here, your Dad might be insane right now, but we both know he wouldn't want you in danger." Pepper says, before getting up.

"Okay." Bobbi says, trusting Pepper and Happy and so she doesn't plan on doing something, or at least she doesn't until she watches her father get attacked with some guy who is using wips that seem to be powered by arc reactor technology, "Dad." Bobbi says, and so she gets up and runs out of the hotel, being careful not use her powers so that she doesn't run too fast.

Once she is outside the hotel Bobbi starts to run towards the race track, this time putting just a small amount of her power into her run, but before she can run to far a hand reaches out from alley and pulls her into it.

"Nat?" Bobbi asks confused, realising who it is, before she attacked, "What are you doing, I have to help my dad." Bobbi argues.

"And expose yourself in the process?" Natasha asks.

"If I have to." Bobbi responds.

"No, there are too many people here, too many camera's, you can't risk it, your Dad wouldn't want you to." Natasha argues.

"I can't just stand by and do nothing." Bobbi argues, pulling her hand out of Natasha's grasp.

"Pepper and Happy are getting him the suit, he'll be okay." Natasha assures her.

"You don't know that." Bobbi says, and she clearly about turns to run again, but before she can Natasha uses one of her widow bites on Bobbi.

"I'm sorry." Natasha tells her friend, knowing, due to how strong Bobbi is, that something that will usual incapacitate a person for well over a couple of minutes will only last about a minute at the most, "You're not thinking straight, you can't risk exposure." Natasha tells her, bending down so that she is next to Bobbi, who she knows is going to be pissed.

After less than thirty seconds Bobbi realises that the widow bite has stopped being effective and so, before Natasha realises Bobbi, backhands her, knocking her down, and then gets to her feet and starts running.

"BOBBI!" Natasha calls after her but Bobbi just keeps running not using her powers yet, as she can run fast enough without using them.
As she gets closer to the track Bobbi sees a motorbike and so she steals it and drives into onto the street, way faster than any sane person would, and within a few minutes she gets to where her father is in, an Iron Man suit, having defeated the person who attacked him, and so without even thinking Bobbi jumps off her bike and hurries to her father and hugs him,

"I'm okay, Little Bird." Tony assures his daughter, as he hugs her.

"That was beyond stupid." Bobbi tells her father, just feeling glad that he is okay.

"Sir, Mrs Stark-May is on the line." JARVIS reveals.

"Answer." Tony requests.

"Mom?" Bobbi asks, and Tony nods.

"Hey Mel." Tony greets.

"Are you okay?" Melinda's voice, clearly worried asks.

"Yeah, I'm fine." Tony assures her, as he keeps an arm around Bobbi.

"What were you thinking?" Melinda asks, sounding shocked.

"That driving the car looked fun." Tony reveals, as he sees police and other people coming towards him, "Look Mel, I've got to go, deal with everything that happened, I love you."

"Love you too." Melinda responds, as Tony hangs up, and as he does Bobbi notices Natasha, who clearly stole a vehicle and so she walks over to her.

"Sorry about hitting you." Bobbi tells her, actually meaning that, as while she was willing to do whatever she had to do to protect her Dad, she does feel a little bad about hitting Natasha.

"And I'm sorry about using my widow bite, but I was trying to protect you." Natasha says.

"I know." Bobbi says, and the two of them exchange half smiles, making it clear that everything is okay between them, "Are we on clean up duty?" she asks curious.

"Nah, the locals have it." Natasha explains, and Bobbi nods.

A little while later Tony has changed out of his Iron man suit and he, and Bobbi because she wasn't going to let him go alone, have gone to the jail where the person who attacked him is being held.

"We ran his prints. We got nothing back, not even a name." the police officer says in French.

"Not surprising." Bobbi says, to her father, in English.

"No, it's not." Tony confirms, "Where are we going?" Tony asks the office, in French.

"Over there. We're not even sure he speaks English, he hasn't said a word since he got here." The office explains, also in French.

"Five minutes." Tony requests, as the police officer opens and allows Tony and Bobbi to walk in.

"Five minutes" The office says, in French, and while Tony walks over to the man Bobbi stays back near the door and just watches, assessing everything and knowing she will get her father out if it
looks like it's needed.

"Pretty decent tech. cycle per second were a little low. You could have doubled up your rotations if you focused repulsor energy through ionised plasm channels." Tony says.

"Really?" Bobbi asks, her father, before she can stop herself it being clear from her tone that she isn't saying really because she doesn't know, but rather in a 'are you seriously saying that right now' kind of way and in response Tony just gives her a look, and Bobbi rolls her eyes and puts her hands up in a surrender type of way.

"It's effective, not very efficient, but it's a passible knock-off." Tony admits, "I don't get it, a little fine tuning you could have made a solid pay check. You could have sold it to North Korea, China, Iran, or gone onto the black market, you look like you got friends in low places." Tony says, and as he does Bobbi smirks.

"You come from a family of thieves and butches." The man, Ivan says, and as he does Bobbi stands up straight and becomes more interested, "And now, like all guilty men, you try to rewrite your own history and you forget all the lives the Stark Family has destroyed." Ivan says, and as he does Bobbi takes notices of his words and realises something.

"Speaking of thieves, where did you get this design?" Tony asks.

"My father Anton Vanko." Ivan says, and as he does Bobbi scans her brain, trying to figure out if she's ever heard of him, and she realises she hasn't.

"Well, I never heard of him." Tony comments.

"My father is the reason you're alive." Ivan reveals.

"The reason I'm alive is 'cause you had a shot, you took it, you missed." Tony says.

"Did I?" Ivan asks, "If you can make God bleed, the person will cease to believe in him, and there will be blood in the water, the sharks will come." Ivan says, "The truth is, all I have to do is sit here and watch as the world will consume you."

"Where will you be watching the world consume me from? That's right, a prison cell. I'll send you a bar of soap." Tony says, as he goes to leave.

"Hey, Tony, before you go, palladium in the chest painful way to die." Ivan says, and as he does Bobbi tenses as she and her father leave.

"Did you really have to tell him a better way to kill you next time?" Bobbi asks, giving her father an annoyed look.

"It got him talking, didn't it?" Tony asks, "Did you get anything from him?" he asks, knowing that Bobbi would have realised something he didn't.

"Oh yeah." Bobbi confirms, "This isn't just about you, he's pissed at our whole family, and after the way he spoke about his father, and said Stark, I'd say your Dad was the cause of his anger." Bobbi explains, having thought about how to say what she is thinking as she knows that her father's father is a sensitive topic with him.

"Of course, this has Howard Stark written all over it." Tony says, sounding bitter.

"Dad, how much does it hurt?" Bobbi asks concerned, there being no question as to what she is
"A little, but it's nothing I can't handle Little Bird." Tony says, putting his arm around his daughter, trying to downplay it, as the two of them drift into silence and continue to walk.

**May 24th 2011**

The following day Tony, Pepper, Natasha, Happy, and Bobbi are flying home together, while Pepper, Happy, and Natasha are happily talking in one area of the plane Tony heads to another part of the plane where Bobbi is watching tv and so he pauses and watches too.

"*Who is the mysterious blond woman in Tony Stark's life, some people have speculated that she is in fact his wife of almost a decade, but I believe you have a different theory Ms Everhart.*" A journalist says.

"*I do.*" Everhart says, "*As you just said Mr Stark has been married for almost ten years, this woman, who I met in Monaco, Bobbi, Is far to young for that.*" Everhart says.

"*Then who do you think she is?*"

"*It's simple.*" Everhart says, "*This is the picture that started the speculation of Tony Stark having children.*" She says, and the picture from 2002 comes up on the screen, "*And this is one of the pictures from yesterday.*" She says, and an image of Iron Man hugging Bobbi, where thankfully her face cannot be seen. "*If you look at the picture from 2002 you will see that the oldest of the children has blond curly hair, as does the woman from yesterday.*"

"*You think this Bobbi is Tony Stark's daughter?*"

"*I'm sure of it.*" Everhart says.

"Mute." Tony says, having heard enough as he walks over to Bobbi, "*I'm sorry.*" He tells her.

"It's okay, it's not your fault, and it will die down soon, it always does." Bobbi comments, as Tony sits down across from her.

"We should go to Rome, I owe you pizza." Tony comments, remembering what they were going to do before Afghanistan.

"What we should do is go to New York." Bobbi tells her father.

"No." Tony says, knowing exactly why Bobbi is suggesting that.

"Dad, don't you want to see Mom, and Daze, and Pete?" Bobbi asks, leaning forward.

"Of course, I do." Tony says, without even thinking about it, "But I don't want them to see me like this, don't want them to know what is going on, truthfully I'd rather you didn't know." He admits.

"Well I know, and I'm not going anywhere." Bobbi tells her father, "Dad, Mom…"

"Will hate me for not telling her, I know." Tony admits, "Maybe it will make things easier.' Tony says, not sure he believes that, but wanting to protect Melinda.

"That's bullshit, and you know it." Bobbi tells her father, "Mom, loves you. There is nothing that's going to make you dying any easier." She argues, "We should go home." Bobbi tries.

"No." Tony says, no room for argument in his voice.
"Dad…” Bobbi starts to say.

"I should go check on Pepper, Nat, and Happy, I don't like to think of what those three can get up to." Tony says, before getting up.

"DAD!" Bobbi calls, but he just keeps walking, "This isn't going to end well." Bobbi mutters to herself, as she watches her dad go.

May 29th 2011

Five days have passed since Tony and Bobbi's conversation on the jet, and since then the media has continued to speculate about who Bobbi is, Rhodey has found out that something is going on with Tony and Tony has found out who Ivan and his father are.

It is a Sunday night, Tony's forty first birthday, and rather than spending it with his family, who he did talk to on a long video call earlier, he is throwing a very big, very public birthday party that fits with the public image he puts out.

"Dad." Bobbi says, walking into her father's bedroom where he is sitting in a chair, "People will be here soon." She explains.

"Okay." Tony says, with a nod.

"You know we can still cancel. I can fly us home and we can spend your birthday with Mom, Daisy, and Peter instead of strangers." Bobbi comments.

"Pepper, Rhodey and Nat will be here…." Tony starts to say.

"Not what I meant, and you know it." Bobbi says, looking annoyed, "This could be your last birthday, you should do what you want to do, and I'm pretty sure that is be with our family." Bobbi argues.

"Of course, it is; but not when I'm not like this." Tony argues.

"Dad…” Bobbi starts to say.

"I've made my choice Barbara, this is what I'm going to do." Tony says his voice harsh.

"Now, you're just being an ass." Bobbi tells her father, before walking out of the room, and Tony is watching her go in such shock that he doesn't even comment about what she said.

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AN2 IMPORTANT: So, this chapter is actually uncomplete, I have someone who is helping me a scene that was meant to be in this chapter, but they haven't gotten it to me, and so I decided to upload what I've written and then that scene will be it's own chapter before going forward. I am actually very far ahead, but I cannot post anymore without that scene, so I'm sorry about that.
Chapter 38

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: I'm really sorry about all the delays. That should have been the last one. From now on updates will be very regular. I want to thank Mocking_Point who helped with this chapter. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW.

Hours later Tony's birthday is in full swing and to the annoyance of Bobbi, Natasha, Rhodey, and Pepper all of whom know the real Tony things are getting way out of control.

"That's it." Bobbi says as her father uses his Iron Man tech to destroy a watermelon, "This has to end now." Bobbi says, stepping forward but before she can get closer to her father Rhodey puts out his arm and stops her.

"You might be strong, but I'm not sure that's enough to fight against the suit." Rhodey tells his niece.

"Rhodey's right. If you try to fight him you're going to get hurt." Natasha says.

"I've got to try something, this isn't my dad." Bobbi says "When you have the signal, get everyone out." Bobbi says, looking between Natasha and Pepper, "Uncle Rhodey come with me." Bobbi says, and not questioning why Bobbi is now giving instructions, Pepper and Natasha nod while Rhodey and Bobbi head downstairs.

"Are you putting on a suit?" Rhodey asks.

"No, you are." Bobbi tells her uncle, "Incase Dad's too far gone that I can't get through to him." Bobbi admits as they get down to the workshop and Bobbi starts searching for something while Rhodey heads to the place to put the suit on them, "Gotcha." Bobbi says, finding what she is looking for, a pair of glasses.

"What are they for?" Rhodey asks curious.

"Just something to give me a little help, be quick Uncle Rhodey." Bobbi says, before hurrying upstairs.

When Bobbi gets upstairs she sees that her father has continued to use his repulsor to destroy things, "JARVIS, cut the music." Bobbi requests, and once she does JARVIS does so and she whistles so that all attention is on her, "Party is over. GET OUT." Bobbi exclaims, and when no one listens to her she pulls out a pistol and fires three shots into the ceiling, "THAT'S IT! EVERYONE OUT!" Bobbi yells as everyone ducks, screams and runs out of the house.

"What's with those glasses? They're so flashy?" Tony asks, slurring which shows just how drunk and out of control he is.

"Shut up, I like 'em." Bobbi says, self-consciously as she made, and designed them herself, "You've got a choice, Dad, either get out the suit or I'll peal you out of it." Bobbi says, walking towards her father and because all the party guests, who are being subtly helped by Pepper and Natasha, are more interested in running none of them hear what said, "JARVIS shut down the suit." Bobbi
"I am sorry Miss Bobbi, I am unable to shut down the suit." JARIVS reveals as Tony planned for that.

"Really Little Bird? You think you can shut down my invention? A little arrogant don't you think?" Tony asks his daughter.

"Lima Whiskey Seven One." Bobbi says, with completely confidence.

"What the hell was..." Tony asks, sounding confused as JARVIS says,

"It seems I am being shut down." His voice getting deeper before fading completely.

"What the hell was that?" Tony asks as Bobbi grabs his shoulders.

"Fury's override. I don't want to hurt you, Dad." Bobbi says, "Get out the suit."

"You think I can't control the suit without JARVIS?" Tony yells, as he grabs his daughter's shoulder, so beyond thinking rationally that what he is doing doesn't even register, "Well, watch this!" Tony says, as he activates the repulses in his feet and lanuces them both across the room.

As they are thrown across the room Bobbi realises that her father plans on smashing them through the wall and so at the last second, she grabs the side of the door way which gives her the moment she needs to flip her father off her and through the wall of the gym.

Thanks to the HUD in her glasses Bobbi can tell that her fathers life signs are still normal, or as normal as they can be for someone who is dying, "Okay, that's enough." Bobbi says as she steps through the hole she created, "I'm really glad we're rich, this isn't going to be cheap to fix." Bobbi mutters to herself as she walks towards her father.

A Bobbi walks towards her father Bobbi can tell, even though his suit that he is out of it, and that she was right when she said that he's not her incredible father right now, and so Bobbi knows she has only one option, disabling the suit, fast.

Seeing a bar bell on the ground she uses her toes and flicks it up into her hands, before snapping it over her knee.

"Oooo! Is that supposed to scare me?" Tony asks his daughter, sounding obnoxious and telling Bobbi that in some ways he wants her to fight him.

"Ugh, Dad I mean this with all the love in the world but shut up." Bobbi says, as she rolls her eyes and flicks the weights off the bar, and as she does Tony stalks over t her, swipes at her twice, but misses both times as Bobbi upper upper cuts him with one of her make shift eskrima sticks, ")

"Ugh Shit." Tony says, and quicker than Bobbi was able to see coming Tony back hands her in the stomach, sending her back into the common room.

"Ugh." Bobbi groans as she rolls over.

"BOBBI!" A voice to her right shouts and honestly Bobbi couldn't tell whether it's her Uncle Rhodey, Pepper, Natasha or Happy,

"I'm good, I'm good." Bobbi says, slightly slurring as her father attempts to blast from the room but before he can Bobbi moves quickly and uses the stick swing and deflects the replusor ray back into the
the room.

As her aim wasn't great the ray hit the ceiling of her parents bedroom collapsing the entire thing down on top of her father.

"DAD!" Bobbi yells concerned, as them fighting doesn't mean she's not concerned, but then she hears a mechanical wine, and Bobbi's eyes widen as her father literally flies from the room football tackling her to the ground.

"Give up Little Bird."

"Never! You need to stop this now." Bobbi says as she flips them so that there positions are reversed, "You're giving the government all the excuse they need to come take these suits!" Bobbi tells her father, being pretty sure it won't work right now but wanting to try logical to get through to him.

"They can try." Tony says, back sounding stubborn and once he does Bobbi rolls her eyes and punches down at the face mask as hard as she can thinking that if she get her father to see her, really see her then maybe he will stop, but instead of breaking the suit she screams as she hears a sickening crack before feeling ice water race up her am.

Thanks to her HUD glasses Bobbi knows that she has shattered her wrist and she knows that means that even with her healing factor it's going to take a few hours to heal.

While Bobbi is distracted Tony grabs both her shoulders and drags their heads together hitting his little girl hard enough to make her sees stars. Realising it's time to take drastic action Bobbi slams her forehead right back down casing him to hit the ground and her to go flying.

"I got this Bobbi." Rhodey say, walking towards Tony in his mark 1 armour.

"Really? Trying to help?" Tony says, "I hate to break it to you, but Stark-May's don't need sidekicks." Tony says, as he starts to get to his feet.

"But they do need friends to stop them when they've gone to far." Rhodey says, as Bobbi starts to try to get up to.

"Uncle Rhodey." Bobbi says, as she squeezes her eyes open and closed so that she can see clearly.

"Stand down." Rhodey says, as he raises his hand, with the repulsor towards Tony.

"You think you got what it takes to wear that suit?" Tony asks as he points his hand towards Rhodey too.

"We don't have to do this, Tony. Bobbi and I are just trying to help!" Rhodey tells his friend.

"You wanna be the War Machine, take your Shot." Tony says.

"DAD!" Bobbi yells, realising that this is getting way out of control.

"Put it down!" Rhodey yells.

"You gonna take a shot?" Tony asks.

"Put it down!"

"No!"
"Drop it, Tony!" Rhodey yells.

"Take it!" Tony yells, and at the same time both Tony and Rhodey take their shot, destroying part of the house in the process as both Tony and Rhodey are knocked backwards.

A few seconds later Bobbi is the first one to her feet and she knows what has to be done,

"Uncle Rhodey. You've got to go. Take the suit." Bobbi tells her Uncle.

"But..." Rhodey starts to say.

"I've got this." Bobbi says, and her Uncle files away.

After Rhodey files away Bobbi walks over to her father, and sits down next to her, "Dad. Please stop this." Bobbi says, as she lays on her father's chest, like she did when she was a little girl.

"Little Bird," Tony says, putting her arm around her, as his sense starts to come back to him, "I'm sorry." Tony says, sounding horrified at what he did, before placing a kiss on her head, and then using his repulsions to fly away, destroying more of his house.

"DAD!" Bobbi yells after him as Natasha and Pepper come running towards.

"Oh my god, you're hurt." Pepper says, looking shocked, "I didn't think that was possible."

"It's possible, just not easy to do." Natasha reveals, "We've got to get you to a SHIELD medical facility."

"No, we've got to talk to Fury and find my Dad." Bobbi says, her Stark-May stubbornness showing itself all too well as she gets up and walks out of the house, knowing that she will help her father, whether or not he wants to be helped.

May 30 2011

After flying away from his daughter Tony flew to a donut shop where he is sitting, and eating donuts as the memories of what he did to his daughter and best friend hit him in full force and with every second he thinks about what happened the more he hates himself.

"Sir Mrs Stark-May is attempting to call you." JARVIS reveals.

"Don't answer." Tony requests, as he knows, after his fight with Bobbi, that Melinda would be, rightfully, furious with him.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers and Tony continues to think about what he did to his daughter, hating himself a little more with every thought.

"Sir." A voice yells and Tony looks down to see Fury, "I'm gonna have to ask you to exit the doughnut." Fury says, causing Tony to roll his eyes.

After rolling his eyes at Fury tony flies back down to the ground, and a few minutes later he and Fury are sitting across from each other.

"I told you, Nick, I don't wanna join your super-secret boy band." Tony says.

"No, no no, see I remember you do everything yourself. How's that working for you?" Nick asks.

"It's... it's... look I'm a bit hung over now, I'm not even sure if your real or if I'm having..." Tony
starts to say, as after what he did he would believe Fury being a hallucination.

"I am very real, I'm the realest person you're ever gonna meet." Fury explains.

"Just my luck. Where are the staff here?" Tony asks, as he turns to have a look, and as he does Fury reaches over to have a look at the effect the palladium is having on his skin.

"That's not a good look." Fury comments.

"I've been worse." Tony says, as Natasha and Bobbi walk over, Bobbi having a bruse on her face, and is clearly holding her arm at a position that tells Tony it is still weak though heled.

"We've secured the perimeter, but I don't think we should hold it for too much longer.' Natasha comments, as Bobbi sits down next to her father.

"Little Bird…. god, I'm so sorry." Tony says, looking at his daughter in horror, guilt clear on his face.

"It's okay Dad." Bobbi tells him.

"No, don't say that, it's not." Tony says, "God, look like what I did…." Tony starts to say, before trailing off.

"Dad, it's okay. I forgive you." Bobbi assures her father.

"You shouldn't." Tony admits.

"Well, if it makes you feel better, Nat's going to stab you now." Bobbi reveals, smirking a little and Natasha does exactly that, injecting Tony with a syringe.

"Oh god, what is that? What did you do to me?" Tony asks, as Natasha sits down next to Fury.

"That's lithium dioxide. It's gonna take the edge off. We're trying to get you back to work." Fury explains.

"Give me a couple of boxes of that. I'll be right as rain." Tony says, already feeling a little better.

"It's not a cure, it just abates the symptoms." Natasha explains.

"Doesn't look like it's going to be an easy fix." Fury comments.

"Trust me, I know. I'm good at this stuff. I've been looking for a suitable replacement for palladium. I've tried every combination, every permutation of every known element."

"Well, I'm here to tell you, you haven't tired them all." Fury says, and as he does Bobbi and Natasha exchanging looks, Bobbi knowing the tone of voice as Fury's 'I know something you don't' voice and so she feels hope for the first time that her father is going to be okay.

A little while later Tony, Bobbi, Fury, and Natasha are back at the Malibu house, which is slightly destroyed, and Tony, Bobbi, and Fury are sitting together on the deck.

"That thing in your chest is based on unfinished technology." Fury reveals.

"No, it was finished." Tony says, "It has never been particularly effective until I miniaturised it and put it in my…" Tony says, as he mimes putting it his chest.
"No, Howard said the arch reactor was the stepping stone to something greater." Fury explains, and Bobbi is extremely interested in that, "He was about to kick off an energy race that was gonna dwarf the arms race, he was on to something big, something so big that I was gonna make the nuclear reactor look like a triple A battery." Fury explains.

"Just him, or was Anton Vanko in on this too?" Tony asks curious.

"Anton Vanko is the other side of that coin. Anton saw it as a way to get rich. When your father found out, he had him deported." Fury says, looking amused.

"Which I'm guessing had a lot of consequences." Bobbi assumes.

"Yep." Fury confirms, "When the Russians found out he couldn't deliver they shipped his ass off to Siberia and he spent the next twenty years in a vodka-fuelled rage. Not quite the environment you want to raise a kid in." Fury explains, and as he does Tony glances over at Bobbi, "The son you had the misfortune of crossing paths with in Monaco." Fury explains.

"You told me that I hadn't tried everything. What do you mean I haven't tried everything? What haven't I tried?" Tony asks, needing to know.

"Howard said you were the only person with the means and knowledge to finish what he started." Fury explains.

"He said that?" Tony asks, sounding shocked.

"Are you that guy? Are you? Cause if you are, then you can solve the riddle of your heart." Fury comments, and as he does Bobbi realises something.

"Wait, did you know that there was a cure this whole time?" Bobbi asks angrily, "Did Nat?"

"I knew there could be a possible lead on a cure, I told Romanoff that, but I needed to find something to know for sure." Fury explains, and as he does Bobbi nods, not feeling very happy with her boss right now.

"Look Nick, I don't know where you get your information, but Dad wasn't my biggest fan." Tony comments, and truthfully Bobbi hates the fact that he clearly believes that.

"What do you remember about your Dad?" Fury asks curious, and Bobbi is actually curious about that answer too.

"He was cold, he was calculating. He never told me he loved me. He never even told me he liked me." Tony reveals, and Bobbi is horrified by that, as she can't imagine that.

"Dad…." Bobbi starts to say, looking at him, but Tony just keeps talking.

"So, it's a little tough for me to digest when you're telling me he said the whole future was riding on me and he's passing it down. I don't get that." Tony admits, and Bobbi can hear the pain in her father's voice, even though he is trying to hide it, "You're talking about a guy who's happiest day was when he shipped me off to boarding school." Tony comments.

"That's not true." Fury says, causing both Tony and Bobbi to look at him, as Tony clearly believes what he is saying.

"Well, then you clearly knew my Dad better than I did." Tony comments.
"I knew a different side of him." Fury corrects, "I've got a two o'clock." Fury says as he stands up as chest is placed on the ground near Bobbi and Tony.

"Wait, what's this?" Tony asks confused.

"Okay, you're good, right?" Fury asks.

"No, I'm not good." Tony says, feeling incredible confused.

"You got this right?" Fury asks. "Natasha's going to remain at Stark. Bobbi you can stay with your father to help, and Coulson will join you, keeping an eye on things." Fury explains, "And Tony, remember, I got my eye on you." Fury says, before leaving.

"So annoying when he does that." Tony says, to Bobbi's amusement.

"We've disabled all communications. No contact with the outside world. Good luck." Natasha says, before leaving, as Phil walks up to Tony and Bobbi.

"Good to see you, Coulson." Tony comments.

"You're an idiot for not telling May what's going on." Phil informs him, clearly protective of his friend.

"Probably, but it's my choice." Tony says, "If you've told her, or going to tell her, you can get out of my house right now."

"I'm not going to, but only because Fury gave me the same order." Phil reveals, looking very much like he doesn't want to lie to Melinda, "But I have been authorised by Director Fury to use any means necessary to keep you on premises, which means if you attempt to leave, or play any games, or give me any actual excuse I will tase you and watch Supernanny while you drool on the carpet, okay?" Phil asks, looking scarier than Tony has ever seen.

"I think I got it, yeah." Tony confirms.

"Enjoy your evening's entertainment." Phil says, "Bobbi." he greats, before leaving.

"Dad? You alright?" Bobbi asks concerned.

"When did your Uncle Coulson get unbelievably scary?" Tony asks curious.

"He always has been, he just hides it." Bobbi says, as she picks up the trunk with ease, as her arm is pretty much 100% now, "Workshop?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, and they head down there.

"Dad, are we going to open it or just stare?" Bobbi asks curious as since they got downstairs, a few moments earlier, they have just been looking at the trunk with H Stark on it.

"I have to say something." Tony says, turning to look at his daughter, "From the day I met you, when I found out your Mom was taking you in I made a promise to myself, I promised that I would never be like my father." Tony admits, "And last night not only was I like him, I was worse." Tony says, guilt clear in his voice.

"Dad, I'm okay." Bobbi assures her father, taking a step forward.
"Because of your powers. That doesn't make what I did right." Tony tells her, "Little Bird, I'm so sorry."

"Dad, I choose to fight you in your suit, I knew what I was getting into." Bobbi assures him.

"I still shouldn't have fought you." Tony says, reaching out and putting his hand against his daughters cheek, "I hurt you Bobbi, and I will never forgive myself for that."

"Well too bad, I forgive you." Bobbi assures her father, reaching out and putting her hand on her fathers as she smiles at him.

"You shouldn't." Tony tells her.

"You're the best Dad in the world, what happened doesn't change that." Bobbi says, and as she does she can clearly see the guilt on her father's face, "You never going to convince me otherwise." Bobbi admits, "So can we look through the trunk and find a way to save your life now, please?"

"Sure, Little Bird." Tony says, knowing he will continue to feel guilty, no matter what Bobbi says, and the two of them squat down and start going though the trunk.

"Original arch reactor plans?" Bobbi asks seeing what her father is looking at.

"Yeah, looks like it." Tony confirms.

"Note books." Bobbi says, handing them to her father, "And old movies?" Bobbi asks, looking at the canisters.

"I'll get the projector." Tony tells his daughter, as he gets up.

A little while later Bobbi and Tony are sitting next to each other going through the notebooks as they watch the films.

"Oh my god, is that you?" Bobbi asks as little boy comes on screen.

"Yep." Tony says, not looking up from what he is doing, and Bobbi proceeds to watch Howard be a complete ass to Tony.

"Was he always like that?" Bobbi asks, with a frown.

"This was a good day." Tony admits, causing Bobbi's frown to increase.

"You're nothing like him." Bobbi assures her father, "You're a million times better." Bobbi says, and even though he disagrees Tony doesn't say anything, he and Bobbi just continue to watch, and read.

For a while Tony and Bobbi continue to read and watch, until they finally read everything and so Tony throws the book he is reading aside,

"How much longer do you think we have?" Tony asks curious.

"Hard to say." Bobbi admits.

"Tony." Howard says, causing both Tony and Bobbi to look directly at the screen, "You're too young to understand this right now, so I thought I would put it on film for you." Howard says, and as he does Bobbi goes from watching the screen to watching her father, "I built this for you. And
someday you'll realise that it represents a whole lot more than just people's inventions. It represents my life's work. This is the key to the future. I'm limited by the technology of my time, but one day you'll figure this out. And when you do, you will change the world. What is and always will be my greatest creation is you." Howard says, as the film adds and as it does Bobbi realises that her father is about to cry.

"Oh Dad." Bobbi says, moving closer to him and putting her arm around her father.

"He never said anything like that to me before." Tony reveals, "I love you Little Bird, so much, I'm beyond proud of you." He assures his daughter.

"I know, you've told me that before." Bobbi tells her father, "I've always known you love me, are proud of me." Bobbi says, and the two drift into silence.

"I need to go apologise to Pepper for last night." Tony says, after several minutes of silence.

"Okay." Bobbi says, being pretty sure that Pepper is owed an apology after what happened, "I need to go New York anyway. Mom finally agreed to take Peter and Daisy to the Expo tomorrow night, after Peter spent days begging, and I said I'd join, plus I promised Daisy I would spend some time with her." She explains.

"Okay, Bobbi…" Tony starts to say.

"I don't agree with the fact that you're keeping this a secret, but I won't say anything." Bobbi assures her father.

"Thanks, Little Bird." Tony says, before getting up, "I love you." He says, kissing on the top of her head.

"Good luck. I believe in you." Bobbi assures her father, who looks amazed, and then leaves.

A while later Tony has gone to Stark to apologise to Pepper, but that didn't happen as she is angry with him, and while there he collected the model from the last Stark Expo in 1974, and found out Pepper, Natasha, and Happy are going to New York together.

"Jarvis could you kindly vac-u-form a digital wire frame? I need a manipulatable projection." Tony says, referring to the Stark expo model that he has set up.

"1974 Stark Expo model scan complete, Sir." JARVIS says, and once he does Tony lifts the blue protection away from the model, "How many buildings are there?"

"Am I to include the Belgium waffle stands?" JARVIS asks.

"That was rhetorical. Just show me." Tony requests, as he clicks his fingers as the model begins to spin and lifts upright, "What does this look like to you JARVIS? Not unlike an atom. In which case the nucleus would be right here." Tony says, pointing to something, "Highlight the unisphere. Loose the footpaths." Tony requests, "Get rid of them." Tony says.

"What is it you're trying to achieve, Sir?" JARVIS asks curious.

"I'm discovering…. correction, I'm rediscovering a new element, I believe." Tony says, sounding slightly uncertain, "Lose the landscaping, the shrubbery, the trees." Tony says, sounding more determined as she flicks things away, "Parking lots, exits, entrances. Structure the protons and the neutrons using the pavilions as a framework." Tony requests, and the model now resembles a
nucleus, which Tony expands, "Dead for almost twenty years and still taking me to school." Tony says, as he snaps down the model so that it fits in his hand.

"The proposed element should serve as a viable replacement for palladium." JARVIS says.

"Thanks Dad." Tony says, with a slight smile.

"Unfortunately, it is impossible to synthesise." JARVIS reveals.

"Get ready for major remodel, fellers. We're back in hard where mode." Tony says, saying before leaving the workshop, knowing he has a lot of work to do.

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After discovering that the new element would work as a substitute for Palladium Tony spends the rest of the day, and all night, working to set up a way to synthesis it. He is getting closer to finishing setting up what he needs to do when Phil walks into the lab.

"I heard you broke the perimeter." Phil says, as he walks in.

"Yeah, that was like, tree years ago? Where have you been?" Tony asks curious.

"I was doing some stuff." Phil admits.

"Yeah, well, me too, and it worked." Tony reveals, "Hey, I'm playing for the home team Coulson, you and all your Fabulous Fury Freak brothers, now are you gonna let me work or break my balls?" Tony asks curious, and as he does Phil pulls a prototype Captain America SHIELD out of crate.

"What's this doing here?" Phil asks, sounding shocked.

"That's it, bring that to me." Tony requests, knowing exactly what he is going to do with the S.H.I.E.L.D, and knowing Phil well enough to know he will not react well to what he is going to do, and he honestly doesn't care.

"You know what this is?" Phil asks, assuming so, but he also knows that Tony could pretend not to know, as he hands the SHIELD to Tony.

"It's exactly what I need to make this work. Lift the coil." Tony requests, and Phil does that, "Go, go, put your knees into it. there you go, and, drop it." Tony requests, and the SHIELD is now in position to make the coil straight, "Perfectly level." Tony says, putting a level on it, "I'm busy, what do you want?"

"Nothing, goodbye, I've been reassigned. Director Fury wants me in New Mexico." Phil explains.

"Fantastic. Land of Enchantment." Tony comments.

"So, I'm told." Phil says.

"Secret stuff?" Tony asks, as he assumes that.

"Something like that. Good luck." Phil says.

"Bye, thanks." Tony says, and they shake hands.

"We need you, May especially." Phil reveals.
"Yeah, more than you know." Tony says, the mention of Melinda making him thinking about all the things he's done recently.

"Not that much." Phil says, before leaving, and once he leaves Tony goes back to building.

Hours later, Tony has finally managed to synthesis the new element, and while JARVIS is running tests on it Tony is sitting at his desk.

"Incoming call with a blocked number, Sir." JARVIS says.

"My phone privilege is reinstated, lovely." Tony says, knowing he should call Melinda, but he would rather talk to her in person, "Coulson, how's the land of Enchantment?" Tony asks curious, assuming it is Coulson on the phone as it's what makes sense.

"Hey, Tony, how you doing? I double cycle." The voice on the other end of the phone, Ivan, says.

"You what?" Tony asks confused.

"You told me to double cycle's more power. Good advice." Ivan says.

"You sound pretty sprightly for a dead guy." Tony comments.

"You too." Ivan says, and as he does Tony presses a mute on the screen, "Trace him." Tony requests, and JARVIS starts to do so.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Now, the true history of Stark name will be written." Ivan says.

"JARVIS, where is he?" Tony asks.


"What your father did to my family over forty years, I will do to you in forty minutes." Ivan explains.

"Sounds good, let's get together and hash it out." Tony suggests.

"Tri-State area, Manhattan and outlying boroughs." JARVIS explains, and as he does Tony's first thought is of his family.

"I hope you're ready." Ivan says, before hanging up.

"Call trace incomplete." JARVIS answers, as Tony sees an advert for Justin's presentation where he knows his family will be, and so he picks up the new arch reactor.

"Sir." JARVIS objects.

"You want to run tests, run them, and assemble the suit while you're at it. put it together now." Tony orders.

"We are unclear as to the effects." JARVIS objects.

"I don't want to hear it JARVIS." Tony says, as he puts the new reactor in his chest, which gains powers, "That tastes like coconut, and metal, oh wow, yeah." He says, feeling amazing.
In New York, having no idea about the danger they are facing Melinda, Pepper, Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, and Natasha have arrived at the expo together, and are watching Hammer's presentation, which is far from good.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, today I am proud to present to you the very first prototype in the Variable Threat Response Battle Suit and it's pilot, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel James Rhodes." Hammer says, and he does Rhodey, in the suit Bobbi told him to take, which has been improved, arrives on stage.

"What?" Pepper asks shocked.

"Uncle Rhodey?" Daisy mutters to himself, sounding surprised.

"For America and its allies, Hammer industries is reporting for..." Hammer starts to say, as Tony, in the Iron Man suit, flies in and lands near Rhodey.

"Dad." Peter says, with a grin, being glad he convinced his mother to buy him an iron man mask, as he can't wait to show his dad.

"We got trouble." Tony says, as he walks over to Rhodey.

"Tony, there are civilians present." Rhodey comments.

"Yeah, including my family." Tony comments.

"Look, Tony, I'm here on orders, let's not do this right now." Rhodey requests, as Tony puts his arm around his best friend.

"Give them a wave." Tony says, as in the audience Natasha, Bobbi, and Melinda exchange looks, all three of them feeling worried.

"Hey, all right." Hammer says, trying to cover for what is going on.

"All these people are in danger." Tony says, knowing his family are included in that, and that terrifies him, "We gotta get them out of here. You gotta trust me for the next five minutes." Tony says, to his old friend.

"Yeah, I tried that. We blew up half your house, remember?" Rhodey ask.

"Listen, I think he's working with Vanko." Tony explains.

"Vanko's alive?" Rhodey asks surprised, as Tony walks up to Hammer.

"Where is he?" Tony asks.

"What?" Hammer asks confused.

"Where's Vanko?" Tony asks Hammer.

"What?" Hammer asks, pretending to be confused.

"Where's Vanko?" Tony once more asks.

"Who?" Hammer asks, once more pretending not to know.
"Tell me." Tony says, sounding angry.

"What are you doing here man?" Hammer asks.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa." Rhodey suddenly says, as the large gun on his shoulder takes aim.

"Is this you?" Tony asks.

"No, I'm not doing that. That's not me. I can't move I'm locked up. I'm locked up!" Rhodey says, as the drones take aim, "Get out of here. Go! The whole system's been compromised." Rhodey says, and as he does Tony flies a little into the air.

"Let's take it outside." Tony says, as he flies into the air, and as he does the drones and Rhodey fire at him, and then Rhodey takes off.

In the audience everyone is starting to panic and worry, running around.

"Pepper! Get Daisy and Peter home!" Melinda requests, "Take them back to the apartment."

"Sure." Pepper answers, not even needing to think about it, "But what about you?"

"MOM!" Daisy and Peter object.

"No argument." Melinda says to her kids, "I'm going to go help Tony, and make sure everyone gets home." Melinda explains, "Stay with Pepper." Melinda tells her two youngest kids, and as she does she and Natasha run back stage, while Bobbi runs to the stage to deal with the androids that haven't taken off yet.

"Let's go." Pepper says, grabbing both Peter and Daisy's hands, and the three of them start to run.

A few moments later Melinda and Natasha get backstage where Hammer and the technicians are.

"He's locked us out of the mainframe." One of the technician says as Natasha and Melinda walk up to where Hammer is.

"Who locked you out of the mainframe?" Melinda asks.

"Whoever you are, go away, please, just go away, I got this handled." Hammer explains.

"Have you now?" Natasha asks, sounding disbelieving.

"Yeah, I do, in fact if Stark hadn't showed up this wouldn't be happening. So, please, now go away." Hammer says, clearly dismissing, "Thank you." He says, before turning to the technician, "Listen, we got to get these bitches out of here, what?" he asks, and as he does Melinda grabs Justin, holds him down and twists his arm, behind his back, beating Natasha by seconds.

"You tell me who's behind this? Who's behind this?" Melinda asks, as she twists the arm tighter.

"Ivan, Ivan Vanko." Justin stutters.

"Where is he?" Natasha asks.

"At my facility." Hammer answers, and as she does Melinda and Natasha exchange looks, nods, and Natasha leaves, as she does Melinda pulls out her phone, and lets go of Hammer.

"This is Agent Melinda May, I'm at Stark Expo, I need back up, and NYPD." Melinda calls.
"No, no, no Honey, don't call the authorities." Hammer says, and in response Melinda just punches him in the face, knocking him out.

"Yes, we need both NYPD and Agents." Melinda explains, before walking towards the technician, "Tell me everything you know, go." Melinda says to the technician.

While Rhodey and Tony are fighting, and trying to get the drones away from people, Natasha is being taken to Hammer's facility why Pepper is trying to get Daisy and Peter out of the park. As they attempt to leave there are so many people that Pepper accidently lets go of Peter's hand.

As he looks around for Pepper, and his sister, Peter, who is wearing an Iron Man mask, is targeted by a drone and so he holds up his hand, but before he can be hurt Tony lands beside him and shoots the drone with his hand repulsor, feeling like he is going to have a heart attack as he sees his son in so much danger.

"Nice work kid." Tony says, smiling at his son, trying to hide how terrified he is.

"PETER!" Daisy says, running towards her brother, with Pepper not far behind her.

"Get out of here, both of you." Tony requests, looking between his children, needing them to be safe, before flying away as he knows if he didn't he'd just draw more attention to them, put them in danger, which he cannot allow.

"Let's go." Pepper says, once more taking Daisy and Peter's hand and leading them out of the park, Pepper being even more careful to make sure she doesn't let go of either Daisy or Peter's hands.

A little while later Natasha has managed to get into Hammer's factory, and has managed to get into Rhodey's suit.

"Robot complete." Natasha says as an image of Tony appears on the screen she is working on, "You got your best friend back.

"Thank you very much Agent Romanoff." Tony says.

"Well done on the new chest piece, I am reading significant higher output and your vitals all look promising." Natasha comments.

"Yeah, for the moment, I'm not dying. Thank you." Tony comments, and as he does an image of Melinda, and Bobbi who has joined Melinda back stage after she did what she could to the drones.

"Wait what?" Melinda asks, sounding both surprised and shocked, "Did you just say you're dying?" Melinda asks.

"Mel?" Tony asks surprised, "No, I'm not dying anymore."

"But you were, why the hell didn't you tell me?" Melinda asks angrily.

"Because I didn't want to do that to you." Tony admits.

"Bullshit." Melinda says, "You…"

"Um, Mom, Dad, it's so not the time for this fight." Bobbi comments.

"Bobbi's right, Tony you've got incoming it looks like the fight is coming to you." Natasha
"Great, Mel?" Tony asks.

"What?" Melinda says angrily.

"We'll talk later okay, when I'm not fending off a hammeriod attack." Tony says, "I love you okay." He says, and Melinda just gives him an annoyed look in response.

"You knew, didn't you?" Melinda asks her daughter as Tony and Rhodey start to fight drones.

"Yeah, I did." Bobbi confirms, and before her mother can say something about that police officers come back stage.

"I'm agent Melinda May, with SHIELD, take Mr Hammer into custody." Melinda says, showing her badge, being glad she has it, and the police pick up Hammer who is still unconscious.

Over the next few minutes Melinda and Bobbi coordinate with the police and head out of the pavilion.

"When they get here, I think you should station them at the south, east, and both west exits." Melinda instructs, as she knows agents are coming, but at the moment they just have police.

"We shut down the seven train in and out of Willets point already." The police officer says.

"Yeah, are you coming with us?" The office asks, looking between Melinda and Bobbi.

"No, I'm staying until the park is clear." Melinda says, and the office says.

"I'm going to make sure no one is trapped or hurt." Bobbi tells her mother, who nods, and Bobbi hurries off.

A little way away from where Melinda and Bobbi are Tony and Rhodey have managed to defeat the drones.

"Heads up, you've got more drones incoming. This one looks different." Natasha tells Tony and Rhodey, "The repulsor signature is significantly higher." She comments, as Ivan in a fall suit lands.

"Good to be back." Ivan says.

"This ain't gonna be good." Rhodey comments, "I got something special for this guy, I'm gonna bust the bunker with the ex-wife."

"With the wat?" Tony asks confused as Rhodey shoots the weapon which bounces of Ivan, where it fizzes off in the water, "Hammer tech?" Tony asks curious.

"Yeah." Rhodey confirms.

"I got this." Tony says, and he starts to attack Ivan's armour, but doesn't do much and results in both Tony and Rhodey being held by Ivan's wipes, "Rhodes, I got an idea, you want to be a hero?"

"What?" Rhodey asks, looking confused.

"I could really use a sidekick. Put your hand up." Tony requests.
"This is your idea?" Rhodey asks, sounding shocked.

"Yep." Tony confirms.

"I'm ready. I'm ready. Go, go, go." Rhodey says.

"Take it." Tony says, and both he and Rhodey shoot their repulsors at the at the same time they both explode, with Ivan in the middle.

"You loose." Ivan says, before dying, and the reactor in his chest starts flashing red and so do all the drones.

"All the drons are rigged to blow. We gotta get out of here Man." Rhodey says.

"MEL! BOBBI!" Tony says, sounding horrified.

"I'll get Bobbi." Rhodey promises his friend, as they fly off, and as they do Melinda sees the red flashing on the drone and starts to run away from it and once she is a little far from it Tony flies to her, picks her up,

"BOBBI! WE'VE GOT TO GET TO BOBBI!" Melinda says as they fly, clearly afraid for her daughter.

"Rhodey's getting her." Tony explains, "Rhodes? Please say you have Bobbi." he says, through the coms.

"I do, she's fine." Rhodey's voice says, to Tony's relief.

"She's fine, Rhodey has her." Tony tells Melinda as they land on a nearby rooftop and Tony takes of the helmet, as he does Melinda pushes Tony away from her, looking furious.

"Mel….." Tony starts to say.

"Why the hell didn't you tell me?" Melinda asks angrily.

"I wanted to protect you." Tony admits, "I knew I was dying and I didn't want you to have to watch me do that. I thought if I didn't tell you then you would be mad, and it would be easier."

"You an idiot." Melinda says.

"Probably." Tony confirms as there is an explosion, "Look Mel, I love you, so much, and keeping the fact that I was dying from you may have been a mistake, but I just wanted to protect you from the pain." Tony says, taking a step forward, "I'm sorry, you're my world, and I didn't want to hurt you."

"You did, and I'm furious with you" Melinda confirms, taking a step forward, "But, I love you too." Melinda says, and the two of them kiss, "Let's go home." Melinda says, once they break apart, and once they do Tony puts his helmet back on, puts his arm into the air and the two of them fly into the air.
Chapter 39

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support. As I promised I'm going to try to update more regularly now.

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A little way after Melinda and Tony left the rooftop they land back home, landing on the balcony landing pad Tony set up months ago, which takes off Tony's suit, and as they walk inside they find Bobbi, Rhodey who also doesn't have a suit on, Pepper, Daisy, and Peter waiting.

"Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, running towards her parents and hugging them, "Are you alright?" Bobbi asks, in a quiet voice.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms.

"Completely." Tony says, as Daisy and Peter hurry over to hug their parents to.

"Has something been going on the last few days?" Daisy asks curious, "Because I've seen the YouTube videos of your birthday party, and Bobbi seemed really worried when she got here." Daisy admits, as the Stark-May family break apart.

"Everything's okay now, Tiny Toni, that's all that matters." Tony tells his daughter.

"Your Arch reactor looks different." Peter realises.

"I changed it, for the better." Tony explains, feeling proud that Peter has realised that, and as he does Daisy and Peter exchange looks.

"It's getting late, Daisy, Peter, you should go get ready for bed." Melinda tells her two youngest kids.

"Fine." Daisy says, rolling her eyes.

"I guess." Peter comments, also looking not happy, and the two of them hug both their parents, and the big sister, before heading upstairs.

"There's something Mom and Dad aren't telling us, isn't there?" Peter asks, as he and Daisy head upstairs.

"I think so." Daisy confirms, and while she is determined to find out she know she will keep her little brother out of it.

A while later Rhodey and Pepper are asleep in the spare bedrooms that usually belong to Antoine and Sharon, as there is more traffic around so it was easier than heading to their respective New York apartments, while Daisy and Peter are asleep in their own rooms and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi are downstairs, when the elevators open and Natasha walks out.
"Clean up's handled." Natasha reveals.

"What's happened to the drones?" Tony asks.

"They've all mainly been destroyed; stray pieces have been taken to SHIELD." Natasha explains, "And speaking of SHIELD, there is something we need to talk about." She says, as she sits down across from the others.

"Avengers Initiative, you've got to give your assessment." Bobbi realises.

"Yeah." Natasha confirms, with a nod, "Fury wants it by morning." She explains, "I know what I want to say, but I want to know what you want me to say." Natasha tells her friend.

"Thank you." Tony says, "I'm not sure." He admits.

"Nat let's talk on the balcony, give Tony a chance to think." Melinda requests, Natasha being able to tell that her friend isn't happy with her.

"Okay." Natasha says, with a nod, and she and Melinda head out to the balcony.

"We should watch right in case Mel pushes Romanoff off the balcony." Tony says, looking concerned.

"Nah, Mom won't get that mad." Bobbi comments, but that doesn't stop her from watching her mother and Natasha talk.

"Who else knew?" Melinda asks, Natasha once they are on the balcony.

"Fury, … and Coulson." Natasha reveals, hesitantly when she says Coulson.

"Phil… Phil knew?" Melinda asks, betrayal on her face.

"Yeah." Natasha tells her friend.

"Why… why didn't you tell me?" Melinda asks trying not to display what she is feeling, but Natasha realises exactly what she is trying to hide.

"Because Stark asked me not to." Natasha reveals, "I didn't approve, but it was what he wanted." Natasha admits, "Linda, I'm sorry. Tony was trying to protect you, and the truth is so was I, after everything you've been through I didn't want to add to your pain." Natasha admits, "You're my sister, Linda and I just didn't want be the one to hurt you." She admits, and as she does Melinda can't help but smile softly as not that long ago Natasha would never admit that.

"You've come a long way." Melinda comments, feeling very proud of her friend.

"I am sorry, Linda, I was just doing what I though was best." Natasha explains, and in response Melinda just hugs her friend.

After a few moments Melinda and Natasha break apart and head back into the apartment where Bobbi and Tony are.

"Given any thought about what you want me to say?" Natasha asks Tony.

"I think right now I just want to be Iron Man and spend time with my family." Tony says, from his words it being clear to Natasha that he might be open to something different in the future.
"Okay." Natasha says, with a nod.

"You're going to have fun writing the assessment, aren't you?" Melinda asks, looking at her friend.

"Yep." Natasha confirms, "It's going to be great." She says, with a smirk.

"You're going to say horrible things about Dad, aren't you?" Bobbi asks, looking concerned.

"Nah, I'm just going to do my assessment on his public personality, rather than his real one." Natasha explains.

"Sounds interesting." Tony comments.

"And as interesting as this conversation is, I'm heading up to bed." Bobbi comments, standing up.

"Night." Melinda tells her daughter, who heads upstairs, "Nat, if you want to stay tonight you can sleep…." Melinda starts to say, but then she realises that with Rhodey and Pepper also staying there is a lack of space.

"On the upstairs couch, I'm fine with that." Natasha says, before heading upstairs too.

"We really need more rooms around here." Tony comments, as Natasha heads upstairs, "How mad are you?" he asks, once Natasha is upstairs.

"Furious." Melinda answers.

"Mel, I was just trying to protect you." Tony says simply.

"I don't need your protection!" Melinda argues, "Tony you were dying, and knowing that would have been is, painful, but if they were going to be your last days then I would have wanted to spend them with you."

"I didn't want you to watch me die." Tony admits.

"You took away my choice." Melinda says angrily, knowing that if Tony had died then she would have wanted to be with him until his last breath, "We don't lie to each other, Tony."

"You're a spy!" Tony points out.

"Yeah, but that's business." Melinda points out, "When it's about us we don't lie, Tony, we don't keep things from each other, we never have."

"Except when you wait six months to tell me about your miscarriage." Tony says, and the second he does he regrets it as Melinda looks like he slapped her, "Damn, I'm sorry Mel. I didn't mean it."

"You wouldn't have said it if you didn't." Melinda says, as she turns to walk away, and as she does Tony reaches out and grabs her arm.

"I'm an idiot, that was out of line and I should have told you what was going on." Tony tells Melinda, moving so that he is looking right at her, "I love you, you are my world. I could handle dying, but what I couldn't handle is saying goodbye to you and our kids, forcing you to watch as I slowly died, that would have hurt more than dying ever could." Tony admits, "I'm sorry, Mel."

"I know you are." Melinda admits, "You say you couldn't handle saying goodbye, well what I couldn't handle is knowing you were dying alone." Melinda admits, "We've both got to do better Tony… no more lying about the important stuff, for either of us."
"No more lying." Tony says, and the two of them lean forward and kiss, "So, I'm not dying anymore, and I have a new arch reactor powering my heart, want to see what it can handle?" Tony asks, giving Melinda a flirty grin, it being more than clear what he is suggesting.

"Definitely." Melinda says, and both she and Tony head upstairs, basically hurrying past Natasha who is still awake on the upstairs couch.

**June 1st 2011**

Hours after Melinda and Tony fought and made up Tony and Melinda are in a SHIELD facility in New York, an outpost one that isn't used often, while Bobbi and Natasha are at the apartment and planning on picking Daisy and Peter up from school as Melinda, Tony, Pepper, and Rhodey have to go to DC after Tony and Melinda meet with Fury.

While Tony is sitting at a desk Melinda is standing back, and as he sees two folders on the desk, one of which is titled Avengers Initiative Preliminary Report he reaches over and grabs it, but before he can open it Fury walks in.

"I don't think I want you looking at that." Fury says, closing the file before Tony can have a look, "I'm not sure it pertains to you anymore." Fury explains, "Now, this on the other hand, is Agent Romanoff's assessment of you, read it." Fury says, as he hands Tony a file, and honestly both Melinda and Tony are truly curious about what Natasha came up with.

"Personality overview. Mr Stark displays compulsive behaviour." Tony reads, "In my own defence that was last week." Tony says, looking up at Fury, "Prone to self-destructive tendencies." Tony reads, "I was dying, I mean, please, aren't we all?" Tony asks, pretending to be insulted but is truthfully amused with what Natasha wrote, "Textbook narcissist." Tony reads, "Agreed." He admits, "Okay, here it is, recruitment assessment for Avenger initiative, Iron Man, Yes?" Tony reads wondering what the hell Natasha is up to, "I gotta think about it." Tony comments, as Melinda wonders the same thing Tony is wondering.

"Read on." Fury instructs.

"Tony Stark not… not recommended?" Tony asks, feeling confused, "That doesn't make any sense, how can you approve me but not approve me?" Tony asks, feeling confused, "I got a new ticker, I'm trying to do right by Mel, Bobbi, Daisy and Peter." Tony says, knowing he has to make it seem like he is objecting, as Fury walks around and rests against the table by Tony's chair.

"Which leads us to believe at this juncture, we'd only like to use you as a consult." Fury says, which is honestly what Melinda was expecting, as Tony stands and offers his hand to Fury, and the two of them shake hands.

"You can't afford me." Tony comments, as he clasps his hand over Fury's as he walks away, and he walks a couple of steps before turning back around, "Then again, I will waive my customary retainer in exchange for a small favour." Tony admits, "Rhodey and I are being honoured in Washington and we need a presenter." He explains.

"I'll see what I can do." Fury says, and once he does Tony and Melinda leave.

"What am I getting myself into becoming a consultant?" Tony asks Melinda in a quiet voice.

"Hard to say." Melinda admits, knowing it could be anything, and the two of them head out of the base.
Hours later Bobbi is in her room with her door open, so that she can hear if something is going on with Daisy and Peter, on the phone when she sees Daisy standing at the door to her room, looking like she wants to come in.

"Hey Hunter, I've got to go. I'll talk to you later." Bobbi says, and she pauses as Hunter responds, "Yeah, me too, see you soon." Bobbi says, before hanging up, "What's up Daze?" Bobbi asks her sister.

"I want to know what's going on." Daisy comments, as she walks towards Bobbi.

"What are you talking about?" Bobbi asks, pretending that she doesn't know exactly what is going on.

"Oh come on, I'm not an idiot!" Daisy says annoyed, as she sits down on Bobbi's bed.

"No one thinks you're an idiot, Daze." Bobbi assures her sister.

"Then why won't you tell me what's going on?" Daisy angrily, "And don't say nothing because something is clearly, or was, going on." She says, "Dad went to LA to do a few things which, as far as I could tell, would make more sense doing from New York, especially with the expo on. You and Aunt Nat stayed with him, and Dad was reckless in Monaco and at his birthday party, and last night Mom was clearly angry about something." She comments, "I'm almost fifteen, I'm not a little kid anymore. If something is going on with my family I deserve to know." Daisy says, sounding angry.

"You may not be a little kid, but you are still a kid." Bobbi tells her sister, "Yes, there was something going on, but it's over now and everything's okay."

"But they weren't before." Daisy realises, and Bobbi nods, "You positive everything is okay?"

"Without a doubt." Bobbi assures her sister, "Daze, there are things you aren't going to be told, hell there are still things I'm not told, that's just the way our family is."

"I know." Daisy confirms, "I just feel like I could have helped."

"Nah, you couldn't have." Bobbi assures her sister, and the two of them drift into silence.

"So, that was Hunter?" DAISY ASKS, "How's things going?"

"Well...." Bobbi says, and the two sisters make themselves comfortable on Bobbi's bed and talk about not just Hunter, but what's been going on in Daisy's life.

While Bobbi and Daisy are upstairs Peter is walking into the living room where Natasha is sitting on the couch watching TV, but because he knows his aunt so well Peter knows that if she needed to she could get into position to attack within a second.

"Um, Aunt Nat?" Peter asks as he walks up to her.

"Hey Pete, what's up?" Natasha asks, turning to look at him.

"Um, I've finished my homework and I want to work on something in the lab, but Dad's rule is that I need someone supervising, so I was wondering if you could?" Peter asks curious.

"Sure, but what are you doing?" Natasha asks curious.
"Bobbi destroyed an alarm clock for me, I'm trying to put it back together." Peter says, looking excited.

"Okay." Natasha says, looking amused at how excited Peter is, as even without being blood related he looks so much like Tony, "Lead the way." Natasha says, as she stands up.

"Thanks Aunt Nat!" Peter says looking excited, as the two of them head to the lab.

A while later Melinda and Tony have returned home and everyone but Tony are fast asleep. Having just checked on all his kids Tony is returning to his and Melinda's room where he climbs back into bed and just watches Melinda as he sleeps knowing that after coming so close to losing her, and his kids, he is never going to take a single moment with them for granted.

"I love you, so much." Tony says, to Melinda's sleeping form.

**June 4th 2011**

A few days have passed since Tony agreed to be a consultant for S.H.I. and ever since he has been enjoying spending time with his family. It is Saturday afternoon and Melinda, Bobbi, Tony, and Natasha are in Tony's lab, while Daisy and Peter are both doing things in their respective bedrooms, at least that what Melinda and Tony believe.

As Tony's injuries, in particular the ones he got from fighting with Bobbi don't seem to be healing Tony is sitting on a bench while Melinda is inspecting them, and Bobbi, who's injuries have completely healed, and Natasha watch on.

"They're healing, just slowly." Melinda comments, "You didn't go easy, did you?" Melinda asks, looking at her daughter, not that she blames her for that.

"Of course not. I was up against the worlds most powerful weapon." Bobbi comments, knowing he mother wouldn't have gone easy either considering the circumstances.

"Second most powerful." Phil says as he and Clint walk into the lab, both of them arriving back from New Mexico.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Tony asks curious.

"We just met a Norse god." Clint comments, as he jumps up onto a bench.

"What?" Melinda, Natasha, Bobbi, and Tony say together, sounding shocked.

"Technically you didn't meet him, you just said you're rooting for him and pointed your arrow at him." Phil says, "I talked to him, more than once."

"Guys, you two arguing about who actually met this god isn't important. Explaining what the hell is going on is." Natasha argues.

"Thor." Clint says.

"The god of thunder?" Melinda asks.

"Yep." Phil confirms, "He's real, but an alien." Phil comments.

"Who's an alien?" A voice asks, and everyone turns to see Daisy and Peter at the doorway.
"A Norse god apparently." Tony comments, "Uncle Coulson was just about to explain." He says, and Daisy and Peter walk over.

"No telling this to anyone okay?" Phil asks, looking between Daisy and Peter, "It's important."

"Okay." Peter says, with nod.

"Daisy?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, not looking that happy, but she wants to know what is going on and so she agrees.

"Like I was saying. Thor, the Norse god of thunder, who is actually an Alien was banished to earth by his father, his hammer, Mjolnir, came with him, and no one other than him could lift it." Phil explains, "He and his adoptive brother Loki had a grudge match that basically levelled a small town." Phil explains.

"Holy crap." Bobbi says, looking shocked, "So let me get this straight, Norse God exists, but they are actually aliens, and have visited earth?" she asks, wanting to make sure she understands correctly.

"Yep." Clint confirms, "Welcome to the new world."

"This is beyond what was in Aunt Peggy's old reports." Melinda says, exchanging looks with Phil, both of them thinking some of the things they dealt with in the early days of their career.

"Really is." Natasha says, "Is it too early to drink?" she asks, and Melinda gives her a disapproving look, "What, you're thinking the same thing." She says, and Melinda doesn't object to that.

"Okay, Daze, Pete, let's go get ice cream." Bobbi tells her siblings, being pretty sure her parents, Natasha, Clint, and Coulson need some time to talk.

"Oh come on! Getting us out of the way so the adults can talk, not fair!" Daisy objects.

"Are you really saying no to Ice Cream?" Peter asks his big sister, looking at her in surprise, and Daisy looks between the adults in the room.

"Nah, guess I'm not." Daisy says, "Can we get pizza to?" Daisy asks curious, and Bobbi turns to Melinda, who exchanges look with Tony.

"Yeah, I guess. Just don't eat too much." Melinda tells her daughter.

"And stay with Bobbi." Tony adds.

"Yes Dad." Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi say, before leaving.

"So aliens actually were in New Mexico." Tony comments, once his kids leave.

"Yep." Clint confirms, "Even without his powers Thor was a pretty great fighter."

"What kind of powers?" Melinda asks curious.

"Bobbi, times ten, can control lightning, and fly." Phil explains.

"Holy crap." Tony says, looking shocked and amazed.
"How'd Fury react?" Natasha asks curious.

"About how you'd expect. I'm pretty sure we're all going to be getting more work." Phil admits.

"That's going to be fun." Melinda comments, sounding slightly sarcastic.

"Yeah, I want to know the story. What exactly happened?" Tony asks, and once he does Phil and Clint start to explain everything that happened, to the amazement of Natasha, Melinda, and Tony.

Hours later, after Phil and Clint explained every detail of what happened in New Mexico the two of them, and Natasha, have left the Stark-May apartment leaving Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter, with Bobbi leaving in the morning to go on an assignment.

It is early evening and Melinda is in her study working on her paperwork about what happened at the expo.

"So, I have an idea." Tony says, walking through Melinda's open door and into the study.

"Is it going to cause something to blow up?" Melinda asks curious, looking up from what she is doing.

"No, but things will need to be destroyed to become something new." Tony says as he sits down across from her, and Melinda just gives an interesting look, "Well, I was thinking, some of the tenants on the lower floors are moving out, not wanting the danger of being around Iron Man, which I don't blame them for, and so I'm thinking it's about time we put the empty space we have to use, and use the arch to give back to New York by making the entire building self-sustaining, and giving the whole place an upgrade, a remodel." Tony explains.

"That sounds like a good idea." Melinda admits, "I take it you already have plans for the empty spaces?"

"Yep, top of it is places for members of our family to stay when they are in town, as we realised over the last few days we've run out of space, plus it means we can have more people stay for longer times if needed." Tony explains.

"You mean for situations like Hope staying for a few months later this year." Melinda comments, as she and Tony have been talking to Hope about that recently.

"Yep. She needs a break from San Francisco and if Sharon, Antoine, and Bobbi come home we're going to need more space." Tony admits, "You know I actually offered Hope a job at Stark so she could get away from San Fran for good." He admits.

"What did she say?" Melinda asks curious.

"That that would give Hank a heart attack and she wasn't prepared to do that." Tony comments.

"That's actually progress." Melinda realises.

"Yep." Tony confirms, "I think it's in November she's coming to stay, and I think we could have one of the guest floors ready by then." He admits.

"That sounds good." Melinda admits, "I know Pepper and Rhodey have places in New York, and Phil, Nat, Clint, and Maria have places they usually stay here, but having places for them to actually stay in the building seems like a good idea to me." Melinda admits, as it was be safer,
"What else you thinking about doing?"

"R & D floors. It will give jobs to people, a lot of people have lost their jobs with Hammer getting shut down, and if they can be trusted then we can give work to them, and others." Tony explains.

"That's a great idea." Melinda says, smiling softly as she knows that one of the reason is to help make things right after everything that has happened, "You mentioned something about some upgrading and remodelling?" Melinda asks curious.

"Yep!" Tony says, with a grin, looking excited, "I have some designs in the lab if you want to have a look."

"Definitely." Melinda says, as she can tell how excited Tony is and she loves that fact, "Let's go." Melinda says, and the two of them head to the lab and spend the next few hours looking at Tony's designs and discussing the remodelling and upgrades they want to make to the building they call home.
Almost three weeks have passed since Melinda and Tony started talking about changes and upgrades they are going to make to the building they call home, and since then remodelling has started, while Daisy has finished her freshman year of high School, Peter has finished fourth grade, and Bobbi has finally completed her biology degree.

It is early on a Tuesday morning and both Melinda and Tony are fast asleep in their bed, or they are until JARVIS turns on all the lights in their room and starts to play music softly, but loud enough for them both to wake up.

"JARVIS, what's going on?" Melinda asks, feeling confused.

"I am following instructions." JARVIS answers, "When you are both ready Miss Daisy, Miss Bobbi, and Mr Peter are downstairs, they will explain what is going on." He reveals.

"It's our Anniversary, I think our kids have a surprise for us." Melinda realises.

"Probably." Tony realises, "I love you."

"Love you too." Melinda responds, and the two of them kiss. Once Melinda and Tony kiss the two of them break apart and head downstairs.

About a minute later Tony and Melinda walk into the living room where they find Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter with a 'Happy 10th Anniversary' sign.

"Happy Anniversary Mom, Dad." Bobbi says, looking between her parents, "There's breakfast in the kitchen."

"Thank you." Melinda says, with a smile, "This is amazing."

"You haven't even heard what our present is yet." Daisy says, with a grin.

"Oh?" Tony asks, looking between his kids.

"You guys haven't taken a proper vacation in a long time, and so I talked to Pepper and Uncle Rhodey, and Uncle Phil and we organized something." Bobbi explains.

"Uncle Clint is going to be here in forty minutes, he's going fly you to a private island, where you both are going to get to spend four days, relaxing and having fun." Peter explains.

"What about the three of you?" Melinda asks concerned.

"We'll be here. Sharon and Antoine are going to be here later today and Uncle Phil, Uncle Rhodey and Pepper said they'll check in on, make sure we don't get into trouble." Daisy explains.
"What about Hunter?" Tony asks, looking at Bobbi who isn't at all surprised by the question.

"He's on assignment, I'm not sure when he'll be back." Bobbi explains, "Look, we'll be fine, you both are the most amazing parents and deserve some time just the two of you."

"Agreed." Peter says.

"Yep." Daisy confirms, and as she does Melinda and Tony exchange looks, it being clear that this is something that both Melinda and Tony are hesitant about.

"If something happens here, or where you are you will be able to call." Bobbi explains.

"Okay, but Clint's not going to fly, I am so we can come back if we need to without waiting for him to return." Melinda explains.

"Okay, but don't come back early without a good reason." Daisy tells her parents.

"I think we can agree to that." Tony says, after he and Melinda exchange looks, "Now, wasn't there something about breakfast.

"Yep, we got the best food!" Peter says, with a grin, and the family of five head into the kitchen where they proceed to have an enjoyable breakfast together before Melinda and Tony leave.

July 18th 2011

Less than a month has passed since Melinda and Tony's 10th anniversary, during which time the two of them were actually able to spend some time together, actually relaxing for the first time in a while, and in that time Daisy has celebrated her fifteenth birthday.

It is a Monday evening and Tony is going between working on new designs for his next Iron Man suit, and designs for the upgrades of the Building which are going to proceed to the next stage soon.

"Sir Mrs Stark-May wants you in the study, as soon as possible." JARVIS informs Tony.

"Okay, thanks J." Tony says, before getting up and heading across the apartment and to the study, "What's up?" Tony asks, as he walks into the study.

"Bobbi, your Dad and I are both here." Melinda says, into the desk phone which is clearly on speaker.

"So, I have to tell you both something." Bobbi tells her parents.

"Is everything okay?" Tony asks, clearly concerned.

"Yeah, it's a good thing, at least I think it's a good thing." Bobbi says, and Melinda can hear the smile in her daughter's voice.

"Bobbi, what's going on?" Melinda asks her daughter, wanting to know.

"Hunter and I got married." Bobbi reveals.

"WHAT!" Melinda and Tony both say, sounding completely shocked.

"Yeah, I'm on my way back to Johannesburg where I'm in the middle of a mission, but we went to London, and got married." Bobbi reveals, "It was a rash decision, but not a mistake." Bobbi admits,
"I love Hunter, and I'm really happy."

"That's great Bobbi." Melinda says, looking at Tony who looks like he is about to explode, "when will you be in New York next?"

"Hopefully this weekend, if this mission goes without a problem.' Bobbi answers, "Look, I've got to go, but I wanted you both to be the first to know." She explains, "Love you Mom, Dad." Bobbi says.

"Love you too." Melinda responds, and Bobbi hangs up, "Tony?" Melinda asks concerned.

"No, no way." Tony say, snapping out of his shock.

"Yes." Melinda tells her husband, "Our daughter has gotten married."

"No. I knew might get married someday, but Hunter? He's just…. The worse." Tony says, "And I know you agree." He adds.

"You're right, I don't like Hunter." Melinda admits, being pretty sure that is a kind way to describe her feeling about Hunter, "But Bobbi does. She's chosen to marry him, as much as you don't like that, as much as I don't like it, she's made a choice." Melinda admits, as she walks over to Tony, "I don't know what she sees in Hunter, and truthfully I would be very happy if he was no where near her, but Bobbi's our daughter, and she's happy, we need to support her; even if we don't approve."

Melinda explains, "If we don't she may want nothing to do with us, she's an adult Tony, she makes her own choices, and if things do end badly with Hunter, then we need to be there for her, and she won't let us if we just hate Hunter and say I told you so." Melinda points out.

"Damn it, I hate it when you make a really good argument." Tony admits.

"Because you know I'm right." Melinda says, looking at Tony, "I don't like it, but I'm prepared to deal with my feelings if it means supporting our daughter, the question is, are you?" Melinda asks.

"I don't know." Tony admits, "But I'll try…. For Little Bird." He says.

"Good." Melinda says, before leaning forward and hugging her husband.

**July 23rd 2011**

Five days have passed since Bobbi called her parents to tell them that she had Hunter got married. It's Saturday evening and having arrived back in New York, Bobbi and Hunter are in the elevator riding up to the Stark-May apartment, which is still in the middle of being remodelled.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Hunter asks, "I mean your parents don't like me, your brother doesn't like me, the only one who does is Daisy."

"Mom, Dad, and Peter don't like you because they don't know you that well." Bobbi comments, "That's why this is a good idea, so you can get to know them better." Bobbi says, walking towards Hunter, "I love you, and I love them, and I know that if given a chance you'll all get along better." Bobbi explains, "So can you try?"

"Of course, I love you too, Bob." Hunter says, before leaning forward and kissing her, and they break apart just as the elevator doors open, smiling at Hunter, Bobbi takes his hand and the two of them head out of the apartment, where they find Melinda, Tony, Daisy, Peter, Sharon, Antoine, Happy, Pepper, Rhodey, Phil, Natasha, Clint, Maria, William, Lian, and Hope, all standing around the living room where there are decorations and a large banner that says, "Congratulations."
"Congratulations." Everyone calls as Bobbi and Hunter walk out, some people sounding more eager than others.

"Oh wow." Bobbi says, as Daisy hurries up and hugs her sister and new brother in law, "This is amazing." She says, as she returns her hug with Daisy.

"Your Mom's to thank for that, she organized this whole thing." Sharon, who has always made her feelings about Hunter clear so it means a lot to Bobbi to see her, says.

"Thanks Mom." Bobbi says, smiling at her mother, being pretty sure she would have talked most of the people who are in the room into being here.

"We have food, and drink, and music, and something to celebrate, let's get this party started." Daisy says, with a grin.

"I like the sound of that." Hunter says, with a grin, and everyone proceeds to celebrate Bobbi and Hunter's marriage as even though most of Bobbi's family don't like Hunter, or think he is good enough for her they do support Bobbi, and respect her choice, and so are more celebrating the fact that she is happy, than the fact that she got married.

September 12th 2011

A couple of months have passed since Bobbi and Hunter got married, and even though Tony still doesn't feel that Hunter is good enough for his daughter, and Melinda really doesn't like him, they have both come to accept Hunter; to a degree.

As of a couple of weeks earlier Daisy has started her sophomore year of high school while Peter has started fifth grade, and so at about ten am on a Monday Melinda, Tony and Pepper are the only ones in the Stark-May apartment, all three of them sitting around a table in the living room.

"So, I have an idea." Tony comments.

"We're still dealing with organising the construction from your last idea." Melinda comments, knowing that they arrange for construction to increase when Daisy and Peter are at school.

"This has to do with that." Tony admits.

"You've come up with a name." Pepper realises.

"Yep." Tony says, "It's simple, my first idea was Stark-May Tower...." Tony starts to say.

"Tony..." Melinda starts to say.

"I know, it's not possible." Tony admits, looking a little disappointed about that, "So, I was thinking we'd just go with Stark Tower." He explains.

"That would be great for the company." Pepper realises.

"Would you mind?" Tony asks, looking at his wife.

"Sounds fine to me." Melinda admits, "Peter is going to find one of his names on the side of the building the coolest thing ever." She realises.

"He really is." Tony comments, "So, we all agree then?"

"Yeah, we do." Melinda confirms, and Pepper nods.
"I've need to get back to Stark, when you want to make the announcement we'll organise what the best way is to od it." Pepper tells Tony, who nods. "I'll see you Melinda."

"Yeah, see you Pepper." Melinda says, and Pepper gets up and leaves, "I should get going too, I've got to get to DC." She admits.

"I know." Tony comments, "I'll see you later, I love you." He says.

"Love you too." Melinda says, before leaving.

After Melinda leaves the apartment Tony heads to his lab and gets to work on what needs to be done to add to the next part of the construction of the tower.

**November 26th 2011**

A couple of months have passed since Tony, Pepper, and Melinda decided on the name Stark Tower for the building where the Stark-May apartment is in, and in that time several of the floors have been finished.

It is a Saturday afternoon and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Hunter, Daisy, Peter, Sharon, and Trip are in in the living room of the Stark-May apartment, watching old movies and waiting for Hope to arrive.

"Sir Miss van Dyne is on her way up in the elevator." JARVIS reveals.

"Great. Thanks Jarvis." Tony answers, "Pause the movie." He requests, and JARVIS does that, as he does the elevator doors open.

"HOPE!" Peter says, running over to great her with a hug.

"Hey Peter." Hope says, returning the hug, "It's good to see you." She admits.

"Good to see you too." Peter responds.

"Hey Melinda, Tony. thanks for letting me stay." Hope says, looking between her two old friends.

"You really don't have to thank us." Tony assures her, "Come on, there's something we've got to show you." He says, as everyone heads to the elevator and while hope is confused everyone else knows exactly what is happening as they go down to the floor below.

When the elevator doors open at the floor below everyone sees a living area that looks a lot like the one on the floor above.

"Wow, this looks great." Trip comments, having not seen it since as Tony, and Melinda have been secretive about the remodelling.

"It really does." Sharon confirms.

"This floor has seven bedrooms, each with adjoining bathroom, a living area, and kitchen." Melinda explains, "And of course it has complete access to the floors above, only this floor, and the one below which is exactly the same, has that." Melinda reveals.

"That's kind of cool." Hope admits.

"We think so. Truthfully I'm pretty sure we should have done something like this a long time ago." Tony admits.
"It's good that it's done now." Bobbi says, believing that.

"It is." Hunter confirms.

"So, are there assigned rooms or something?" Hope asks curious.

"Nope. Pick which every you like." Tony tells her.

"Can we actually have a look around? You haven't let us." Daisy comments.

"Sure, we can have a look at the other floors that are done too." Melinda answers, and several people around the room look excited about that.

"I'll show the way." Tony says, and once he does he, Melinda, Bobbi, Hunter, Hope, Daisy, Peter, Sharon, and Trip all take a tour of the floors that have been remodelled.

December 23rd 2011

About a month has passed since Hope came to New York to stay and she is still staying, enjoying her time with her extended family.

It's a Friday evening and while Melinda is finishing up some paperwork with SHIELD, Tony is dealing with some of the requirements he needs to meet for Stark Tower, and Sharon and Antoine aren't home for a mission, Bobbi, Hunter, Daisy, Hope and Peter are the only ones home.

"This is a bad idea." Bobbi comments as she, Daisy, Peter, and Hunter walk into the building's garage.

"Oh come on, it's vulnerable skill, it can help to know it." Hunter argues.

"Hunter's right." Daisy comments, "Besides, how is this any worse than what you and Aunt Nat taught me, or the kind of things grandma has taught me?" Daisy asks.

"Good point." Bobbi admits, "Okay, Hunter can teach you." She says, "JARVIS, don't tell Mom, Dad, Hope, or anyone else about what's about to happen." Bobbi requests.

"Yes Miss Bobbi." JARVIS answer, as Bobbi has control to make requests like that, and he won't tell unless Melinda or Tony specifically ask.

"I'm out of here." Peter says, walking away, looking angry.

"Peter!" Bobbi calls, hurrying over to her brother, "What's up Peter?"

"What's up? Your Husband is teaching our sister to hotwire a car! How is that okay?" Peter asks curious.

"Because a time might come where Daisy needs to get away from a dangerous situation and the best way for her to do so is to hotwire a car, it's better that she knows." Bobbi explains.

"Right." Peter says, actually realising that that is a good point, but he doesn't like that, "Whatever I'm going to go talk to Hope, I'd know you'd rather be with him." Peter says, before starting to walk away again, but once again Bobbi quickly gets in front of him, and this time stands right in front of him, and squats down a little so that they are the same time.

"Hey, that's not true." Bobbi assures her brother, "You're my little brother, Pete, you will always be important to me, and someone I want to spend time with, nothing will every change that, okay?"
Bobbi asks, and Peter gives a nod, "Good. How about a Star Wars marathon, just me and you?"

"I'd like that." Peter says, and Bobbi stands up and puts her arm around her little brother's shoulder, "Pete and I are going upstairs, try not to get into trouble you too." Bobbi tells her sister, and Husband, and once she does she and Peter head upstairs.

"How about once you can hotwire it I teach you some basics of driving it." Hunter suggests, looking at Daisy.

"Ah, yes please." Daisy says, as Hunter starts to explain what she is going to be trying to do.

**February 3rd 2012**

A little over a month has passed since Hunter taught Daisy to hotwire a car, a skill that she hasn't told her parents she knows, and in that time, Peter has celebrated his eleventh birthday.

It's about lunchtime on a Friday and Tony is walking into the Triskelion, as Fury wants to see him, about some consulting work. Having passed security Tony walks into the lobby of the Triskelion and as he does he sees someone familiar, and so he walks straight over to them.

"I thought you work in the basement." Tony comments, as he walks up to his wife.

"I do." Melinda confirms, "Fury asked me to escort you." Melinda explains.

"Huh." Tony comments, as Melinda starts to walk Tony walks with her, "So? Where are we going?" Tony asks curious, noticing people watching them, and he isn't at all surprised, though he is once more a little surprised when he realises people are paying more attention to Melinda than him.

"Directors office." Melinda answers.

"Fun, are you going to be in the meetings?" Tony asks curious.

"Nope." Melinda answers, and as she does both she and Tony hear an agent say, in a not very quiet whisper,

"It's Iron Man and The Cavalry."

As soon as they hear that Tony sees Melinda tense, and Tony remembers that Bobbi told him people are calling Melinda that, and if he had to guess she hates that fact, and so he wants to comfort her, but knows he can't in front of so many people.

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Hours later, Tony has had his meeting with Fury and both he and Melinda have retuned home. As he keeps thinking about Melinda's reaction to someone calling her 'The Cavalry' Tony decides to ask Melinda about it, and so he heads into the study where Melinda is working.

"Mel?" Tony asks, as he walks in, and sees that Melinda is reading on the couch rather than sitting at the desk.

"Yeah." Melinda says, looking up from the folder she is reading.

"I wanted to ask you something." Tony admits, as he walks over and sits down next to Melinda, "The Cavalry…." He says, and as soon a she says the words Melinda tenses at that, "Why were agents calling you that?" He asks, and he notices Melinda look tense, and even more hesitant, "You
"They've been calling me that since Bahrain." Melinda admits, pain in her voice, "No one at SHIELD, except Fury and Nat who guessed, know what happened, but there are rumours." Melinda admits, "And because of something one of the agents said before the mission, people started calling me The Cavalry…. And I hate it." Melinda admits.

"Because it reminds you of what happened, of what we lost." Tony realises.

"Yeah." Melinda says, and as she does Tony reaches out and making it clear what he is going to do as he does, he takes Melinda, who doesn't flinch, hand.

"I'm sorry." Tony says, and the two of them drift into silence, knowing that it must kill Melinda a little every time she is called The Cavalry.

April 26th 2012

Almost three months have passed since Tony and Melinda talked about other agents calling her The Cavalry and, in that time, Hope has gone back to San Francisco, having enjoyed her time in New York a lot as it allowed her to become close to the family she lost a long time ago.

It's late at night on a Thursday and Melinda and Tony are both in the living room of their apartment, where the renovations are almost done, and Melinda is pacing back and forth after a call she just received.

"So, what exactly did she say?" Tony asks, looking concerned.

"She said she was coming home for a few days." Melinda explains, "But she didn't seem okay." Melinda says, looking, and sounding, worried.

"Did she say if Hunter was coming with her?" Tony asks curious.

"No." Melinda answers, and as she does Bobbi steps out of the elevator, and as soon as she does her parents hurry over to her, and even though Bobbi is one of the best spies in the world her parents know her well enough to know that she isn't okay.

"Little Bird? What's happened?" Tony asks, looking concerned.

"Hunter and I are over, we're getting a divorce." Bobbi reveals, as tears weal in her eyes, and without a word both her parents hug her, tightly as while neither of them liked Hunter it hurts them to see their daughter hurt. As soon as Bobbi feels her parents hugging her, something which makes her feel safe, she starts to cry, and her parents just hold her tighter.

April 29th 2012

Three days have passed since Bobbi returned home to tell her parents that she and Hunter are getting a divorce and ever since Bobbi has just been enjoying spending time with her family, while not explaining exactly what happened between her and Hunter.

It's late afternoon and Melinda, Bobbi and Tony are in Tony's lab together, Bobbi having just finished explaining something to her parents.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Yeah, work will be a great distraction." Bobbi admits.
"As someone who often uses work as distraction, it doesn't always work as well as you want." Tony admits, wanting his daughter to learn from his mistakes.

"And a deep cover assignment, with zero contact and no backup, is hard enough under the best circumstances. You have to be sure you can handle it." Melinda tells her daughter.

"I can, Mom." Bobbi assures her mother, knowing that "Being anyone else but myself seems like a really great idea right now, I need this. It's what I'm going to do." Bobbi explains, as right now she doesn't want to be herself, doesn't want to feel the pain of her and Hunter being over, and doing an undercover assignment she doesn't have to. As Bobbi explains what she needs Tony and Melinda exchange looks, neither liking the sound of that, but they both realise they aren't going to talk Bobbi out of this.

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod.

"When do you leave?" Tony asks.

"I leave for DC in a few hours, but first I'm going to take Daze and Pete out to get some food." Bobbi explains.

"Say goodbye before you go." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Of course." Bobbi says, before leaving the lab, going to spend a few hours with her siblings.

"I don't like this." Tony comments, as Bobbi leaves.

"Me either." Melinda admits, and the two of them drift into silence, both of them worried about their daughter and feeling like the worse thing for her to do is a deep cover assignment, but they also know they can't talk their daughter out of this, something they hate.
Chapter 41

May 2 nd 2012

Three days have passed since Bobbi left to go on her undercover assignment, that she hopes will distract her from the fact that her marriage is over, and in that time the remodelling of Stark Tower have officially been completed, and Tony is walking back into the apartment where Melinda, Daisy, and Peter are, having just used his Iron Man suit to disconnect the building from the electricity grid.

"What does it look like, Pete?" Tony asks his son, knowing Peter understands the monitoring completely.

"Levels are holding steady." Peter says, with a grin, "You did it Dad."

"We did it." Tony says, as he walks over to his family.

"So, you're going to make more buildings like this, right? The world needs more clean energy." Daisy comments.

"Yep. Pepper's already in DC, working on more zoning." Tony explains.

"Cool." Daisy says, looking glad.

"Nicely done." Melinda says to Tony, smiling at him, as the elevator doors open and Phil walks in and the second she sees him Melinda knows something horrible has happened, "What's happened?" Melinda asks.

"The three of us need to talk." Phil explains.

"Daze, Pete, go upstairs." Melinda says, as her phone starts to ring, and as Melinda sees the caller id she knows things are worse than she thought.

"What! No! That's not fair!" Daisy objects.

"Listen to your Mom, Tiny Tony, go upstairs." Tony tells his daughter, seeing the look on his wife's face.

"Fine." Daisy says, looking annoyed, and she and Peter head upstairs, doing so reluctantly.

"J, make sure Daisy and Peter can't eavesdrop." Tony instructs.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"May." Melinda answers, taking a step away from Phil and Tony.

"What the hell is going on?" Tony asks, looking concerned.
"Something bad." Phil answers, as he hands Tony a large object, "You need to look this over, as soon as possible." He explains, as once he has the object Tony walks a few steps away and starts to read.

"I want you to join Coulson on the Quinjet back to the Hellicarrier." Fury, via the phone, informs Melinda.

"I'm not a field agent anymore, Nick, not a specialist." Melinda argues, causing Tony to look at her while he is looking at what Coulson brought.

"You'll always be a specialist, it's who you are." Fury says, "And it's a level seven May, we need you." He says, telling the truth.

"I can't Nick. I cannot go back in the field, especially not for a level seven." Melinda says, not knowing that saying the sentence will become one of the biggest regrets of her life.

"Okay." Fury says, and Melinda is surprised by that as it isn't like Fury to just give up, "Then you're to get to DC as soon as possible. While Hill, Coulson and I are on the Hellicarrier you're in charge of the Triskelion, communicating with other bases, and giving instructions to them if it becomes necessary." Fury reveals, as while he hoped he could get May to the Hellicarrier, his plan was always to put her in charge of the Triskelion when she refused.

"Um Sir, I'm pretty sure I'm not next in line to be put in charge." Melinda comments, causing both Phil and Tony to look at her, as Melinda could probably list all the agents who are higher ranked than her.

"I need someone who knows what the hell they are doing running things, someone who will make the calls that need to be made, who can lead everyone if it gets to that point, someone who agents will actually listen to, that's you." Fury tells Melinda, as several of the people who are higher ranked than Melinda are people who lower ranked agents won't listen to.

"Yes Sir." Melinda answers, knowing that this is the closest Fury has ever gotten to saying 'I need you' to anyone, "I get there as soon as I can."

"Good." Fury says, before hanging up.

"You're in charge?" Phil asks, looking shocked.

"Apparently." Melinda confirms, "What's actually happened?" she asks, being pretty sure she needs to know.

"The Joint Dark Force Facility has been destroyed. The Tesseract has been stolen, by Loki, and…." Phil starts to say, before trailing off.

"And?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Clint's been compromised." Phil explains, and Melinda has to reach out to grab the table so that she doesn't fall over.

"Mel?" Tony asks concerned.

"That explains the level seven." Melinda realises, collecting herself.

"What does level seven mean?" Tony asks, looking between Melinda and Phil.
"End of the world." Phil and Melinda answers.

"That we're at War." Melinda adds.

"Great." Tony says, sounding sarcastically.

"It also means we're beyond personality assessments Fury will call you in." Phil explains, looking at Tony, who is going though all the information Phil gave him.

"Which means will you on call for Fury, and me at the Triskelion we have to get Daisy and Peter somewhere safe." Melinda realises.

"On that note, I've got to go." Phil says, looking between Melinda and Tony, "I'll see you when I see you." He says, before leaving.

"We need a plan, for Daisy and Peter." Tony realises, "Everyone who is a SHIELD agent is out, Rhodey is on a mission, same with Bobbi…." He says but then he realises something, "Will she be called in to fight with the Avengers?" he asks worried.

"Would Fury want her, yes, but from what I know she's too deep undercover to get out, or get news to, easily which means he's likely not able to" Melinda explains, "I'll call Mom. She has safe houses, it will be safest for Daisy and Pete to go somewhere off the grid."

"Good idea." Tony confirms, and Melinda makes another call on her phone.

A few minutes later Melinda and Tony walk upstairs to where Daisy and Peter are sitting in the upstairs living room.

"Finally, are you actually going to explain what is going on now?" Daisy asks sounding annoyed.

"You both need to pack a bag, put some clothes and entertainment, but no electronics, including phones." Melinda explains.

"Why?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"Um, what the hell?" Daisy asks, looking shocked.

"Something bad is happening, that's why Uncle Coulson was here." Tony explains.

"How bad?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"Really, really, really bad." Melinda explains, "Everyone is in danger, do you remember Uncle Phil telling you about Loki?" Melinda asks.

"Norse god alien?" Daisy asks.

"He's on earth and has stolen something powerful." Tony explains, "He's also controlling your Uncle Clint."

"Will Uncle Clint be okay?" Peter asks worried.

"We hope so." Melinda answers, "I have to go to DC, and your Dad's got work to do. So, the two of you are going a safe place with Grandma. Your going to fly to DC with me and then Grandma will take you somewhere safe."
"Where?" Daisy asks curious.

"We don't know." Tony answers, "It's better that way."

"This is really, really bad, isn't it?" Peter asks, and both of his parents' nod, once they do he hurries over and hugs them, and so does Daisy.

For a few moments Melinda and Tony hug their children before they break apart,

"Go, pack a bag, and remember no electronics. Grandma will check." Melinda explains, looking at Daisy in particular.

"Okay, come on Pete." Daisy tells her brother, and they head to their respective bedrooms.

"We're doing the right thing, right?" Tony asks concerned.

"We're doing what we have to do." Melinda explains, "I got to get changed." Melinda says, heading to hers and Tony's room as even though she isn't going into the field she will be wearing her tactical outfit.

A while later Melinda, Tony, Daisy, and Peter are all in the garage.

"I love you, both so much." Tony tells his two youngest children as he hugs her.

"I love you too." Daisy and Peter both respond as Tony kisses the heads of both his children before they break apart and Daisy and Peter get into the car.

"Mel…" Tony starts to say.

"I love you." Melinda says, cutting him off.

"I love you too." Tony responds, "I…"

"There's nothing else either of us need to say." Melinda says, taking a step forward.

"There are still a lot of things I would like to say, but you're right." Tony says, before kissing Melinda, "I love you." He says, when they break apart.

"I love you too." Melinda responds and while Melinda gets in the car to drive off with Daisy and Peter Tony heads back upstairs to continue reading everything Phil gave him.

An hour later Melinda, with Daisy and Peter, has landed the plane in DC, where Lian is waiting for them.

"Hey Grandma." Daisy greats.

"Daisy, Peter." Lian says, smiling at her grandchildren, "Bags." She requests, and both of her grandchildren hand over their bags.

"Your really going to search them?" Daisy asks, surprised.

"Of course." Lian confirms, and she spends the next few minutes searching both Daisy and Peter's bags, finding Daisy's laptop as she does.
"I'll put it on the plane, Daisy. You'll get it back, you just can't have it right now." Melinda explains to her daughter, as she takes the laptop.

"Pockets." Lian tells her grandchildren and looking annoyed Daisy pulls her phone out and hands that to her mother too.

"How are you and Dad going to contact Grandma? You don't even know where we are going." Daisy comments.

"We have a sat phone." Lian explains.

"I love you both, soo much." Melinda says, before hugging both her children at the same time, "Be good for grandma." Melinda requests.

"We will." Peter says.

"I'll try." Daisy comments, and the three of them break apart, as they do Melinda and Lian exchange looks and nods.

"Let's go." Lian says and she leads her two youngest grandchildren over to a car which they leave in.

After watching her children and mother leave Melinda takes Daisy's laptop and phone into the plane, where she leaves them in a safe place, before she leaves the plane, climbs onto a motorbike, and drives to the Triskelion.

A little while after she said goodbye to her two youngest children and left the plane she flew to DC on Melinda arrives at the Triskelion and walks straight into the operations control room where all the agents are.

"Agent May." An agent greets.

"Agent Scott." Melinda greets, knowing that he is the agent who was in charge of the control room, "Catch me up." Melinda requests, and the Agents start to explain to her what they know so far.

May 3rd 2012

Over Twelve hours has passed since Melinda arrived at the Triskelion and ever since then they have been working with The Hellicarrier to try and find Loki, and a lead on him has finally been found.

While monitoring things Melinda's phone rings and because she knows exactly who it is, even without the caller ID, Melinda steps into the corridor to answer.

"How do you think Nat would react if I made an entrance?" Tony asks curious.

"I think she'd be shocked if you didn't." Melinda admits.

"Okay, hijacking PA system and blasting ACDC it is." Tony answers, "Thanks Mel."

"Tony, you know who else is going to be there, right?" Melinda asks concerned about how Tony is going to react.

"Yeah, but I got a job to do, I'm going to focus on that." Tony explains.
"Okay. I'm here okay, I love you…. Don't hesitate to call." Melinda says.

"I won't. I love you." Tony says, before hanging up and once he does Melinda heads back into operations control.

After hanging up with Melinda Tony did exactly what he told Melinda he was going to do and proceeds to help Steve Rogers aka Captain America capture the god of mischief Loki. After capturing Loki the two of them, and Natasha flew him back to the Hellicarrier, during which time they were joined by Thor, who both Tony and Steve fought with.

Having just landed back on the Hellicarrier, Tony pulls out his phone and makes a call.

"May." Melinda answers.

"He's an ass!" Tony says, without even saying hello.

"Tony?" Melinda asks, feeling very confused.

"Rogers, I met him, and I honestly dint know why Dad and Aunt Peg loved him so much. He's a self-righteous prick." Tony says, sounding angry.

"Tony, breathe." Melinda suggests, "I'm sorry he's not what you thought he'd be." Melinda admits.

"Me too." Tony admits, "I should go… sorry about calling I just had to rant." Tony admits.

"You never have to apologise for that." Melinda assures him, "I'm here okay, even if you just need to rant." Melinda assures her husband.

"Thanks Mel." Tony says, "I love you." Tony says.

"I love you too." Melinda responds, and once she does Tony hangs up and heads out of the room, where he is leaving his suit.

"Coulson!" Tony calls, as he sees his friend.

"Good, there you are, Fury wants us on the bridge." Phil explains.

"Okay." Tony says, with a nod, "You should come to New York soon, Daisy and Peter miss their Uncle Phil?" Tony comments.

"I will." Phil assures his friend as he walks onto the bridge.

"Iridium, what do they need the iridium for?" Tony hears Bruce Banner as Tony and Phil walk onto the bridge.

"It's a stabilizing agent." Tony reveals, "Means the portal won't collapse on itself, like it did as SHIELD." He explains, "No hard feelings, Point Break, you've got a mean swing." Tony says, as he gently hits Thor's very muscular arm, knowing that he doesn't have the time to react to the fact that he just fought an alien, who also happens to be a god, "Also, it means the portal can open as wide, and stay open as long as Loki wants." Tony explains, before turning to the crew, "Uh, raise the mid-mask, ship the top sails." He says, getting blank looks in response from the crew, "That man is playing galaga, thought we wouldn't notice, but we did." Tony says, pointing to a crew member, and once he does he covers one of his eyes with his hand, and looks around, "How does Fury see these things?"

"He turns." Maria answers.
"Well, that sounds exhausting." Tony says, as he subtly puts a button sized hacking implant under Fury's desk, managing to do so without anyone noticing. "The rest of the raw Materials, Clint can get his hands on pretty easily." Tony reveals, "Only major component he still needs is a power source." Tony reveals, a high energy density, something to kick start the cube." He says, as he clicks his hands together.

"When did you become an expert in thermonuclear astrophysics?" Maria asks curious, as she knows that isn't one of Tony's areas of expertise, or at least it wasn't.

"Last night." Tony answers, "The info packet, Selvig's notes the extraction theory papers." Tony says, and just gets a lot of blank looks in response, "Was I the only one who did the reading?" Tony asks curious as it certainly seems like it.

"Does Loki need any particular kind of power source?" Steve asks curious, having not understood most of what Tony said.

"He's got to head the cube to a hundred and twenty million Kelvin just to break through the Coulomb barrier." Bruce says.

"Unless, Selvig has figured out how to stabilize the quantum tunnelling effect." Tony comments.

"Well, if he could that he could achieve Heavy ion fusion at any reactor on the planet." Banner says, and as he does Tony is very glad that someone understands what he is saying.

"Finally, someone who speaks English." Tony says, walking over to Bruce.

"Is that what just happened?" Steve asks, looking very confused, as Tony and Bruce shake hands, Tony feeling incredibly glad to meet Bruce as he is someone that he respects.

"It's good to meet you, Doctor Banner." Tony says, meaning that, "You're work on anti-electron collisions is unparalleled, and I'm a huge fan of the way you lose control and turn into an enormous green rage monster." Tony says, with a grin.

"Thanks." Bruce says, looking down.

"Doctor Banner is only here to track the cube." Fury reveals, as he walks into the room, "I was hoping you might join him." Fury says, looking at Tony.

"You might want to start with that stick of his." Steve reveals, "It might be magical, but it works an awful lot like a Hydra weapon." Steve comments.

"I don't know about that." Fury comments, "But it is powered by the cube, and I'd like to know Loki used it to turn two of the sharpest men I know into his personal flying monkeys." Fury says.


"I do! I understand that reference!" Steve says, looking proud of himself as Tony rolls his eyes, understanding less and less what his father and Aunt Peggy saw in him.

"Shall we play, Doctor?" Tony asks, looking at Bruce.

"Sure." Bruce answers and the two of them head out of the bridge.

A few minutes later Tony and Bruce are both in the lab that Fury gave them, both of them working together on trying to find the cube, and truthfully enjoying each other's company.
"The gamma rays are definitely consistent with Selvig's reports on the Tesseract, but it's going to take weeks to process." Bruce reveals.

"If we bypass their mainframe and direct a reroute to the Homer cluster, and clock this around six hundred teraflops." Tony says, from where he is working on a piece of equipment that he brought himself.

"All I packed was a toothbrush." Bruce comments, looking amused, which causes Tony to smile.

"You know, you should come by Stark Tower sometime." Tony says, knowing Melinda would be okay with that and Peter, and Bobbi too if she was home, would love to meet Bruce as they both know all about his work, "There are ten floors which are all R and D you'd love it. it's candy land." Tony explains.

"Thanks, but the last time I was in New York I kind of broke… Harlem." Brue reveals.

"Well, I promise a stress-free environment." Tony says, as he walks over to Bruce, "No tension, no surprises, he says, as he suddenly pokes Bruce with a miniature electrical pod.

"Ow!" Bruce yells, as Steve walks in.

"Nothing?" Tony asks, as he looks at Bruce closely.

"Hey! Are you nuts?" Steve asks Tony.


"Is everything a joke to you?" Steve asks looking annoyed.

"Funny things are." Tony counters.

"Threatening the safety of everyone on this ship isn't funny." Steve says, and then it's almost like he realised what he said, "No offense, doctor." He adds.

"No, it's alright. I wouldn't have come aboard if I couldn't handle pointy things." Bruce reveals.

"You're tiptoeing, big man. You need to strut." Tony says, as he walks away, walking closer to Steve.

"And you need to focus on the problem, Mr Stark." Steve comments.

"You think I'm not?" Tony asks, doing his best to hide his annoyance, "Why did Fury call us, why now?" he asks, "Why not before? What isn't he telling us?" Tony asks, knowing that there is something Fury isn't saying, "I can't do the equation unless I have all the variables." He explains.

"You think Fury's hiding something?" Steve asks.

"He's a spy. Captain, he's the spy. His secrets have secrets." Tony says, as he thinks about everything he knows, and everything's he's learnt being married to spy for over a decade, "It's bugging him too, isn't it?" Tony asks, pointing to Bruce.

"Uh, I just want to finish my work here, and…." Bruce starts to say, bubbling and really not wanting to get involved.
"Doctor?" Steve asks.

"'A warm light for all mankind' Loki's jab at Fury about the cube." Bruce says.

"I heard it." Steve says.

"Well, I think that was meant for you." Bruce says, pointing at Tony who offers him a blueberry from a pack he pulled out, seemingly from nowhere, and so Bruce takes one, "Even if Barton didn't tell him, it's been all over the news." Bruce says.

"The Stark Tower? That bug ugly…" Steve starts to say, and Tony gives him a less than happy look, "Building in New York."

"It's powered by an Arc reactor, self-sustaining energy source. The building will run itself for what, a year?" Bruce asks, looking at Tony.

"That's just the prototype." Tony reveals, "I'm kind of the only name in clean energy right now."

"So why didn't SHIELD bring him in on the Tesseract project?" Bruce asks, "I mean, what are doing in the energy business in the first place?" he asks.

"I should probably look into that once my decryption program finishes breaking into all of SHIELD'S secure files." Tony says, pulling out his phone from his pocket, which is basically looks like a single piece of glass.

"I'm sorry, did you say..." Steve says, looking shocked and taken by that.

"JARVIS has been running it since I hit the bridge." Tony reveals, "In a few hours we'll know every dirty secret SHIELD has ever tried to hide." Tony reveals, knowing that if he has a chance he's going to delete the report on Bahrain so that no one else can read it.

"And you're confused about why they didn't want you around?" Steve asks.

"An intelligence organisation that fears intelligence? Historically, not awesome." Tony comments.

"I think we should stay on target. Loki's a man who means to start a war, if we don't stay focused he'll succeed." Steve comments, "We have orders, we should follow them." Steve says, and Tony can't help but remember a debate he once heard Melinda and Richard have about following orders.

"Following is not really my style." Tony comments.

"And you're all about style, aren't you?" Steve asks, hitting a nerve, not that Tony will ever admit that.

"Of the people in this room, which one is A, wearing a spangly outfit, and B, not of use?" Tony asks.

"Steve, tell me none of this smells a little funky to you?" Bruce asks, trying to play peacemaker, not overly sure that he's going to succeed at that, and hearing what Bruce said Steve considers it for a moment, before shaking it off.

"Just find the cube." Steve says, before leaving.

"That's the guy my dad never shut up about?" Tony asks, with a frown, "Wondering if they should have kept him on ice." Tony says, and as he does he can practically see the disapproving look Peggy would give him if she knew he said that, though he hopes she would also disapprove of
Steve acting the way he is, but he's not sure.

"The guy's not wrong about Loki. He does have the jump on us." Bruce comments.

"What he's got is some ACME dynamite kit. It's gonna blow up in his face, and I'm gonna be there when it does." Tony reveals.

"And I'll read all about it." Bruce comments.

"Uh-huh, or you'll be suiting up like the rest of us." Tony says.

"Ah, see, I don't get a suit of Armor." Bruce comments, "I'm exposed, like a nerve, it's a nightmare." Bruce reveals, and even though he is usually hesitant about talking about what happened to him Tony realises that now is time to.

"You know, I've got a cluster of shrapnel, trying every second to crawl its way into my heart." Tony reveals, pointing to the arch reactor in his chest, "This stops it. This little circle of light, it's part of me now, not just armour." Tony reveals, "It's a …. Terrible privilege." He reveals.

"But you can control it." Bruce comments.

"Because I learnt how." Tony says, thinking about Bobbi and how he watched her spend years learning to control her strength, but as it's not his place to talk about his daughter, and what she went though, he doesn't say anything.

"It's different." Bruce says, as he tries to ready the computer screen but Tony slides the date aside with his finger so that the two of them can look directly at each other.

"Hey, I've read all about your accident." Tony reveals, "That much gamma exposure should have killed you." Tony comments.

"So you're saying that the Hulk, the other guy, saved my life?" Bruce asks, "That's nice. It's a nice sentiment, saved for what?"

"I guess we'll find out." Tony says, as he and Bruce both go back to work.

"You might not like that." Bruce comments.

"You just might." Tony responds as the two of them go back to work both realising they have had something they haven't had in a while. Bruce has someone who isn't afraid of the Hulk, someone who doesn't see him as what the Hulk can do for them, while Tony has someone who understands him when he talks, who he doesn't have to dumb himself down for, and for both of them they know, if even if they don't admit it that this is the start of a great friendship.

Far away from the Hellicarrier, and even DC, Daisy, Peter and Lian are at one of Lian's safehouse which no one knows about. It is late at night, but because Peter can't sleep he wants to see if his sister is awake.

"Daze, you awake?" Peter asks, in a quiet voice, from the doorway of the room Daisy is sleeping in.

"Yeah." Daisy answers as she sits up and once he get the conformation that his sister is awake Peter hurries over and sits down next to her, and once he is Daisy puts the blanket over him too.

"Do you think Mom and Dad are okay?" Peter asks curious.
"I don't know." Daisy answers.

"What do you think is going on?" Peter asks.

"I don't know."

"Do you think a way has been found to help Uncle Clint?" Peter asks.

"I'm sorry Pete, I just don't know." Daisy admits, "I wish I did." She reveals, sounding frustrated.

"You miss having your phone and computer, don't you?" Peter asks, knowing his sister well enough to know that.

"Yep. If I had either of them I'd be able to answer all your questions." Daisy admits.

"Do you think that's why Grandma wouldn't let you have them?"

"Maybe." Daisy admits, "You okay?" she asks, as she is pretty sure that her brother would have come to her for more reasons than just wanting to ask questions that he'd know she doesn't know the answer to.

"This place is creepy." Peter admits.

"Yeah, it really is." Daisy confirms, "But we're safe here." Daisy reveals, "Grandma will make sure of it."

"I know, but what I don't get is why we're here." Peter admits, "We've never been sent away before."

"I know." Daisy says, putting her arm around her brother, "It's means something really bad is happening, like Mom and Dad said, and it's okay to be scared." She admits.

"I'm not scared....." Peter says, and Daisy gives him a look that makes her look a lot like Melinda, "Okay, Maybe a little." Peter admits, "Daisy what if something happens to Mom or Dad? Or Bobbi? or another member of our family?"

"I don't know." Daisy admits, hating that she doesn't have more to say to her brother, "But I know that you and me, we're going to stick together, and as long as we do that we'll be okay." Daisy reveals, deciding not to mention that because their grandmother knows she knows how to use a gun there is one in the bedside table just in case.

"Us against the world?" Peter asks his sister, smiling at her.

"Us against the world." Daisy confirms, and the two of them drift into amused silence, both siblings trying to hide how worried they are for their family.
May 4th 2012

Hours have passed since Loki was captured, but as of yet there has been no lead on the Tesseract. In DC Melinda feels like she, and the agents she are in charge of, are just in a holding pattern.

"Agent May?" A voice asks.

"Yes, Agent Jensen?" Melinda asks, looking at a level five agent who Melinda knows like to think he knows too much to be that level.

"Loki’s been captured, I don't think we need to be at full alert level." Agent Jensen comments.

"That's not your call, Agent." Melinda says, giving him a stern look, "And while Loki may be captured the Tesseract is still missing, so the alias Loki has, so until told otherwise we will be at full alert level, understood?" Melinda asks, giving the agent a stern look.

"Yes Ma'am." Agent Jensen responds.

"Get back to work." Melinda orders, as she checks her phone to see if she has any messages from Fury or Tony.

Back at the Hellicarrier Tony and Bruce have been working on finding the Tesseract all night, and as the only thing they can do at the moment is just sit and wait Tony is siting on a table, while Bruce stands when Fury walks in.

"What are you doing, Mr Stark?" Fury asks, sounding angry.

"Um, kind of been wondering the same thing about you." Tony admits.

"You're supposed to be locating the Tesseract." Fury comments.

"We are. The model's locked and we're sweeping for the signature now." Bruce reveals, "When we get a hit we'll have the location within half a mile."

"And you'll get your cube back, no muss, no fuss." Tony comments, as monitor shows a collection of secret files, "What is phase two?" he asks curious, as Steve drops a Hydra assault weapon on a desk, causing Tony, Fury and Bruce to look at him, all three of them realising that Steve looks pissed.

"Phase two is SHIELD uses the cube to make weapons." Steve explains, "Sorry, the computer was moving a little slow for me." He says, looking at Tony.

"Rogers, we gathered everything related to the Tesseract. That does not mean…." Fury starts to explain.
"I'm sorry, Nick." Tony says, as he moves the computer screen towards Fury, climbing off the table as he does, showing him plans of the weapons, "What were you lying?" he asks.

"I was wrong Director. The world hasn't changed a bit." Steve comments, as Thor and Natasha walk into the lab. As they walk in Bruce, who is looking pissed, looks at Natasha.

"Did you know about this?" Bruce asks, looking at Natasha and as he does Tony thinks about Melinda and wonders if she knew.

"You wanna think about removing yourself from this environment doctor?" Natasha asks.

"I was in Calcutta, I was pretty well removed." Bruce reveals.

"Loki's manipulating you." Natasha explains.

"And you've been doing what exactly?" Bruce asks.

"You didn't come here because I bat my eyelashes at you." Natasha comments, knowing that.

"Yes, and I'm not leaving because suddenly you get a little twitchy." Bruce comments, "I'd like to know why SHIELD is using the Tesseract to build weapons of mass destruction." Bruce reveals.

"Because of him." Fury says, pointing at Thor.

"Me?" Thor asks, looking confused and stunned.

"Last year earth had a visitor from another planet who had a grudge match that levelled a small town. We learnt that not only are we not alone, but we are hopelessly, hilariously, outgunned." Fury explains.

"My people want nothing but peace with your planet." Thor reveals.

"But you're not the only people out there, are you? And, you're not the only threat." Fury reveals, "The world's filling up with people who can't be matched, that can't be controlled." Fury says, and as he does Tony frowns not because that includes him, but because it includes Bobbi.

"Like you controlled the cube?" Steve asks.

"Your work with the Tesseract is what drew Loki to it, and his allies. It is a signal to all the realms that the earth is ready for a higher form of war." Thor says, saying words that no one likes the sound of.

"A higher form?" Steve asks, looking confused.

"You forced our hand. We had to come up with something." Fury explains.

"A nuclear deterrent, cause that always calms everything down." Tony comments.

"Remind me again how you made your fortune, Stark?" Fury asks.

"I'm sure if Stark still made weapons he'd be neck deep in by now." Steve comments.

"Wait? Hold on. How is this now about me?" Tony asks, wondering how that happened.

"I'm sorry, isn't everything?" Steve asks.
"I thought humans were more evolved than this." Thor comments.

"Excuse me, did we come to your planet and blow stuff up?" Fury asks, looking disapproving.

"Do you always treat your champions with such mistrust?" Thor asks, with a frown.

"Are you really that naive? SHIELD monitors potential threats." Natasha comments.

"Are saying that Captain America is on a watch list?" Bruce asks.

"We all are." Natasha says.

"Wait, if you are that means Mel is, is she above or below me?" Tony asks, and as he does everyone, but Fury and Natasha are confused about who Mel is.

"I swear to god Stark, one more crack...." Steve says.

"Threatened, I feel threatened." Tony comments, and as he does everyone starts to fight, not realising that the blue gem on Loki's sceptre is glowing brightly, as everyone continues to fight, it being hard to tell who is saying what until Thor says,

"You speak of control, yet your court chaos."

"It's his MO isn't it?" Bruce asks, "I mean, what are we, a team? No, we're a chemical mixture that makes chaos we're .... We're a time bomb." Bruce says, and Tony has to admit that Bruce has point as he has seen what a good SHIELD team can do and they're certainly not that.

"You need to step away." Fury says.

"Why shouldn't the guy let of a little steam?" Tony asks, as he puts his hand on Steve's shoulder.

"You know damn well why! Back off!" Steve says, as he pushes Tony off him, and Tony looks directly at him.

"Oh, I'm starting to want you to make me." Tony comments, once again trying not to think about Peggy and how she'd react to what he is doing.

"Big man in a suit of armour, take that off what are you?" Steve asks, and truthfully, not that he'd admit it to anyone but Melinda the words hurt.

"Genius, Billionaire, Husband, Father, Philanthropist." Tony says, to Steve, Bruce and Thor's shock, and Natasha's amusement, though Bruce realises Tony made the offer to come to Stark Tower even though he has kids, who would be there, which makes him feel touched.

"I know guys with none of that worth ten of yours." Steve says, feeling shocked that Tony has kids as there was nothing about that in the file he was given, "Yeah, I've seen the footage. The only thing you really fight for is yourself." Steve explains, and once more Tony is hurt by Steve's words, "You're not the guy to make the sacrifice play, to lay down on the wire and let the other guy crawl over you." Steve comments.

"I think I would just cut the wire." Tony says.

"Always a way out." Steve says, with a smile, "You know, you may not be a threat, but you better stop pretending to be a hero." He says, and Tony goes from hurt to angry.

"A hero? Like you? You're a lab rat, Rogers. Everything special about you came out of a bottle!"
Tony says angrily, and as he does Steve puffs his chest at Tony who just stands there, unmoving.

"Put on the suit, let's go a few rounds." Steve says, and as he does Thor laughs at them.

"You people are so petty…. And tiny." Thor says, and as he does Tony rubs his head and moves away from Steve.

"Yeah, this is a tee…" Bruce starts to say.

"Agent Romanoff, would you escort Doctor Banner back to his…" Fury starts to say.

"Where? You rented my room." Bruce points out.

"The cell was just in case…." Fury starts to say.

"In case you needed to kill me, but you can't I know! I tried!" Bruce says, causing everyone to freeze, and causes Tony to think about Afghanistan when he thought similar things, "I got low, I didn't see an end, so I put a bullet in my mouth and the other guy spit it out!" Bruce explains, pain in his voice, "So I moved on. I focused on helping other people. I was good until you dragged me back into this freak show and put everyone here at risk!" Bruce says, getting upset as he looks at Natasha who is getting very unnerved by him, "You wanna know my secret, Agent Romanoff? You wanna know how I stay calm?" he asks, and as he does Natasha and Fury have their hands on their respective guns, ready to use them if needed.

"Doctor Banner put down the sceptre." Steve says, and as he does Bruce realises that he is actually holding Loki's sceptre, and before he can react the computer beeps, which they all turn too.

"Got it." Tony says, as Bruce puts down the sceptre and walks over to the computer.

"Sorry, kids. You don't get to see my little party trick after all." Bruce comments.

"You've located the Tesseract?" Thor asks.

"I can get there faster." Tony says.

"Look, all of us…." Steve starts to say.

"The tesseract belongs on Asgard, no human is a match for it." Thor says, and as he does Tony goes to leave, but Steve stops him.

"You're not going alone!" Steve exclaims.

"You gonna stop me?" Tony asks, knowing thanks to the fight he had with Bobbi, something which he still hates himself for doing, that even if Steve wanted to, if he was in the suit he wouldn't be able to.

"Put on the suit, let's find out." Steve comments.

"I'm not afraid to hit an old man." Tony reveals.

"Put on the suit." Steve says, and as he does Bruce, who is looking at the monitors notices something about the Tesseract.

"Oh, my god." Bruce says, shocked, but before anyone can say anything there is a great explosion, and everyone are thrown in every director. Steve, Fury, Thor and Tony are thrown across the lab while Natasha and Banner are thrown down to the lower equipment room.
"Put on the suit." Steve tells Tony, as the two of them manage to get their barrings.

"Yep." Tony responds, and Steve helps him to his feet as the two of them run out of the lab, knowing they have to fix the damage that has been done.

In DC Melinda is standing at the back of the operations control centre, looking around at everything, monitoring things.

"AGENT MAY!" An agent at a computer yells, and Melinda can hear the panic.

"What is it?" Melinda asks as she jogs over to the agent.

"We've lost all contact with the hellicarrier." The agent explains, "From what we can tell it seems like one of the engines exploded and then we lost contact." He explains.

"Okay, keep trying to re-establish contact." Melinda instructs, "EVERYONE." Melinda calls, and all the agents look at her, "Everyone at stations, we've lost contact with the Hellicarier, so be prepared to move out if we get a lead on the tesseract." Melinda orders.

"Yes Ma'am." All the agents respond and they get to work.

A little while later, on the Hellicarrier Tony, with a bit of help from Steve, has managed to repair some of the damage so that they could stay in the air, and Natasha has managed to make it so Clint is no longer being controlled, unfortunately during the battle Loki escaped, killing Phil in the processes.

As everything has settled down Tony is with Steve, Fury, and Hill on the bridge Tony thinking about how he is going to tell Melinda, and their kids, that Phil is gone as he knows Melinda especially is going to take it badly.

"These were in Phil Coulson's jacket, guess he never did get you to sign them." Fury says, as he throws Phil Captain America Trading Cards, which Tony knows mean everything to Phil, and which also have blood on them towards Steve, who picks them up.

"We're dead in the air up here. Our communications, location of the cube, Banner, Thor, I got nothing for you. Lost my one good eye." Fury says, sounding upset about that, "Maybe I had that coming." He comments, "Yes, we were going to build an arsenal with the Tesseract." He admits, "I never put all my chips on that number though, because I was playing something even riskier." He admits, "There was an idea, Stark knows this, called the Avengers Initiative." Fury says, "The idea was to bring together a group of remarkable people, see if they could be something more. See if they could work together when we needed them to fight the battles we never could." Fury explains, "Phil Coulson died still believing in that idea, in heroes." Fury says, and as he does Tony gets up and walks away not wanting to hear it anymore, "Well, it's an old-fashioned notion." He admits.

After leaving the Bridge Tony heads to the detention level, needing to see for himself where his friend died. Once he gets there Tony just stands and stares at the blood for a few moments before pulling out his phone, and not even sure it will work as communications are out, calls Melinda.

"Tony? What happened, are you okay?" Melinda, who has stepped out of the operation centre, worried voice answers after a few rings.

"I'm okay." Tony assures his wife, "Loki's escaped, but Nat got Clint back on our side." Tony reveals, feeling the need to share the good news first.
"What else?" Melinda asks, being able to tell from Tony's voice that there is something else, something bad, going on.

"You don't deserve to be told this over the phone, but I need to be the one who tells you, I don't want to risk you hearing another way." Tony explains.

"Hear what? Tony, what's happened?" Melinda asks, sounding worried, feeling a sense of dread in her stomach.

"It's Phil." Tony reveals, "He went after Loki, tried to stop him from leaving, and...." Tony starts to say.

"No." Melinda says, tears coming to her eyes, "No... don't...."

"I'm sorry, Mel. He's gone." Tony says, hating the fact that he's causing his wife so much pain, but also knew it would be worse if it came from anyone else.

"I should have been there...." Melinda says, feeling that maybe she could have stopped it, and it is easier to blame herself than thinking allowing herself to admit how much it hurts.

"Mel, No." Tony says, sounding horrified, "This is not your fault. Even if you were here there's no guarantee that you could have saved Phil, maybe we would have lost both of you." Tony says, feeling horrified about the thought.

"We'll never know." Melinda comments, "I can't believe this." Melinda admits, as Phil has been her professional partner, he friend, since she was seventeen and she can't imagine not seeing him again.

"I know. From what we can tell he got a decent blow on Loki." Tony reveals, not sure if it will make things better or worse.

"Of course, he did." Melinda says, not expecting anything else, "I should go, get the agents working on finding Loki." Melinda says, and from his wife's tone of voice Tony is pretty sure she wants revenge, "Don't die."

"I'll do my best." Tony says, as Steve walks into the room, "I love you." He tells Melinda.

"I love you too." Melinda responds, before hanging up.

"Your wife?" Steve asks, once Tony has hang up.

"Yeah, I had to call her and tell her that the person who's been watching her back, who's been her partner since she was seventeen, the person who our three kids call Uncle Phil, is dead." Tony says, sadly.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realise you were so close." Steve admits.

"Not a lot of people do." Tony admits, "A few years ago Mel would have been the one here in the middle of all this and I would have been the one waiting for news." Tony admits, "I don't know what position is worse." He admits.

"I didn't know Agent Coulson well, but he seemed like a good man." Steve comments.

"He was an idiot." Tony comments, it being easier for him to be mad than admit how much it hurts, admit how much he misses his friend.

"Why? For believing?" Steve asks.
"For taking on Loki alone." Tony corrects.

"He was doing his job." Steve says.

"He was out of his league. He should have waited. He should have…." Tony starts to say.

"Sometimes there isn't a way out, Tony." Steve says.

"Right. How did that work for him?" Tony asks, as he starts to walk out.

"Is this the first time you've lost a friend, a fellow soldier?" Steve asks, and as he does Tony turns around, looking furious.

"We are not soldiers!" Tony exclaims, "I am not marching to Fury's Fife." He says.

"Neither am I!" Steve assures him, "He's got the same blood on his hands as Loki does. Right now, we've got to put that aside and get his done." Steve says, and as he does Tony is reminded of Melinda as he has heard her say that exact phrase before, though he is pretty sure she learnt it from Peggy, so it makes sense, "Now, Loki needs a power source, if we can put together list…." Steve starts to say.

"He made it personal." Tony says as he looks at Phil's blood on the wall.

"That's not the point." Steve says, trying to get Tony to focus.

"That's the point. That's Lok's point. He hit us all right were we live, why?" Tony asks, as his mind starts to try and make sense of everything.

"To tear us apart." Steve comments.

"Divide and conquer, great, but he knows he has to take us out to win, right?" Tony asks, "That's what he wants. He wants to beat us, and he wants to be seen doing it, he wants an audience." Tony realises.

"Right I caught his act in Stuttengard." Steve comments.

"Yeah, that's just a preview. This is opening night and Loki he's a full tilt diva," Tony says, "He wants flowers, he wants parades, he wants a monument built in the skies with his name plastered…." Tony starts to say, and Steve gives him a look, and as he does Tony realises something, "Sonofabitch." He says, realising exactly where Loki would be, and he is beyond thrilled that he and Melinda sent Daisy and Peter to be with Lian.

A little while later Tony has repaired his suit, and Natasha, Clint, and Steve have 'borrowed' a plane, and all four of them are on their way to New York, Tony flying faster than the others.

"Hey Stark." Clint says through the coms the four of them are on.

"What Barton?" Tony asks curious.

"You know I would feel much better if Mels was on this with us." Clint says, and Steve is confused about who he is talking about, until he remembers that Tony called his wife Mel.

"So would I, but you know why she can't be." Tony responds.

"Doesn't mean I don't wish she was." Clint says, and as he does he realises something, "Wait, is she
at the apartment? Because she could handle Loki before we get there."

"She's in DC, Fury has her running things." Tony explains.

"Of course, he does." Clint says, looking amused, and causing Steve to become even more confused.

A few minutes later Tony has tried to shut down the machine that is about to open another portal, and failed and so he has landed on the landing area he designed for his suit and is walking inside the apartment, where he finds Loki with his sceptre, heading towards the bar.

"Please tell me you're going to appeal to my humanity." Loki comments.

"Uh, actually I'm planning to threaten you." Tony corrects.

"You should have left your armour on for that." Loki comments.

"Yeah, it's seen a bit of mileage, and you've got the blue stick of destiny." Tony comments, "Would you like a drink?" Tony asks curious.

"Stalling me won't change anything." Loki comments.

"No, no, no, threatening." Tony corrects, "No drink? You sure? I'm having one." Tony says.

"The Chitauri are coming, nothing will change that. What do I have to fear?" Loki asks.

"The Avengers." Tony answers, and Loki just looks confused, "That's what we call ourselves, sort of like a team, Earth's mightiest heroes type of thing." Tony says.

"Yes, I've met them." Loki says, not looking all that impressed.

"Yeah, takes us a while to get any traction, I'll give you that one." Tony says, with a smile, "But let's do a head count here. Your brother, the demi-god; a super solider, a living legend who kind of lives up to the legend; a man with breath-taking anger management issues; a couple of master assassins, and you big fella you managed to piss off every single one of them." Tony says.

"That was the plan." Loki says.

"Not a great plan. When they come, and they will, they'll come for you." Tony says, as he picks up bracelet looking devices from under the bar, though they are much more than that.

"I have an army." Loki says.

"We have a Hulk." Tony counters.

"I thought the beast had wandered off." Loki says.

"You're missing the point." Tony says, "There's no throne, there is no version of this, where you come out on top." Tony says, "Maybe your army comes and maybe it's too much for us, but it's all on you." He says, "Because if we can't protect the Earth you can be damned well sure we'll avenge it." Tony says, and as he does Loki walks up to him, raising the sceptre as he does.

"How will your friends have time for me when they're so busy fighting you?" Loki asks and he taps Tony on the chest, but apart from a ping nothing happens, and so Loki tries again, but once again nothing happens, "This usually works." Loki comments.
"Well, performance issues. You know… one in five." Tony says, and in anger Loki grabs Tony by the throat and flings him across the room.

"JARVIS, anytime now." Tony says quietly.

"You will all fall before me." Loki says, and he throws Tony out of the window.

As Tony freefalls down the tower one of his suits in a red pod shoots out of the assignment and scans the bracelets on Tony, and transforms into a new Iron Man suit, which latches around Tony just in time for him to be able to fly up before he hits the ground.

"And there's one other person you pissed off! his name was Phil." Tony says, and as he does Loki raises the sceptre and Tony flies at him, causing Loki to fall on his ass.

In DC, a few minutes later Melinda and all the agents watch as Tony flies around the tower, a portal opens, and an army of aliens fly out.

"Bloody hell." One of the Agents mutters, as A SHIELD Quinjet with Natasha, Clint, and Steve arrive.

"Okay. This is it." Melinda says, trying not to think about the fact that three people she loves are about to fight aliens, "I want teams in the air to assist Director Fury's team ASAP." Melinda instructs.

"Yes Ma'am." Agent Scott says, and Melinda starts to get to work organising the teams.

For about half an hour Tony, Natasha, Clint, and Steve, who are joined by Thor and Bruce, who turns into The Hulk fight the aliens doing everything they can to defeat them while protecting civilians.

"Stark, you hearing me?" Fury asks, through the coms, as Tony manages to destroy one of the large ships, "We have a missile headed straight for the city." He reveals.

"How long?" Tony asks.

"Three minutes." Fury responds, and Tony knows exactly what he has to do.

A couple of minutes later, in DC, Melinda watches in horror as live cameras show Tony, in his Iron Man suit catch up with the missile from behind, grab it, wrench it off course and while holding it flies straight into the sky, towards the portal.

"No." Melinda says, horrified, but no one is close enough to hear her.

"Stark, you know that's a one-way trip." Steve says to Tony, as he flies towards the portal, holding the nuke.

"Save the rest for the turn J." Tony requests.

"Sir, shall I call Mrs Stark-May?" JARVIS asks.

"You might as well." Tony says, and JARVIS starts to make the call, but because Melinda had to put her phone down when she was coordinating the teams she doesn't realises that her phone is
ringing rather she just watches on in horror as Tony flies closer and closer to the portal, finally into it which causes Melinda to feel like he heart has stopped.

Once Tony is in the portal, seconds later, all communications die, as his suit begins to freeze slightly, and Tony looks on in horror as he sees that the black sky is filled with about a hundred ships, and so Tony lets go of the missile, which whistles off into the blackness. Once the missile reaches the main ship it implodes, causing ever single ship to explode and Tony to fall back to earth.

In DC everyone watches as the Chitauri and Leviathans die, but Melinda is completely focuses on the portal.

"Come on Tony." Melinda mutters to herself, knowing that he must be the reason the Chitauri and Leviathan have been defeated, but there is no sign of the man she loves, and she just watches as the portal starts to close, "No, no." Melinda mutters to herself, but then to her relief Tony falls through the portal, but the second he does Melinda realises that something is seriously wrong, but to her relief the Hulk catches him, saving him.

In New York, Tony wakes up on the ground with The Hulk, Thor and Steve around him.

"What the hell? What just happened?" Tony asks, feeling confused, "Please tell me nobody kissed me."

"We won." Steve says.

"Alright, yay, alright, good job, guys." Tony says, "Let's just not come in tomorrow. Let's just take a day. Have you ever tried shawarma? There's a shawarma joint about two blocks from here. I don't know what it is, but I wanna try it." Tony comments.

"We're not finished yet." Thor says as he looks up at Stark Tower.

"And then shawarma after." Tony says.

Over the next few minutes Tony, Steve, Thor, and The Hulk make their way up to the tower where they are joined by Clint, and Natasha and the six of them capture Loki putting an end to the Battle of New York.
May 5th 2012

A day has passed since the Battle of New York ended and in that time Thor, with Loki and the Tesseract have headed back to Asgard, and the clean up has begun. As he Bruce has nowhere to go and Tony considers him a friend Tony has invited Bruce to stay at the Stark Tower.

"We've got some improvements to make, some obvious repairs, but you're welcome to stay here as long as you'd like." Tony assures Bruce.

"Are you sure?" Bruce asks, looking concerned, as he doesn't want to put Tony's family in danger.

"Positive." Tony says, as the elevator doors open and Bobbi hurries out.

"Dad." Bobbi says, running towards her father, actually using her powers, so Bruce is shocked by how fast she runs.

"Little Bird." Tony says, hugging his daughter, and for the first time since she was a kid Bobbi accidently uses her powers as she hugs her father, "Little Bird…. Powers." Tony manages to say as he feels like he is being squeezed.

"Crap, sorry." Bobbi says, letting go of her father, "Dad, I felt you die." Bobbi says, pain in her voice.

"Damn, I hoped you wouldn't." Tony admits, as he did think about that, "I'm okay Bobbi, promise." Tony assures his daughter.

"Good." Bobbi says, once more hugging her father, this time making sure not to accidently use her powers, and as they break apart after a few moments Bobbi realises that she and her father aren't alone, "Doctor Banner." Bobbi greats, sounding slightly amazed.

"Bruce, this is my oldest daughter Bobbi, Little Bird, Doctor Bruce Banner." Tony introduces.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Doctor. I studied your work when I was in college." Bobbi explains.

"It's nice to meet you too." Bruce says, having many questions about Bobbi's 'powers' but feeling it would be rude to ask them.


"DC. Your Mom was running things at the Triskelion and your brother and sister were with your Grandma." Tony explains, "They should be home later today. Your Mom is just having some issues getting permission to fly into New York."

"That makes sense," Bobbi admits, "Dad, I heard rumours, about Uncle Phil, are they…." Bobbi starts to say, and as she does she sees the look on her father's face, "No." Bobbi says, tears coming
to her eyes, "How?"

"Loki." Tony tells his daughter, and as he does Bobbi breaks down in tears, her legs giving out from under her, but she doesn't collapse as Tony catches her daughter before she can fall down, and he just holds her while she cries, Bruce feeling like he is interrupting a private father/daughter moment as Tony holds his oldest daughter as she cries.

In DC Melinda is waiting by the plane that she, Daisy and Peter flew in when a car drives in and Daisy, Peter, and her mother get out, as soon as they do Daisy and Peter hurry over to their mother and hug her.

"I missed you." Peter tells his mother.

"I missed you too, both of you." Melinda says, as they break apart.

"What the hell happened?" Daisy asks, and as she does Melinda looks at her mother, wanting to know how much Daisy and Peter have been told so she knows what to explain.

"They haven't seen any TV's or heard any radios," Lian explains.

"What's happened?" Peter asks confused.

"Let's talk inside." Melinda requests, and once she does she, Peter, and Daisy head into the plane while Lian leaves.

"Mom?" Daisy asks, as she and Daisy sit down next to each other in chairs and Melinda sits down across from them.

"A lot has happened in the last few days." Melinda tells her kids, "Loki used the item he stole form SHIELD to open a portal." Melinda explains, "Alien's invaded, attacked New York."

"You're kidding." Peter says, sounding shocked.

"No, I'm not." Melinda answers, "Your Dad, Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, who wasn't being controlled anymore, Thor, Steve Rogers….."

"Wait Captain America?" Daisy asks shocked, "Dad met him?"

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "All of them along with Doctor Bruce Banner as the Hulk fought the aliens." Melinda explains.

"Are they all okay?" Daisy asks worried.

"Yeah, they are." Melinda confirms, "And I know you Daisy, so I know you are going to look up any footage you can find." Melinda says, "You will see footage of your Dad flying into the portal, with a bomb, and then falling out of him, it will look bad, but he's okay." Melinda assures her daughter.

"Are you sure?" Peter asks.

"Yes, I've talked to him myself." Melinda reveals, as Tony called her when he went go get Shawarma with the others.

"Good, that's good." Daisy says, looking glad though she definitely wants to see the footage, "So everyone's okay…. Right?" Daisy asks, and her mother gets an odd look on her face, "Mom?"
Daisy asks concerned.

"SHIELD managed to capture Loki for a little while, but he escaped." Melinda explains, "When he was escaping Uncle Phil confronted him, tried to stop him, and Loki…. Loki…."  

"Mom?" Peter asks, tears coming to his eyes as he suspects he knows what Melinda is going to say, but he won't believe it until she says it.

"Loki killed Uncle Phil." Melinda reveals, the words being incredible hard for her to say.

"NO!" Daisy yells, looking horrified, as tears come to her yes, "He can't have, he can't be."

"Uncle Phil…" Peter says, as he cries and so Melinda just leans forward and hugs her kids.

About an hour later Bobbi, Tony and Bruce are in the living area of the Stark-May apartment, cleaning up some of the mess so that Daisy and Peter can't get hurt when they get home, and with ease Bobbi lifts up a beam, and moves it to a better place, and as she does she can feel the look Bruce is giving her.

"You can ask you know." Bobbi says, and Tony just looks between his daughter and new friend.

"How can you do that?" Bruce asks.

"When I was six me, my biological parents, and my brother were taken by a group who wanted to make another super solider." Bobbi explains.

"They experimented on you." Bruce realises, feeling sympathy for the young woman as he remembered the pain he went through and has to imagine that Bobbi went through just as much pain, but as she was six it would have seemed so much worse.

"Yeah, they killed my brother, and parents, and I ended up with powers." Bobbi explains, explaining quickly as it is still hard for her to talk about it, "Mom's a SHIELD agent, she found me, took me in even though Fury wasn't a fan of the idea. She and Dad have been friends forever so when they finally got married he adopted me to." Bobbi explains.

"If you don't mind me asking what kind of powers do you have?" Bruce asks curious, as he is pretty sure he can guess some of them but wants to know for sure.

"Strength, speed, advanced agility and advance speed." Bobbi explains, "Plus another power that I'm still trying to understand where I can sense if Mom, Dad, and I assume my brother and sister, are hurt, or feeling extreme emotion." Bobbi explains.

"Huh." Bruce says, looking interested, "If…." He starts to say, but before he can finish the elevator doors open and Melinda, Daisy and Peter walk out.

"DAD!" Daisy and Peter yell and they hurry to their father and hug them.

"Mom." Bobbi says, walking over to her mother, and hugging her as her siblings hug their father tightly, "I'm so sorry about Uncle Phil." Bobbi says, knowing that it would be hard for her mother, and the two of them break apart, as they do Daisy and Peter walk over to hug their sister while Melinda walks over to Tony.

"And you told me to stop being a hero." Melinda says, with a proud smile.

"I just did what I had to do." Tony says, and once he does he and Melinda kiss, "I love you." Tony
"I love you too," Melinda responds.

"Mel, Daisy, Peter, I'd like you to meet Doctor Bruce Banner, I've invited him to stay with us from now on." Tony explains, "Bruce, I would like you to meet my wife Melinda, son Peter, and daughter Daisy." He says.

"It's nice a pleasure to meet you all." Bruce says, looking between the members of the Stark-May family.

"It's a pleasure to meet you too, Doctor." Melinda says, "I know you've been on the run for a while, so welcome home." Melinda says, it being clear that she agrees with Tony's idea of offering Bruce some place to say.

"Thank you." Bruce says, feeling touched by Melinda and Tony's kindness.

"This place is kind of wrecked." Daisy notices.

"That's why we have to clean up and fix things." Tony says, and everyone gets started on doing that, the four adults in the room being careful to watch Daisy and Peter to make sure neither of them do, or touch, anything dangerous.

Hours later everyone in the Stark Tower are fast asleep, as the bedrooms haven't been damaged, when Melinda is woken up. At first Melinda doesn't understand what woke her up, until she realises Tony is tossing, turning, and muttering to himself.

"JARVIS, light on." Melinda instructs, and JARVIS does that, "Tony, Tony wake up!" Melinda says loudly, not wanting to touch Tony to wake him up as she isn't sure how he'd react to that, "Tony." Melinda says, raising her voice a little, and that seems to work as Tony bolts up right, looking afraid, "Hey, you're okay, you're safe." Melinda assures her husband, moving a little closer to him, but still being sure not to touch him.

"Mel, Mel, it was so cold, so dark, so many ships." Tony says, looking terrified.

"You're not there anymore." Melinda assures Tony, "And the ships are gone, you destroyed them." Melinda tells him.

"There are more out there." Tony says, looking at Melinda, "Mel, something else is coming, I know it." he admits, "I'm not paranoid, I...."

"I believe you." Melinda assures Tony as she has seen too much with SHIELD not to and hearing those three little words from Melinda mean everything to Tony, "Whatever else is coming we'll face it, together." Melinda says, and Tony just nods, "Let's lay down, even if you can't sleep." Melinda suggests.

"I can't. I'm going to go work in the lab." Tony says, before getting up and heading out of his and Melinda's room, Melinda watching him go in concern as he goes as while she completely believes him when he says something is coming she also knows what obsessing over something like that can lead to.

Hours later Tony is still in his lab, though he has been out several times because it is Bobbi's twenty fifth birthday, not that she wants to do anything considering everything what happened.
"Dad." Bobbi says, walking into the lab, "JARVIS said you wanted to talk to me."

"Yep, I did." Tony says, "I have something for you."

"I've already open all my birthday presents." Bobbi comments, as she walks over to her father.

"This isn't a birthday present. Not exactly anyway." Tony reveals, "When your Mom took you in a I set up a trust for you, just like I did when Daisy was born, and again when Peter was born." Tony reveals, as even though Peter was his godson at the time he wanted to make sure he'd be okay, "The way the trust was set up you'd each get access on your respective twenty fifth birthdays." Tony explains, as he hands Bobbi over paperwork and a card, "This is yours now." He explains.

Taking the paperwork from her father Bobbi starts to read it, and honestly, she can't believe what she is reading,

"Is this right?" Bobbi asks, looking at her father in shock.

"Of course." Tony answers.

"You're giving me a hundred million dollars?" Bobbi asks, looking at her father in shock.

"It's always been yours, I've just been holding on to it for you." Tony reveals.

"I…. I don't know what to say." Bobbi admits.

"You don't have to say anything." Tony explains, "I never want you, or your brother, or your sister, to have to worry about money. This way you won't have to." Tony says, and having no idea what else to say Bobbi just hugs her father.

May 8th 2012

After a couple of nights where he actually managed to get some sleep Tony is standing near the door to his and Melinda's bathroom just watching his wife who is sitting on their bed staring out to space.

"Sir, Miss Bobbi, Mr Peter, Miss Sharon, Mr Antoine, and Miss Daisy are waiting downstairs with Doctor Banner." JARVIS reveals, "And Miss Potts, Colonel Rhodes, Agent Barton, Agent Romanoff, and Commander Hill are in the elevator on their way up."

"Thanks J." Tony says, before walking over to Melinda, "Mel." Tony says, sitting down next to her, "We got to go."

"I don't know if I can do this." Melinda admits, doing so because it is Tony next to her.

"Yeah, you can. You're the strongest person I've ever met." Tony admits, "Mel, Phil's your family. Today people are going to talk about Phil the agent, Phil the hero, but you two had something no one else had, saw a side no one else did." Tony says knowing that and he was never jealous of that, "If you really don't think you can talk today, then that's okay, I'll say something, but I think you owe it to yourself, and what you two had to say something." Tony admits, not wanting to push her, but at the same time thinks Melinda may regret it if she doesn't.

"I love you, you know that." Melinda comments.

"Yeah, I think I've gotten that impression before." Tony says, smirking slightly, "I'll be here, okay. Right next to you."
"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, and she reaches out and takes Tony's hand, "Let's go." She says, and they both get up and head out.

A little while later Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Sharon, Antoine, Natasha, Clint, Bruce, Rhodey, Pepper, Maria, and Happy are all at Phil's funeral. As there are SHIELD agents who don't know about Bobbi, Sharon, and Antoine's connection to Phil present the three of them, Daisy, and Peter are going to sit together in the back, though they are hanging back while everyone arrives, so they aren't seen.

"Mr Stark." A voice says, and Tony turns to see Steve who is walking with Fury.

"Captain." Tony says, greeting with a simple nod.

"May." Fury greats, with a simple nod, honestly thinking that Melinda is in better shape than he was expecting, which is why he isn't going to tell her about Coulson until he is surer it has worked, as while Tony is her husband, and the love of her life, Phil was her partner.

"Sir." Melinda responds, "Captain Rogers." Melinda greats, knowing it would mean a hell of lot to Phil to have Steve at his funeral.

"Ma'am." Steve says.

"Agent May is one of our best agents and was Phil Coulson's partner." Fury introduces.

"Mel's also my wife." Tony adds, with a proud look on his face.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, and I'm sorry for your lost." Steve says sincerely.

"Thank you." Melinda answers.

"We should take our seats." Maria says, walking over and everyone takes their seats Melinda, Tony, Rhodey, Natasha, Clint, Bruce, Maria, Fury, and Steve all spreading the first row, with Melinda, Rhodey, Clint, and Tony in the middle.

"There's only four of us left." Clint realises, Melinda, Rhodey and Tony knowing exactly what he is thinking about.

"That's depressing." Rhodey comments, and even though they don't say anything both Melinda and Tony agree.

Over the next twenty or so minutes various people talk, Fury, Maria, other members of SHIELD, as well as more religion than Phil would have liked, until finally Melinda gets up to speak,

"I remember the first day I met Philip J Coulson, or Phil as he's always been to me." Melinda says, "It was our first day at the academy. I was operations, he was communications, but we were roomed together, with two other agents." Melinda reveals, "I'm ashamed to admit that I didn't think a coms agent could be as good as an operation, but within the first week Phil proved me wrong." Melinda says, with a sad smile, "Phil worked harder than anyone else at the Academy, and it showed." Melinda admits, "We became friends, family, and for twenty-five years Phil Coulson has been my partner, the person I wanted to have watching my back." Melinda explains, "In Twenty-Five years of friendship we've had some ups and downs, but no matter what I always knew if I needed him, or even if I just needed someone watching my back, Phil would be there, without me even asking." Melinda reveals, "Phil Coulson died a hero, and so many people will remember him as that, but I'll remember him as my friend, as my partner, and I'll remember everything we shared
together." Melinda says, as she looks over to the casket, "Goodbye Phil." Melinda says, before walking back over to her seat and sitting down.

A while later Phil's funeral and burial is over and Melinda, Tony, Bobbi, Daisy, Peter, Bruce, Sharon, Antoine, Pepper, Natasha, Clint and Rhodey are all back at the Stark Tower, which Tony is going to rename to Avengers Tower, remembering their friend.

"Linda." Natasha says, walking over to the bar where Melinda is getting another drink.

"Yeah?" Melinda asks, and as she looks at Natasha she can see the concern on her face, "What is it?" She asks concerned.

"Clint." Natasha answers, "He's blaming himself for Phil." Natasha admits, "I've tried to tell him that it's not his fault, but he won't listen to me, I thought maybe he might listen to you." Natasha admits, though she knows there is a pretty good chance he won't.

"Where is he?" Melinda asks curious.

"Balcony." Natasha answers, and she pours a second scotch and heads out to the balcony where Clint is standing.

"Drink." Melinda says, handing her friend, her brother, a drink, and as he knows better than refusing Clint takes the scotch and takes drink.

"I always love the scotch you and Tony get." Clint comments, once he takes a drink, "Nat ask you to talk to me?" and Melinda just gives him a look, "Thought so."

"Clint, what happened to Phil isn't your fault." Melinda assures her friend.

"Of course, it is!" Clint says, looking upset, "I let Loki onto the hellicarrier, Mels." Clint points out.

"You were being controlled, it wasn't your fault." Melinda assures him, "Phil wouldn't blame you, and he wouldn't want you to blame yourself." Melinda reveals, "Clint, if it wasn't you it would have been someone else. Everything that happened was part of Loki's plan."

"That doesn't make what I did any better Mels." Clint admits, "I know I wasn't in control, but that doesn't change anything.

"I know." Melinda tells him, "But as hard as it is you should try to stop blaming yourself." Melinda says, and the two of them drift into silence as they stand together.

"Do you remember when we were stuck at the Hub and started a prank war?" Clint asks Melinda curious.

"I thought Phil and Hand were going to have an aneurism." Melinda comments, "You know Hand tried to get us banned from the Hub."

"Yeah, Phil told me." Clint says, smirking, "I miss him."

"So, do I." Melinda confirms, and once more the two of them drift into silence.

"Mom, Uncle Clint." Daisy says, walking onto the Balcony.

"Yeah Daze?" Melinda asks her daughter.
"Foods here, Sharon and Antoine just came back." Daisy explains.

"Okay." Clint says, and he, Melinda, and Daisy head back inside, passing Bobbi who is heading onto the balcony.

"Is everything okay?" Melinda asks.

"Yeah, I'll be right in." Bobbi says, causing Melinda and Clint to nod, "What do you want Hunter?" Bobbi asks, sounding a little annoyed, as her mother and Clint head inside.

"Sharon called…." Hunter starts to explain.

"Sharon hates you." Bobbi comments.

"She does." Hunter confirms, knowing better than denying that, "But she told me what happened, what happened to Coulson, and thought you might need someone out of the family to talk to, to spend time with. So, I'm here if you do." Hunter says, as even though he and Bobbi are getting a divorce he always feels like he and Bobbi have a connection.

"Thanks Hunter." Bobbi says, feeling glad, her voice kinder than it was, "I should go… but I'm glad you called."

"No problem, Luv." Hunter responds, before hanging up.

After hanging up with Hunter Bobbi just stares out at the city for a few moments before she heads back inside where everyone is eating food. Looking around at her family Bobbi walks straight over to Sharon.

"Thank you." Bobbi tells one of her best friends.

"You don't have to thank me." Sharon assures her, "Just because I can't stand Hunter doesn't mean I don't know what he means to you."

"You mean meant." Bobbi corrects.

"Sure, I do." Sharon responds, disbelieving, "We should eat." She says, and the two of them go to join the rest of their family and as everyone eats they all share stories and memories of Phil morning their family member in their own way.
Three weeks have passed since the Battle of New York, and since then the Stark Tower has officially been renamed Avengers Tower, and more repairs and remodelling has begun.

It's a Sunday afternoon and Tony is in his lab, where he has been spending a lot of time building more suits, some of which are being transported to Malibu.

"Dad." Peter says, walking into the lab.

"Yeah?" Tony asks, looking up from what he is doing.

"I'm done all my homework and I was wondering… if it was okay, if I could help you." Peter asks as he helps his Dad a lot in the lab, but he knows Tony is working on the Iron Man suits which is something Peter hasn't helped with yet.

"Sure Kid." Tony tells his son, and Peter grins, "Get over here." Tony says, with a grin, and Peter hurries over to his father and the two of them start to work on the Iron Man suit together.

While Peter and Tony are in the lab together Melinda is working on Paperwork in her study and rather than hacking something that she probably shouldn't Daisy is walking into said study.

"Mom." Daisy says, and Melinda looks up.

"Yeah Daisy?" Melinda asks curious.

"I want to learn self-defence." Daisy says, and Melinda looks up at her.

"Are you sure?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yeah, I mean Grandma's taught me stuff over the years, so have Bobbi, and Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, you, even Hunter, Sharon and Antoine but I don't know a lot of self-defence, I want to." Daisy admits, "If something happens and no one is around I want to know how to protect myself, and even Peter if I have to."

"Okay." Melinda says, with a nod, feeling like those are pretty good reasons, "Get changed, we'll meet in the gym in five minutes." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Yes Mom." Daisy says, before hurrying off, and five minutes later both Melinda and Daisy are in the gym, where Melinda starts to teach her daughter some basic self-defence.

June 23rd 2012

About a month has passed since Daisy asked her mother to teach her self-defence, since Peter asks
his Dad if he could work on the Iron Man suits with her father and since then they have both finished school for the years and continued to work with their parents, each learning a lot.

It's a Saturday night and because they have both been spending all day with their two youngest kids Melinda and Tony haven't had a chance to celebrate their anniversary, not that either of them mind as they love spending time with their kids, but now that Daisy and Peter are in their respective bedrooms Tony and Melinda are up on the roof together, having a nice meal.

"You're really getting rid of the balcony?" Melinda asks her husband.

"Only so a Quinjet, or slightly bigger plane can land if needed, that seems like a better plan." Tony admits.

"Yeah. I guess." Melinda says, not sure how she feels about that.

"No more talking about repairs." Tony comments, "It's our anniversary." He says, "To us, and Eleven years of marriage." He says, with a grin, as he picks up his glass of wine.

"To us." Melinda says, with a smile, and she and Tony both toast and drink, and enjoy what's left of their anniversary together.

*July 2nd 2012*

A little over a week has passed since Melinda and Tony's anniversary. It is Daisy's sixteenth birthday and what she wanted most is to go for her learners' permit, as like with Bobbi one of her birthday presents was a car, not a van like she wanted but one that would be easy to learn to drive in.

While Melinda took Daisy to do the test Tony stayed home with Peter, and he is waiting in the living room for Daisy and Melinda to arrive home. Finally, a while after Tony started to wait for his youngest daughter and wife the elevator doors open and Daisy and Melinda walk out,

"How'd you go?" Tony asks his daughter, but she just runs past and runs upstairs, "What happened?" Tony asks concerned.

"She didn't pass." Melinda reveals, "I don't know exactly what happened, she wouldn't talk about it, but I know she rescheduled another test for next week." Melinda explains.

"She's probably not feeling too good about herself right now." Tony realises, "I'll go see if our girl will talk to me." He says, before heading upstairs.

About a minute later Tony gets to Daisy's bedroom where he knocks on her door, and doesn't hear a response,

"Daze, it's Dad." Tony says, as he knocks again, "Can I come in?" Tony asks.

"Yeah." Daisy's quiet voice responds, and Tony walks into the room where he finds his daughter sitting on her bed, curled up.

"Daze, it's okay not to pass something." Tony tells his daughter, as he sits down next to her.

'You're a genius! You've never failed anything!' Daisy says, turning to look at her father and looking upset.

"Actually, I have, and every time I failed at something I learnt a lot." Tony tells her, "Now, why
"That's it I don't know!" Daisy says, looking annoyed, "I know the road laws Dad, I even driven before with Hunter." Daisy says, and Tony decides that he isn't going to mention that to Melinda, "But I was the questions, and it was like what happens when I take an exam, I lost focus and I failed." Daisy explains, "I really hate studying." Daisy explains, and as she does Tony frowns.

"You've never told me or your Mom that before." Tony says, sounding surprised, "Never told us that you lose focus."

"Why would I? Bobbi and Peter are geniuses, it's pretty clear that I'm not." Daisy says, looking disappointed.

"Tiny Tony it's important because there might be a reason." Tony tells his daughter, "You're an incredible hacker, and you can focus on that for hours, but if you find yourself unable to focus on tests, or exams, there might be a reason for that, a reason that has nothing to do with how smart you are."

"You really think so?" Daisy asks her father, looking shocked.

"I really do." Tony confirms, "Give me a couple of days, I'm going to talk to JARVIS, and Doctor Banner, and do some research, and try to come up with some things that could help." Tony says, wanting to do whatever he can to help his daughter.

"Thanks Dad." Daisy says, leaning forward and hugging her father.

"You don't have to thank me, Daisy." Tony tells his daughter as he returns the hug, feeling like he should have realised this a long time ago.

**Two Days later.**

Ever since talking to Daisy about why she failed her drivers test Tony has been working hard to try and find everything that could help Daisy be able to focus better.

"Dad, Jarvis said you want to see me." Daisy says, walking into the lab.

"Yep, I did." Tony says, "So, I've done some research, talked to some experts and have a few ideas of ways to help you." Tony explains, "I figure that at the moment what is important to you is being able to pass your learners test and so we'll focus on that." Tony admits, "But first, I want to show you something." Tony says, as he gestures to the seat in front of screens and Daisy sits down, "This is from when I first started building the Iron Man suit." Tony says, hitting the spacebar and playing the videos of he took of when he first started to test the suit.

"Oh my god." Daisy says, "It wasn't perfect right away?" Daisy asks, looking at her father in surprise.

"No, it wasn't." Tony confirms, "Daisy, not succeeding at something doesn't have to be a bad thing, it can be the best learning experience you'll ever have." Tony explains to his daughter, "The ideas I have may help, but they may not, either way I won't give up helping you." Tony explains to his daughter, and in response Daisy just hugs him.

"I love you, Dad." Daisy says.

"Love you too, Tiny Toni." Tony responds, as they break apart, "You ready to get started?"
“Yep.” Daisy says, with a grin.

Five Days Later

Ever since Tony showed Daisy the videos of what happened when he was first creating the Iron Man suit the two of them have been working on ways to help Daisy when it comes to concentrating on tests and studying.

The day of Daisy's second attempt at undertaking her learners permit has come and this time Tony has taken her rather than Melinda. Feeling like he has been waiting for a lifetime Tony is waiting outside the testing centre when he finally sees Daisy run out and over to him.

"So?" Tony asks his daughter, who's face is pretty hard to read.

"I passed!" Daisy says, grinning form ear to ear.

"Congrats Daze." Tony tells his daughter, as he hugs her.

"Thanks Dad." Daisy says as she hugs her father, and Tony kisses her check.

"Let's go home, your Mom and Brother are going to be so happy to hear this." Tony says.

"Can I drive home?" Daisy asks curious.

"No. there's too much traffic, another time." Tony tells his daughter.

"Fine." Daisy says, looking slightly annoyed as she gets into the passenger side of the car while Tony gets into the drivers side.

August 6th 2012

Less than a month has passed since Daisy successfully passed her driver's test and ever since she has continued to work with her father to find ways to help her focus when studying for school.

It's about three am and as Melinda woke up alone in bed she got up and headed downstairs, knowing exactly where Tony was without JARVIS telling her, and just like she expected Melinda finds Tony in the lab working on a new Iron Man suit, and so she just walks over, and without saying a word sits down on one of the benches and just watches Tony work.

For about twenty minutes Melinda just sits and watches Tony, without him even realising that he is no longer alone, until he turns to grab something and realises that Melinda is sitting on the bench,

"God." Tony says, grabbing his chest, "I have a heart condition Mel!" Tony points out.

"I know, I also like watching you work." Melinda says, smiling back at him, "Do you want to talk about why you can't sleep?" Melinda asks curious.

"Not really." Tony comments, "Do you?" he asks curious.

"Ten years." Melinda says.

"I know." Tony says, as he walks over and sits down next to Melinda, "I miss them." Tony admits.

"Me too." Melinda confirms, "They'd be so proud of Peter."

"Yeah, they would be." Tony confirms, as he knows he is proud of Peter so knows that Richard
Hours later Melinda and Tony are still awake, and the two of them have been joined at breakfast by Daisy, Peter, and Bruce. As everyone eats breakfast Bruce notices that everyone seems rather tense and sad, but he doesn't know why.

"Pete, if you want to talk, we're all here." Tony tells his son.

"I know." Peter answers, not looking up from his food which he is just pushing his around on his plate, "Can we go to the cemetery?" Peter asks, looking between his parents.

"Of course." Melinda answers, "But you have to eat a bit more, okay."

"Okay." Peter says, and then he turns to his sister, "You'll come too, right?"

"Of course." Daisy assures her brother, "You know, Bobbi brought me some Tim Tams back from Australia, I'm sure Mom and Dad will let us eat them for breakfast this once, right?" Daisy asks, looking between her parents, figuring it will be a good way to get Peter to eat more than a few bites.

"Just this once." Melinda answers, after she and Tony exchange looks.

"Great, let's go Pete." Daisy says, and the two youngest Stark-May siblings hurry up stairs.

"Cemetery?" Bruce asks, looking confused, once Daisy and Peter are upstairs.

"Today's the tenth anniversary of the day Peter's biological parents were killed. His biological father was mine and Mel's, oldest, best friend." Tony says sadly, and Bruce is a little surprised as he thought for sure Tony was Peter's biological father, even if Melinda wasn't his mother.

"His parents were CIA agents. They were on their way to a mission and their plane was sabotaged, we still don't know by who, Peter was our godson and we promised The Parker's that we'd look after him if anything happened to them. So, we took him in, adopted him." Melinda adds.

"For a long time, he called us Uncle Tony and Aunt May, and then when he wanted he asked if he could call us Mom and Dad." Tony explains.

"I'm sorry." Bruce says, honestly not sure what else to say, and the three of them drift into silence.

A while later Peter, Daisy, Melinda, and Tony are all at the cemetery where Richard and Mary Parker are buried together.

While Daisy and Peter are standing together a few steps back from the graves Melinda and Tony walk up to them and both put flowers on the grave.

"We miss you guys, so much." Tony says, looking between the names.

"We're looking after Peter, you'd be so proud of him." Melinda says, and once she does the two of them just stare at the names for a moment before walking back over to Daisy and Peter.

"Do you want to say something Kid?" Tony asks his son.

"What do I say?" Peter asks, looking between his parents.
"Whatever you wish you could tell them, whatever you'd like them to know." Melinda explains to her son, and as she does Daisy gives her little brother a supportive smile.

"Okay." Peter says, with a nod, before he walks over to his parents' grave, "Um, hi, it's me, Peter… this feels really strange." He admits, "I'm not really sure what to say. You were, are, my parents, but now Uncle Tony and Aunt May are my mom and dad." Peter admits, "They tell me about you, all the time, and does everyone else, even Hope's been telling me stories lately." Peter reveals, "I wish I could remember you. I wonder what you'd think of me, I hope you would be proud." He admits, then pauses for a moment, "I want you to know that I'm happy, and loved, and Daisy and Bobbi are the best, most annoying, sisters anyone could ever want, and Mom and Dad are amazing parents." Peter reveals, "I love you. Say Hi to Uncle Phil for me." He requests, and for a few moments he just stares at the grave belonging to his biological parents, before getting up and heading over to Melinda, Tony, and Daisy, "Can we go home?" Peter asks curious.

"Sure Kid." Tony assures his son, and four of them head out of the cemetery and back home.

October 27 th 2012

Two months have passed since the tenth anniversary of when Richard and Mary were killed and in that time, Daisy has started her Junior year of High School, and is doing better thanks to the help Tony got her, while Peter has started sixth grade where he is, like always, top of his class.

It is a Saturday afternoon and Melinda is just returning to Avengers tower having spent the morning in DC as there was something Fury needed someone from the admin department for. As Melinda walks into the apartment a paint ball flies past her and hits the wall on the other side of the room.

"What is going on?" Melinda asks, looking shocked.

"Dad made paintball guns, ones that don't cause bruises when hit, and because this place is getting painted next week we're giving them a try." Daisy says, as she Tony, and Peter all come out from where they were taking cover.

"Does everywhere in the apartment have paint ball hits?" Melinda asks

"Everywhere except the lab." Peter answers, "Bruce has locked himself in there and we're to leave him alone, so he doesn't Hulk out." Peter explains.

"That's a good idea." Melinda says, knowing that, "But what made you think Paintball in the apartment was a good one?" Melinda asks, looking at Tony, "Yes, things are getting painted tomorrow, but there's still furniture and other things that could be covered in paint." Melinda says, looking at Tony.

"Yeah, but it's fun." Tony says, with a smirk.

"Really." Melinda says, giving Tony a look, and as she does she walks over to Daisy and takes the paintball gun off her daughter, "Do you still think so?" Melinda asks, as she points the weapon at Tony.

"Yep." Tony says, and he and Melinda both fire at the same time, and while Melinda's ball perfectly hits Tony's miss, "Oh, it's on." Tony says, and he fires several times managing to hit Melinda.

"is there another gun? More paintballs?" Melinda asks curious, her face and voice completely natural.
"In the gym." Tony answers.

"Okay. Five minutes to re-load, re-stock then we'll continue this. With two teams, me and Peter, you and Daisy." Melinda explains.

"Sounds fun." Tony answers, as Daisy and Peter exchange amused looks, and five minutes later four of the five members of the Stark-May family are having a paint ball war in their apartment while Bruce is locked in the lab, not wanting to know what is going on.

**December 18th 2012**

Less than two months have passed since The Stark-May paintball war, which cost a lot to clean up after. Due to all the attention that is on New York, all the press and people that are constantly around Avengers Tower Melinda and Tony have decided to take all of their kids to LA for the holidays and so the two of them, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter are in Malibu for Christmas.

It's late at night and as she just heard things crashing coming from downstairs Melinda has ran downstairs where she finds Tony on the ground with pieces of an Iron Man suit around him.

"As always, Sir, a great pleasure watching you work." JARVIS says.

"Tony." Melinda says, hurrying over to him, "Are you okay?" she asks worried.

"Ahh, I'm fine." Tony answers, sitting up, "Just testing a new suit."

"Is it meant to be in pieces?" Melinda asks curious.

"Technically, just not right now." Tony admits.

"Tony when did you last sleep?" Melinda asks, as she knows Tony hasn't been sleeping lately, but isn't quite sure when the last time he slept was, and as she asks Tony looks like he isn't going to answer, "JARVIS?" Melinda asks curious.

"Mr Stark-May hasn't slept in Seventy-Two hours Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers.

"Traitor." Tony says, to his friend.

"Actually Sir, your instructions are to answer Mrs Stark-May's questions as if they were your own." JARVIS answers.

"He's right you know." Melinda says, looking amused, "You should get some sleep." Melinda comments.

"I'm fine." Tony says, and as he does Melinda's phone goes off, "Who's texting you that late?" he asks curious.

"Nat." Melinda answers, with a slight frown, "Asking if I ca go to the LA out base to help with something."

"Cryptic." Tony comments, "You need to go, don't you?"

"Yeah, but you really do need to sleep Tony." Melinda tells her husband, "Or if you can't sleep then just lay in bed, with or without your eyes open." Melinda suggests, "Just try okay." She says, and Tony nods, once he does Melinda gets up and heads upstairs, so that she can get changed before heading into SHIELD hoping that Tony manages to get some sleep.
December 19th 2012

After Melinda tried to get Tony to sleep he ended up watching a horrifying news report, then hours later went to go have lunch with Rhodey. Melinda on the other hand after spending a few hours at SHIELD returned home to have breakfast with their children, and Tony, before taking them to do some Christmas shopping which they are just returning home, where they find an Iron Man suit in the living room.

"Oh Cool." Peter says, with a grin, "I like the new design."

"Thanks Pete." The Iron man suit says, as it walks around and as she watches it Melinda realises something.

"I don't know the more red gold Is kind of classic, this looks kind of faded, don't you agree?" Daisy asks, looking at her sister.

"I'm with Peter, I kind of like it." Bobbi comments, and as she does Daisy rolls her eyes, "Of course I would love to give flying it myself a go."

"Not happening." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Had to try." Bobbi responds, with a shrug.

"Why don't you three take your shopping upstairs." Melinda comments, looking between her kids.

"Sure." Bobbi answers, and she, Daisy, and Peter, head upstairs.

"Complete remote control, impressive." Melinda comments.

"How can you tell?" The Suit asks.

"The weight distribution isn't right." Melinda answers as she heads downstairs.

(Line break)

Less than a minute later Melinda walks into the lab where Tony is doing pull ups,

"Okay. What's going on with you Tony?" Melinda asks, as she walks over to her husband, "I want to help you, but I can't help you if you don't let me."

"You know we we're once in this exact situation but reversed." Tony comments, as a way to avoid answering.

"Yeah, I do. Which is why I'm pushing, because you pushed me, didn't give up, so I'm not going to either." Melinda admits, "Just talk to me, Tony." Melinda requests.

"I'm a piping hot mess." Tony comments.

"Which is why I haven't been pushing you, but now I think you need a push, so talk to me." Melinda requests, once she is standing right in front of him.

"It's New York, nothing's been the same since then." Tony comments.

"I know." Melinda confirms.

"I know you do. You experience things and then they're over and you still can't explain 'em. Gods,
aliens, other dimensions. I...I'm just a man in a can." Tony comments "The only reason I haven't cracked up is probably because of you, and our kids, which is great, I love you all, I'm lucky, but Honey, I can't sleep, you go to bed, and I got my lab whether here or at home, and I do what I know, I tinker." Tony explains, "But the threat is imminent, and I have to protect what I can't live without, and that's you, and or kids."

"Do you know why your Dad and Aunt Peggy created SHIELD?" Melinda asks curious, and while Tony is confused by the question he has an answer,

"Dad's ego?"

"Protection." Melinda corrects, "Phil.... Phil used to say that SHIELD agents were the SHIELD that protected people, whether they knew we were or not, whether they could ever know what they needed protection for or not." Melinda explains, "Do you know why I didn't quit SHIELD when I adopted Bobbi, or had Daisy, or when we adopted Peter? Or why after Bahrain I just transferred to admin instead of walking away completely?"

"You said you couldn't." Tony realises, still not sure where Melinda is going with this.

"I've been a SHIELD agent since I was seventeen, I have a level seven clearance and I know that I've seen things, been apart of missions above my clearance level." Melinda explains.

"How many clearance levels does SHIELD have?" Tony asks, and Melinda gives him a look, "Right, not the conversation we're having."

"My point is, I've things most people wouldn't believe, so I understand what you're feeling right now." Melinda explains, "Your machines are apart of you Tony, but so I am, so our kids, and right now you're focusing on your machines to help you deal with what you saw, what you experienced, but we can help you too, I can help you." she reveals, "You don't have to go through this alone, I get how unbelievable things can be, but I've had the training to handle it, you haven't so let me help, because I want to." Melinda says, and Tony just nods, and leans forward, and so Melinda just hugs him and kisses the top of his head, "How about Movie night, with our kids?" Melinda asks after a few moments.

"I'd like that." Tony answers, and they both head upstairs.

Hours later Tony and Melinda are both fast asleep in their bed, or they are until Tony starts to have nightmares.

"JARVIS, light." Melinda instructs, "Tony! Tony! Wake up." Melinda says, trying to wake him up, but before she can try more than just saying his name she is grabbed and shoved away from him by one of the Iron Man suits the Mark 42, which wakes Tony up.

"Power down." Tony says, as he makes a cutting motion before looking over to Melinda, who is looking surprised, "I must have called it in my suit. That's not supposed to happen." Tony says, looking panicked, "I'll recalibrate the sensors, can we...."

"Hey, it's okay." Melinda assures Tony moving closer to him, "Accidents happen." She says, hiding the fact that she is scared as she knows the kind of damage an Iron Man suit can do because she doesn't want to add to Tony's guilt.

"This wasn't just an accident. I could have.... You could have...." Tony says, looking panicked, and Melinda recognizes the signs of a panic attack.
"It's okay. I'm okay. You're okay." Melinda assurers her husband, moving closer to him, "You're safe. We're safe." Melinda assures him, "Okay?"

"Mel, Mel." Tony says, reaching out and grabbing Melinda's hand, which she flinches at because she wasn't expecting it, but Tony doesn't realise.

"I've got you." Melinda says, moving closer to Tony, putting her arm around him, and the two of them just sit in silence, in their brightly lit bedroom, as Melinda holds Tony, knowing that he is struggling and wishing that there was more she could to help him.
Chapter 45

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you for the support. PLEASE, PLEASES, LEAVE A REVIEW.

December 20th 2012

Having no idea what happened with her parents the night before Daisy is in her room, or at least the room that is hers when they are in Malibu, doing things on her computer when she finds something she can't believe,

"JARVIS, get Mom, and Bobbi, and Peter, tell them I need to see them, now." Daisy says, sounding panicked.

"Yes, Miss Daisy." JARVIS answers, and once JARIVS waits Daisy just waits, until the door to her bedroom opens and Melinda, Bobbi, and Peter hurry in.

"What is it, Daisy?" Melinda asks her daughter, looking worried.

"This." Daisy says, turning her computer around to face her family and pressing play, and they all see a video of Tony, outside the hospital that they know Happy is in, "Is that what you want? Here's a little Holiday greeting I've been wanting to send to the Mandarin. I just didn't know how to phrase it until now. My name is Tony Stark and I'm not afraid of you." Tony says, as he takes off his glasses, "I know you're a coward, so I've decided that you just died, pal. I'm gonna come get the body. There's no politics here; it's just good old-fashioned revenge. There's no Pentagon; it's just you and me. And on the off-chance you're a man, here's my home address: 10880, Malibu Port, 90265. I'll leave the door unlocked." Tony says, then says to the reporter, "Bill me."

"Did he just do what I think he just did?" Bobbi asks looking shocked.

"Yes, he did." Melinda confirms, with a frown, "Bobbi, stay with your brother and sister." Melinda requests.

"Sure Mom." Bobbi says, and Melinda heads downstairs.

"Why would Dad do that?" Peter asks, looking shocked.

"Because someone hurt someone he loves." Daisy says, understanding her father's actions.

"Yep." Bobbi confirms.

A little while later Melinda is waiting in the workshop when Tony drives in and gets out of his car.

"You've know, don't you?" Tony asks.

"I do." Melinda confirms, keeping her voice calm, "What were you thinking?"

"I was thinking that I had to draw the Mandarin out, and this was the best way to do it. Even if it put me in danger." Tony admits.
"You didn't just put yourself in danger, you put me and our kids in danger too!" Melinda says, angrily.

"Oh god, I didn't even think." Tony says, looking horrified, as he realises the gravity of what he did, "Mel, I'm sorry."

"I know you are." Melinda says, being able to tell that, "But I also know that Daisy, Peter, Bobbi and I cannot be here now. We're going back home, back to New York." Melinda says.

"That's a really good idea." Tony realises, "I'll be home as soon as I settle this." Tony informs Melinda.

"I know you will." Melinda says, before heading back upstairs.

A little while later Melinda, Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi have all packed their bags and the four of them are with Tony in the living room of the Malibu house.

"We should stay, and help." Bobbi argues.

"No." Tony tells his daughter, "I need you all to be somewhere safe." Tony says leaving out the 'far away from me' that he is thinking.

"Your plan is stupid." Daisy tells her father.

"I know, Tiny Toni, but it's what I have to do." Tony tells his daughter, who is looking amused.

"You're not really going to miss Christmas, are you?" Peter asks as even with everything they have been through Tony has never missed Christmas, though Melinda has missed part of one or two.

"I have to deal with the Mandarin Pete, and your Mom's right. It's best for you guys not to be here while I do." Tony says, looking between his children, "I love you guys, so much." Tony says, and as he does Daisy hurries over to him.

"Love you, Daddy." Daisy tells her father as she hugs him tightly being old enough to know just how bad this could get, and after losing her Uncle Phil she knows more than ever that she wouldn't handle losing her father.

"Love you too, Daze." Tony says, placing a kiss on his daughters' head, and when they break apart Peter walks over to his father.

"I love you Dad." Peter says.

"Love you too." Tony responds.

"We built a whole lot of new suits, use them." Peter says, in a quiet voice before he and Tony break apart, and once they do Bobbi walks over to her father.

"Don't die out there… I love you, Dad." Bobbi says, as she hugs him.

"Love you too, Little Bird." Tony says, "Look after your Mom for me." He says, even though he knows Melinda doesn't need it.

"I'll do my best." Bobbi responds, as the two of them break apart, and as they do Bobbi and Melinda exchange looks, "Let's go downstairs guys." She tells her siblings.
"I'll be right there." Melinda reveals, and Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi head downstairs, "I love you Tony, so much." Melinda tells her husband, "Don't get yourself killed."

"I'll do my best." Tony admits.

"This might help with that." Melinda says, as she hands over a USB.

"What's on this?" Tony asks curious.

"Everything SHIELD has about the Mandarin, maybe something will help." Melinda responds.

"Thanks Mel." Tony says, and he leans forward and kisses Melinda, and once they break apart Melinda heads downstairs while Tony just stands in his house, knowing that he wants to be with his family, but that he cannot be until the Mandarin is dealt with.

December 22nd 2012

Ever since Melinda, Bobbi, Daisy and Peter left for New York Tony has been working hard on trying to find a lead on the Mandarin and he has finally gotten one.

"Ever been to Tennessee, Jarvis?" Tony asks curious, from where he is sitting on top of a very large tool cabinet.

"Creating a flight plan for Tennessee." Jarvis says, and as he does Tony hears the doorbell knock.

"Are we still at 'ding-dong? We're supposed to be on total security lock down. Come on, I threatened a terrorist. Who is that?" Tony asks.

"There's only so much I can do sir, when you give the world's press your home address." JARVIS explains and as he does Pepper storms in.

"Pep?" Tony asks surprised, "What are you doing here?" he asks, as he starts to put on the Mark 42 Iron Man suit.

"I'm here to talk some sense into you." Pepper admits, "I get it, you have to stop the Mandarin, and Melinda had to get the kids out of here, but that doesn't mean you have to stay here and get yourself killed."

"As great as this conversation would be, I've got a visitor upstairs." Tony explains.

"You what!" Pepper says, sounding shocked, as Tony, in the suit, walks past Pepper and heads upstairs.

When Tony walks upstairs the doors open and a women who Tony recognizes as Maya Hansen walks in.

"Right there is fine." Tony says, when Maya walks inside, "You're not the Mandarin, are you? Are you?" he asks, as the face mask lifts up.

"You don't remember, why am I not surprised." Maya comments.

"Don't take it personally, I don't remember what I had for breakfast." Tony comments.

"Gluten Free waffles, Sir." JARVIS answers.

"That's right." Tony comments.
"Okay, look, I need to be alone with you. Someplace not here, it's urgent." Maya comments.

"I'm flattered, but just like I was '99 I'm in a relationship with the love of my life, only I'm married to her now." Tony explains.

"Tony? is it safe? Who's here?" Pepper asks, walking up the stairs, as there were no explosions. "Yeah, it's safe." Tony confirms, "It's Maya Hansen. Old botanist pal that I used to know." Tony explains, as Pepper walks in and Tony gets out of the suit.

"And she's here… why?" Pepper asks, feeling confused.

"Because I need Tony's help." Maya explains.

"What… what for? Why now?" Tony asks, feeling confused.

"Because I read the papers, and frankly, I don't think you'll last the week." Maya comments.

"I'll be fine." Tony comments.

"No, you won't, which is why you should go to New York." Pepper tells her friend, clearly worried about him.

"Nope, not happening." Tony responds, "I'll be fine here and everyone there is safe."

"Tony…" Pepper starts to say.

"We're not taking about this." Tony argues.

"Um Guys." Maya says, looking worried.

"What?" Tony asks, turning to look at her and Maya points to a bomb that is heading straight for the house. Suddenly the house is hit and as everything explodes around them Tony gets the Iron Man suit onto Pepper to protect her.

From his position on the ground, where he is in pain, Tony looks over to Maya, who is unconscious, and once he realises that Tony realises that the roof is about to fall on him, and before he can react Pepper bends over him, protecting him from the debris.

"I got you." Pepper says.

"I got you first." Tony comments, "Like you said, we can't stay here." He says, as the helicopter starts shooting at the house. Move, I'm right behind!" Tony yells, and as he and Pepper run to get out the floor in front of Tony collapses, though Pepper gets to the other side, "Get here, I'm gonna find a way around." Tony says, and Pepper looks hesitant, "Stop stopping! Get her, get out, go!" Tony yells.

After Tony yells Pepper manages to grab Maya and uses the Iron Man suit to get them safety. But the house gets further destroyed as the helicopters continue to fire on them.

"Sir, Miss Potts is clear of the structure." JARVIS says, as the house crumbles around Tony, and so Tony motions for the iron man suit to fly off Pepper and onto him.

"JARVIS, where is my flight power?" Tony asks, feeling desperate.

"Working on it, Sir. This is a prototype." JARVIS says, as Tony manages to use his suit to destroy one of the helicopters.
"That's one." Tony comments.

"Sir, the suit is not combat-ready." JARVIS says as Tony manages to get away from the bullets being fired at him from one of the remaining helicopters and again uses his suit to bring down the helicopter.

"That's two." Tony says, and as does the helicopter explodes and it crashes into the house, and the remaining Helicopter continues to shoot at the house, finally the remains of the house with Tony inside falls into the office.

As she sees the house fall Pepper runs to the edge and calls, "TONY!"

In the ocean Tony starts to feel like he is drowning as he flashes back to being water boarded in Afghanistan,

"Sir take a deep breath." JARVIS says, and after a few moments Tony just waits until his suit gets flight power activated by JARVIS, "Flight Power Restored." JARVIS says, and Tony manages to fly out of the ocean.

In New York Melinda is in her study doing paperwork with the TV playing in the background when she suddenly hears,

"Breaking News. We're crossing live to Malibu where Tony Stark's house is under attack, with reports coming in that indicate that Tony Stark himself was inside." The News Reporter explains, and Melinda sees images of the Malibu house falling into the ocean.

"No." Melinda says, looking horrified, "No, no, no." Melinda mutters to herself, and before she can react more Bobbi runs into the room, "Please tell me…." Melinda starts to say.

"He's alive." Bobbi assures her mother, "Terrified, and hurt, but alive." Bobbi tells her mother, who smiles, and takes a deep breath, before grabbing things out her desk, and looking like she is about to go somewhere, "Mom?" Bobbi asks, looking confused, "What are you doing?" Bobbi asks, as her mother walks over to the weapons safe that is in the study, one of three that is in the Stark-May portion of Avengers tower with other weapons safes being in hers and Tony's bedroom and Tony's lab.

"What I should have done in the first place." Melinda realises, "I need you to stay with Daisy and Peter." Melinda tells her daughter.

"You know I will." Bobbi answers, "Where are you going?"

"L.A." Melinda answers, feeling like she should have sent her kids back to New York, but stayed with Tony as dealing with terrorists is her world, not his, and so she should have helped him.

"Mom, you don't even know if Dad's still in L.A." Bobbi points out, "He could have used one of the suits to go anywhere."

"We'll I'll start in L.A, figure out where to go from there." Melinda says, putting on a thigh holster and grabbing extra magazines, "I've got to go, Bobbi, your Dad's alone, with no back up, I have to help."

"I know." Bobbi assures her mother, "I'll keep Daisy and Peter safe."

"I know it's a losing battle, but try and keep them from watching the news, and Daisy off her
laptop." Melinda tells her oldest daughter.

"I don't like my chances, but I'll try." Bobbi answers, "I know you're going to do whatever you have to do, but at least try to be careful." Bobbi requests.

"I'll do what I can." Melinda says, walking over to her daughter, "I love you." Melinda says, before hugging her.

"I love you too." Bobbi responds, and Melinda goes to leave the office, but before she can leave Daisy and Peter run in.

"Is Dad alive?" Daisy asks, looking at her sister.

"Yeah, he is." Bobbi says to her brother and sisters' relief.

"Mom? Where are you going?" Peter asks, noticing the weapon his mother has on her.

"L.A. I'm going to help Dad." Melinda explains, taking a step towards Daisy and Peter, "I need you two to listen to your sister, okay, and ignore the news, and whatever you see online." Melinda says, looking at Daisy, "There's going to be a lot of speculations, a lot of things that aren't true, what is true is that your Dad is alive." Melinda explains, looking between her kids.

"We can do that." Peter says, with a nod.

"You'll let us know what is going on, right? What's really going on?" Daisy asks her mother.

"I'll do my best." Melinda says, as she hugs her two youngest kids, "I love you both." Melinda says, placing a kiss on each of her children's heads, before breaking them, "I'll be home when I can." Melinda says, before leaving the study, but before she can get to the elevators she runs into Bruce, who has clearly hurried upstairs from his floor as soon as he saw the news.

"May… I just saw, I'm…." Bruce starts to say.

"He's alive." Melinda tells Bruce, "Bobbi's in the study, she'll fill you in." Melinda explains.

"You're going after the Mandarin." Bruce realises, as he has spent enough time around the Stark-May's to know that Melinda was once one of SHIELD'S best field agents, and judging by how often she and Natasha spare, is still pretty good but retired from field work for a reason that no one will talk about.

"I'm going to help Tony." Melinda corrects, "But yeah, that's probably how this is going to end." Melinda confirms, and realising what she has to do Melinda takes a step closer to him, "Bruce, if something happens to me, or Tony…." Melinda starts to say.

"I'll protect them." Bruce promises as in the last few weeks the Stark-May's have treated him like family, and despite his better judgement as him caring for people never ends well, he has started to see them as that, care for them, "I promise."

"Thank you." Melinda says, sincerely, before side stepping Bruce and getting on the elevator. As the elevator doors close Melinda isn't sure if she is doing the right thing, but she does know that it is the right thing, as she has to help Tony.

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Far away from New York, in Tennessee Tony is flying in his suit when he is woken by alarms going off.
"Sir, Sir!" JARVIS says loudly.

"Alright, kill the alarm, I got it." Tony comments, as he starts to wake up a bit more.

"That's the emergency alert triggered by the power dropping below five percent." JARVIS says, and as he does Tony notices that he is flying through the show at night, and he falls and crashes into the ground in the middle of a forest. Once he has crashed Tony takes off his face helmet as he lies on the ground and tries to catch his breath.

"It's snowing, right? Where are we, upstate?" Tony asks.

"We're five miles outside of Rose Hills, Tennessee." JARVIS answers.

"Why?" Tony asks, sounding shocked, "JARVIS, not my idea! What are we doing here?" Tony asks shocked, "This is thousands of miles way, I gotta call Mel, find Pepper, I gotta…." Tony starts to say.

"I prepared a flight plan. This was the location." JARVIS explains.

"Who asked you?" Tony asks, "Open the suit." He instructs.

"I… I think I may be malfunctioning, Sir." JARVIS comments.

"Open, J." Tony instructs, and the suit gets off Tony and so he sits up, "That's brisk." Tony says, realising that it is cold, "Maybe I'll just cozy back up for a bit." Tony says, lying back in the suit.

"I actually think I need to sleep now, Sir." JARVIS says, as the suit loses power.

"JARVIS? JARVIS? Don't leave me, Buddy." Tony requests, but it's too late.

After realising that he has lost the suit Tony drags it to a petrol station as he knows he has to make two calls, the first one he makes is to Melinda.

"Mel, it's me." Tony says, "I've got a lot of apologise to make, and not a lot of time. So first off, I'm so sorry I put you and our kids in harms way. That was selfish and stupid and won't happen again." Tony says, knowing that he will do everything in his power to keep that promise, "It's Christmas, and I'm sorry in advance because I can't come home yet, I need to find this guy. You and our kids have to stay safe, that's all I know. I just stole a poncho from a wooden Indian…. I love you." Tony says, before hanging up and once he hangs up he makes a second call, "Pepper, it's me. I'm sorry about putting you in danger, you didn't deserve that." He admits, "You should stay away, go somewhere safe, I'll let you know when it's safe. You're an amazing friend, and I'm going to try to be a better one in the future." Tony says, before hanging up once more.

On a plane between New York and Los Angeles Melinda is flying on a plane, when she gets an alert that Tony has called, and so while she flies she plays the message he left.

"Mel, it's me." Tony's voice says, "I've got a lot of apologise to make, and not a lot of time. So first off, I'm so sorry I put you and our kids in harm's way. That was selfish and stupid and won't happen again. It's Christmas, and I'm sorry in advance because I can't come home yet, I need to find this guy. You and our kids have to stay safe, that's all I know. I just stole a poncho from a wooden Indian…. I love you." Tony says.

"I love you too." Melinda mutters, "But you don't have to fight this battle alone." She says, knowing that this is a battle that she cannot let Tony fight alone, and so she is going to do
whatever she can to help him, knowing he was right about one thing, their kids have to be safe while they're fighting this battle, which they currently are.

After making his two phone calls Tony drags his Iron Man suit to an abandoned looking farmhouse. Once he breaks in he places the suit on a couch and sits next to it.

"Let's get you comfy." Tony says, to the suit, and he moves the head a little, "You happy now?" Tony asks, and once he does he moves to a seat, at a bench, where he starts to try and fix the micro-repeater implants in his arm, and as he attempts to do so a blond boy, who looks to be about Peter's age, walks into the doorway and points a potato gun at Tony.

"Freeze! Don't move!" The boy yells.

"You got me." Tony comments, putting up his hands, "Nice potato gun. Barrel's a little long. Between that and the wide gauge, it's gonna diminish your FPS." Tony says, and as he does he points his gun at a glass on a shield and shoots at it, breaking the glass, "And now you're out of ammo." Tony comments, putting his hands down.

"What's that thing on your chest?" The boy asks curious.

"It's an electromagnet. You should know, you got a box of them right here." Tony says, picking up a box.

"What does it power?" The boy asks and once he does Tony stands and points the desks light at his Iron Man suit which is still on the couch behind him, "Oh my god!" the boy says, sounding shocked, and he drops his potato gun and takes a step towards Tony, "That's… that's… is that Iron Man?" the boy asks, sounding shocked.

"Technically, I am." Tony answers.

"Technically, you're dead." The boy says, as he walks past Tony and hands him a news paper which has the headline 'Mandarin Attack: Stark presumed dead.'

"A valid point." Tony admits, being glad that for two things, that He called Melinda and that Bobbi will know he is alive, so she doesn't worry, as the boy walks over to the Iron Man suit and sits down next to it.

"What happened to him?" The boy asks curious.

"Life. I built him, I take care of him, I'll fix him." Tony comments.

"Like a mechanic?" The boy asks curious.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, being reminded a lot of Peter, and not just because the boys are the same age, but because they have the same interested, knowledge seeking look in their eyes.

"Oh, if I was building Iron Man and War Machine…" The boy starts to say.

"It's Iron Patriot now." Tony corrects, really hating that name.

"That's way cooler!" The boy says, looking thrilled.

"No, it's not." Tony says, with a frown, and a childlike pout.

"Anyways, I would have added in the um…the retro…" The boy starts to say, trying to find
right words.

"Retroreflective panels?" Tony supplies, assuming that that is what the boy was meaning.

"To make him stealth mode." The boy explains.

"You want a stealth mode?" Tony asks curious.

"Cool, right?" The boy asks.

"That's actually a good idea. Maybe I'll build one." Tony says, thinking about all the possible applications about that, and as he does the boy touches the suit and doing so he accidently breaks of one of Iron Man's fingers.

"Oops!" The Boy yells.

"Not a good idea!" Tony objects, "What are you doing? You gonna break his finger? He's in pain, he's been injured, leave him alone." Tony requests, standing annoyed.

"Sorry." The Boy says.

"Are you?" Tony says, and as he does he sees that the boy looks truly sorry, "Don't worry about it, I'll fix it." Tony assures the boy, "So, uh, who's home?" Tony asks curious, knowing that this could be hard to explain to the boy's parents.

"Well, my mom already left for the diner, and dad went to 7-Eleven to get scratchers. I guess he won, cause that was six years ago." The Boy comments, trying to hide how hard that is for him and so Tony decides to take the same approach.

"Which happens, Dads leave, no need to be a pussy about it." Tony says, even though he truly feels angry at the boys' father, "Here's what I need; a laptop, a digital watch, a cell phone, the pneumatic actuator from your bazooka over there, a map of town, a big spring, and a tuna fish sandwich." Tony requests.

"What's in it for me?" The boy asks.

"Salvation. What's his name?" Tony asks curious.

"Who?"

"The kid that bullies you at school, what's his name?" Tony asks.

"How'd you know that?" the boy asks, and Tony doesn't answer, rather decides to do what he has been wanting to do for Peter to help Flash, his bully problem, but his son won't let him.

"I got just the thing." Tony says, as he opens a compartment on the Iron man suit and takes out a metal object, "This is a piñata for a cricket." Tony jokes, "I'm kidding. It's a very powerful weapon." Tony explains, "Point it away from your face and press the button on top. It discourages bullying. Non-lethal, just to cover one's ass." Tony says, and as he does Harley reaches out to take it, but Tony pulls his hand away, "Deal? Deal? What'd you say?" Tony asks curious.

"Deal." The boy answers.

"Deal." Tony says, and he hands him the object, "What's your name?" Tony asks curious.

"Harley. And you're..." Harley starts to say.
"The Mechanic, Tony." Tony says, and as he does he looks at Harley, "You know what keeps going though my head? Where's my sandwich?" he asks.

While Tony is in Tennessee Melinda has landed in Los Angeles and as she walks out of the Stark Plane she flew she finds Rhodey waiting.

"He's alive." Melinda says, without even saying hello.

"Are you sure?" Rhodey asks, needing the answer to be yes.

"Yeah, Bobbi is, and he called." Melinda explains.

"Good, that's good." Rhodey says, looking relieved, but Melinda realises that there is something else going on.

"You've got bad news, don't you?" Melinda asks.

"Yeah. It's Pepper." Rhodey says, looking worried, "She was at the house. People, press, and emergency services saw her after the house collapsed, but it looks like she left with another women, and no one's heard from her since, I haven’t been able to contact her." He says, looking worried.

"Okay… then we find Pepper, we find Tony, and we do whatever we can to help." Melinda says.

"Sounds like a plan." Rhodey says, "What's SHIELD doing?" he asks, as he knows they won't want to get in SHIELD's way or have SHIELD get in there's.

"No idea, I haven't talked to Fury." Melinda explains, as she couldn't risk him giving her orders to stay away.

"So, you're off book." Rhodey realises.

"Is that going to be a problem?" Melinda asks, as she knows Rhodey has his code.

"Nope." Rhodey answers, "Let's bring our family home." He says, as that's what Tony and Pepper are to both of them, and they both head into the plane, knowing there are computers, and other tech that they are going to need to find Tony and Pepper.
A while after Tony meet Harley Kenner the two of them have, bonded, though Tony has had a panic attack and have fought people who seem to be impossible to kill, that has some fire based regenerative properties, that looks very similar to a Mandarin explosion, while Tony has also found out a bit of information about what is going on.

"You're welcome." Harley comments.

"For what? Did I miss something?" Tony asks, having no idea what the boy could be talking about.

"Me, saving your life." Harley says.

"Yeah. A, I saved you first." Tony comments, "B, thanks, sort of." Tony says, "And C, if you do someone a solid, don't be a yutz, all right? Just play it cool." Tony suggests, "Otherwise you come off grandiose."

"Unlike you?" Harley asks, "Admit it, you need me. We're connected." Harley says, with a grin.

"What I need is for you to go home, be with your mom." Tony says, meaning that, "keep your trap shut, guard the suit, and stay connected to the telephone, because if I call, you better pick up, okay?" Tony says, as he gets into a car, "Can you feel that? We're done here." Tony comments, "Move out of the way or I'm going to run you over." Tony says, not meaning that, but wanting the boy to get out of the middle of the road, "Bye kid." Tony says, and as he goes to go he realises that Harley looks upset and so he turns back to him, "I'm sorry kid, you did good." Tony assures the young boy.

"So, now you're just gonna leave me here, like my Dad?" Harley asks, pulling a face.

"Yeah." Tony says, and then he realises something, "Wait, you're guilt tripping me, aren't you?" Tony asks, hiding how amused he is.

"I'm cold." Harley says, in a joking manner.

"I can tell." Tony says, slightly mockingly. "You know how I can tell? Because we're connected." Tony says, before driving away, knowing that Harley will be fine.

"It was worth a shot." Harley mutters as he watches Tony drive away.

In Los Angeles Melinda and Rhodey are still on the plane, trying to find some lead on Tony and Pepper.

"Yes Sir. I'll be right there." Rhodey says, into his phone, before hanging up.
"You got to go?" Melinda asks.

"Yeah. There is work for Iron Patriot, a lead on the Mandarin." Rhodey explains.

"Go. I'll figure out where Tony and Pepper are and let you know." Melinda promises.

"Thanks." Rhodey says, before leaving.

After Rhodey leaves Melinda just stares at the screen of the laptop she is working on, trying to figure out what do to, before she finally gets an idea, so she calls Bobbi.

"Mom? Have you found Dad?" Bobbi asks, clearly worried.

"Not yet." Melinda answers, "I need you to put me on speaker." Melinda requests.

"Okay, but I'm in my room alone." Bobbi says, as she does what her mother asks.

"That's okay." Melinda says, "JARVIS?"

"Yes, Mrs Stark-May?" JARVIS answers, as while JARVIS in Tony's suit is miss functioning JARVIS in the tower is still working perfectly.

"Before the explosion at the Malibu house what was the last thing Tony asked you to do?" Melinda asks, hoping that it will give her some idea of where Tony could be.

"Mr Stark-May asked me to create a flight path for Rose Hill Tennessee." JARVIS answers.

"Are there any of the Iron Man suits in Rose Hill?" Melinda asks, knowing that all of Tony's suits have trackers in them.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers.

"Thanks JARVIS. Bobbi, I'll talk to you later." Melinda tells her daughter, before hanging up.

After Melinda hangs up with her daughter she heads to the cockpit and once she is able to flies the plane into the air, heading for Tennessee.

A while later Melinda is still in the air, getting close to Tennessee, when her phone rings, when she sees that it Rhodey who is calling her, she quickly flicks the plane to autopilot,

"Rhodey?" Melinda asks, as she answers.

"May. I've just talked to Tony." Rhodey reveals, and as he does, because of the sound that is in the background Melinda knows that he is flying in the War Machine, now Iron Patriot, armour.

"Is he okay? How'd he sound?" Melinda asks.

"Like Tony." Rhodey admits, "He asked me about AIM, I think he thinks they have something to do with what's going on." She explains.

"Aim, okay. I'll look into it." Melinda says, "Rhodey…." She starts to say, but before she can get her question out he cuts her off,


"Okay, good luck stay safe." Melinda says, to her friend.
"I'll do my best." Rhodey says, before ending the call.

Once Rhodey hangs up Melinda checks to make sure the autopilot is still working probably before getting out her computer, and her phone. Once her phone is out Melinda calls her apartment once more,

"Speaker again?" Bobbi asks, answering, as that's what she assumes.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "JARVIS?"

"Yes Mrs Stark-May?" JARVIS asks.

"I'm on my laptop and phone, can you access them so I can stay in contact with you?" Melinda asks, remembering Tony saying something about that being possible, but she cannot remember exactly what he said.

"Yes Ma'am. It will take a moment though." JARVIS answers.

"Thanks JARVIS, take all the time you need." Melinda answers, "Bobbi? Are you okay? Are Daisy and Peter okay?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yeah, we're all fine." Bobbi assures her mother, "Have you got any leads on Dad?"

"Yeah, but I need JARVIS to be able to get to him." Melinda explains.

"Okay." Bobbi says, "Is there anything I can do?" she asks curious.

"Just look after you brother and sister." Melinda requests.

"Mrs Stark-May I am successfully uploaded to your phone and upload." JARVIS answers.

"I can do that." Bobbi tells her mother, "If you need anything, if there is anything else I can do, just call." Bobbi requests.

"I will." Melinda assures her daughter, before hanging up, "Okay, JARVIS, if I put an earpiece in I can stay in contact with you, right?" Melinda asks.

"That is correct." JARVIS confirms.

"Good." Melinda says, feeling glad, "Okay, JARVIS, what do you know about AIM? Has Tony asked you anything about Aim since the Malibu house was destroyed?" Melinda asks, knowing she is playing catch up and so she has to get some idea of where to go, fast.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers, "By discovering AIM downlink facilities I was able to pinpoint the Mandarin's broadcast signal." JARVIS reveals.

"Where is it?" Melinda asks.

"Mami, I believe Mr Stark-May is on his way there." JARVIS explains.

"Coordinates?" Melinda asks, and Jarvis puts them into the screen and so Melinda figures out the nearest place she can land. Once she does that Melinda manually changes course before setting the coordinates for the new location, "Does Tony have an Iron Man suit with him?"

"No Ma'am." JARVIS answers.
"Okay." Melinda says, knowing that is not the answer she would like, "What about Pepper? Has Tony found anything on where she is?" Melinda asks, once the autopilot is once again engaged.

"No Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS answers.

"Damn it." Melinda says, annoyed, "Okay, call Rhodey." Melinda requests, and she waits for the call to be connected, "JARVIS?" Melinda asks, "What's going on?"

"I seem unable to connect to Colonel Rhodes." JARVIS answers.

"Damn it." Melinda says, switching the plane to manual once more, and forcing it to go faster, "Keep trying to get through to Rhodey." Melinda instructs.

"Yes Mrs Stark-May." JARVIS says, as Melinda forces the plane to gas fast as possible.

**December 24th 2012**

While Melinda is on her way to Miami Tony has infiltrated the Mandarin's broadcasting location, and after finding out that the Mandarin is actually an actor Tony was captured. Since being captured Tony has found out that Maya is working for Killian, the man he ignored in 1999, and who is running an projected called Extremis, an extremely volatile substance which Killian has injected into Pepper, while Maya has been killed.

While Tony is zip-tied to a bedframe he is watching as two men are trying to figure out why the watch that Tony got from Harley is beeping.

"Careful there, it's limited edition." Tony comments, "Hey, uh, Pony tail express. What's the mileage count between Tennessee and Miami?" Tony asks, curious, looking at one of the men who are watching him.

"Eight hundred and thirty-two miles." The other man answers.

"Very nice." Tony comments.

"I'm good like that." The man who knew the distance says as the beeping of the watch continues.

"Can you, uh, stop that?" One of the men say.

"Break it, you brought it." Tony says, and of the men breaks the watch.

"I think I brought it." One of the men comments.

"Okay, that's wasn't mine to give away." Tony comments, "That belongs to my friend's sister, and that's why I'm gonna kill you first." Tony comments.

"What are you going to do to me?" The Man asks, sounding disbelieving.

"You'll see." Tony answers.

"You're zip-tied to a bed." The Man comments.

"This." Tony says, as he makes a hand motion to call the suit, "That." Tony says, doing the same hand motion again.

In the grounds of the place where Tony is Melinda is following the trail of unconscious, or dead,
she's not sure which, people, which she knows Tony has caused, towards a house, not knowing if they are alive or dead as she doesn't have time to check.

"Mrs Stark-May, I am getting an Emergency Signal from the Iron Patriot armour." JARVIS reveals.

"Rhodey." Melinda mutters, feeling concern, "Where?"

"The structure to the north." JARVIS reveals.

"Okay, thanks JARVIS." Melinda says, and she heads there rather than to the house.

A few minutes later Melinda in the building where JARVIS says an Emergency signal is coming from Rhodey's suit, and rather than finding Rhodey Melinda finds Tony, who has parts of his suit on, fighting people, having taken down two, and so Melinda fights, taking down several of them as Tony takes down the rest.

"Mel…" Tony says, looking amazed as he hurries towards her.

"Tony." Melinda says, hugging him, feeling beyond glad to see him.

"What are you doing here?" Tony asks.

"You need back up." Melinda explains.

"You're amazing." Tony says, with a grin, loving his wife so much.

"Rhodey's here somewhere." Melinda reveals.

"I know. Pepper too. we've got to go." Tony says, and they both hurry out of the building together, as they do Tony sees the face mask coming towards him.

"Not this time." Tony says, catching the face mask and putting it on as they get outside, "Phew! It's good to be back." Tony comments, "Hello, by the way." Tony says, to JARVIS.

"Oh, hello, Sir." JARVIS answers, as they see the Iron Patriot armour fly into the sky.

"Stark is lose, somewhere in the compound, and has a women with him." An announcement says though the compound.

"Ah, let's go!" Tony says, putting an arm around Melinda's waste and trying to use the thrusters but they misfire, "Aw, crap." Tony says, looking annoyed.

"Guess things are completely back." Melinda comments, "JARVIS, can you get through to Rhodey?" Melinda asks, through her ear piece.

"You're talking to JARVIS?" Tony asks, as while Melinda is fonder of JARVIS than she once was, he doesn't think she has ever had an ear piece with a direct line to him.

"It was the best way to help you, the only way." Melinda explains.

"Tony?" Rhodey asks, having been connected to his friend.

"Rhodey, tell me that was you in the suit." Tony says.
"No." Rhodey answers.

"Damn it." Melinda says, sounding annoyed.

"May?" Rhodey asks surprised.

"Yeah, I'm here too." Melinda confirms.

"Listen we can catch up later, Rhodey, main house, as fast as you can. There's someone you and Mel should meet." Tony explains and he and Melinda hurry to the house.

About a minute later Melinda and Tony have gotten to the house, where they have been joined by Rhodey, and both Melinda and Rhodey are pointing their guns at the man who has been pretending to be the Mandarin, Trevor.

"You make a move, and I'll break your face." Melinda comments

"I never thought people had been hurt. They lied to me." Trevor comments.

"This is the mandarin?" Rhodey asks, sounding shocked, as Melinda is just looking annoyed.

"Yeah, I know, it's embarrassing." Tony says.

"Hi Trevor. Trevor Slattery. I know I'm shorter in person, a bit smaller, everyone says that, but um, hey, if you're here to arrest me, there's some people I'd like to roll on." Trevor comments.

"Here how it works, Meryl Steep. You tell them where Pepper is and they'll stop doing it." Tony comments.

"Doing what?" Trevor asks confused, and as he does Rhodey hurts Trevor.

"OW! THAT HURT! I GET IT! I GET IT!" Trevor says.

"I don't know about any Pepper, but I know about the plan." Trevor admits.

"Talk." Melinda instructs.

"Do you know what they did to my suit? Rhodey asks.

"What? No? But I do know it's happening off the coast, something to do with a big boat." Trevor explains, "I can take you there." Trevor says, before he suddenly gets up and starts chanting, "Ole', Ole, Ole, Ole." Trevor chants.

"Tony, I swear to God, I'm gonna blow his face off." Rhodey comments.

"Get in line." Melinda says, looking at her friend.

"Oh, and this next bit may include the vice president as well, is that is that somewhat important?" Trevor asks.

"Yeah, a little bit." Rhodey says, looking as annoyed as Melinda feels.

"So?" Tony asks.

"What are we gonna do?" Rhodey asks, "I mean, we don't have any transport." Rhodey says, but as he does he realise something, "I know you're off book but can you get SHIELD transport?" Rhodey
"Yeah, but it will take time, time that I guess we don't have." Melinda admits, as Trevor opens a beer and Tony gets an idea.

"Hey Ringo, didn't you say something about a lovely speedboat?" Tony asks.

"Yes, they gave me one." Trevor answers.

"We're gonna take that." Melinda reveals, as she punches Trevor, knocking him out, "Let's go." She says, to Rhodey and Tony and the three of them head out of the house to find the Speedboat that they are going to 'borrow'.

A little while later Melinda, Tony, and Rhodey are all on Trevor's speedboat together speeding to where they are hoping to find Pepper, with Rhodey the one driving the boat.

"If he's right about the location, we're twenty minutes form where Pepper is." Rhodey explains.

"We'll need to figure out this vice president thing, though." Melinda comments.

"Right, I wonder who I'm calling right now." Tony says, with a smirk, "Oh, that's the vice president." Tony explains, as Melinda lovingly rolls her eyes.

"Hello?" The vice president says.

"Sir, this is Tony Stark."

"Welcome back to the land of the living." The Vice President says.

"We believe you're about to be drawn into the Mandarin campaign, we gotta get you somewhere safe, as soon as possible." Tony says.

"Mr Stark, I'm about to eat honey-roast ham surrounded by the agency's finest, and the president is safe on Air Force One with Colonel Rhodes. I think we're good here." The Vice President says.

"Sir, this is Colonel Rhodes, they're using Iron Patriot as a Trojan horse." Rhodey says, "They're gonna take out the President somehow. We have to immediately alert the plane." Rhodey explains.

"Okay, I'm on it. I'll have security lock it down. If need be, they can f-22s in the air in thirty seconds." The vice president says, and as he does Melinda frowns as she finds something off, but she isn't sure what, 'Thank you, Colonel.'

"Rhodes and Stark out." Rhodey says, knowing that if they mention Melinda then they're just going to get in trouble.

"Mel, what's up?" Tony asks concerned, being able to tell that something is bothering here.

"I'm not completely sure." Melinda admits, "Something wasn't right." She says, "JARVIS, call Fury." Melinda requests, and for the next minute or so Melinda just listens to the call ring out, "And of course he's not answering his phone." Melinda mutters, sounding annoyed.

"It doesn't matter, we'll handle it." Rhodey comments, "But we gotta make a decision." He reveals, looking at Melinda rather than Tony as he knows Melinda will understand, "We can either save the president, or Pepper, we can't do both."
"Sir." JARVIS says, "I have an update from Malibu." He reveals, "The cranes have finally arrived, and the cellar doors are being cleared as we think." JARVIS explains.

"And what about the suit that I am wearing?" Tony asks as the Mark 42 is currently connected to car batteries.

"The armour is now at 92%" JARVIS reveals.

"That's going to have to do." Tony says, as he pulls the wires leading to the car battery out of the suit.

A little while later Tony has managed to save everyone who was on Air Force One, which was blown up.

"Give me some good news, Man." Rhodey requests, opening the door to the below deck cabin where Tony was using the same remote using technology he was using at the Malibu house.

"I think they all made it." Tony comments.

"That's great." Melinda says, looking relieved.

"Yeah, but I missed the president." Tony comments.

"Damn it." Melinda says, thinking that it is the worst time for Fury not to be answering his phone.

"You couldn't save the president with the suit, how are we gonna save Pepper with nothing?" Rhodey asks.

"Uh Say, JARVIS, is it that time?" Tony asks curious.

"The house Party Protocol, Sir?" JARVIS asks

"Correct." Tony answers.

**December 25th 2012**

A little while later Melinda, Tony, and Rhodey are making their way through a platform of an oil taken. As Tony's Iron Man suit was destroyed and they don't have the War Machine armour the three of them only have guns, guns that Melinda and Rhodey both have raised, while Tony, who in the middle of them, is just holding them.

"Look, I'm sorry, I know you don't want to do stuff like this anymore." Tony says to his wife.

"To help you I will." Melinda comments, meaning that, and knowing if she wasn't so stubborn then maybe she could have helped Coulson, saved him from Loki.

"You're not gonna freak out on us, are you?" Rhodey asks Tony.

"I hope not." Tony comments, "Oh, my god." Tony comments, spotting the War Machine armour, with the president inside.

"He's strung up over the oil tanker, they're gonna light him up." Melinda realises.

"Viking funeral." Rhodey realise.
"A public execution." Tony comments.

"Sounds about right." Melinda comments as that fits in perfectly with what has happened so far.

"Broadcast will commence shortly." A PA announcement says, "Take final positions."

"Tony put your gun up." Melinda tells her husband as she, Rhodey and Tony make their way around the platform, it being clear that she and Rhodey are completely comfortable with what they are doing, even though Melinda hasn't done something like this in a while, while Tony isn't close to as comfortable as the love his life and best friend.

"Stay on my six, cover high, and don't shoot me in the back." Rhodey tells his friend, knowing that Melinda will cover anything they miss.

"Six, high, back, all right." Tony says, and suddenly there is gunfire, and so Tony, Melinda and Rhodey all take cover, after Melinda and Rhodey both shoot some guys.

Once they take cover Tony shoots the glass of a lamp trying to get right of some of the light.

"You see that? Nailed it." Tony comments.

"Yeah, you really killed the glass." Rhodey comments.

"You think I was aiming for the bulb? You can't hit a bulb at this distance." Tony says, and once he does Rhodey stands up and hits the bulb while Melinda stands up too and shoots the bulb of a light further away, "Show offs, both of you." Tony comments, looking between them.

"Move." Melinda suddenly says, as she starts to fire, and all three of them quickly move, and Rhodey and Tony both join Melinda in firing.

"I'm out." Tony says, once they are hiding behind a cover again, "Give me... either of you have extra magazines?" Tony asks curious.

"There not universal, Tony." Rhodey argues.

"I know what I'm doing, I used to make this stuff." Tony comments.

"Rhodey doesn't have one that fits that gun, but here." Melinda says, handing Tony a magazine that will work with his gun, feeling glad that she grabbed several types.

"Thanks Mel." Ton says, "Save my spot, ready?" Tony asks, and he quickly sticks his head out.

"What'd you see?" Rhodey Asks

"Too fast, nothing." Tony says, causing both Melinda and Rhodey to roll their eyes, and Tony checks once again, this time slower, "Three guys, one girl, all armed." Tony comments.

"Not bad odds." Melinda comments, knowing she has faced worse.

"God, I would kill for some armour right now." Rhodey comments.

"You're right, we need backup." Tony comments.

"We really don't, we've got this. You two get to the President, get him out, I'll deal with the people." Melinda explains.
"What no!" Tony objects, knowing that that would be beyond dangerous.

"Toony." Rhodey says, drawing out his best friend's name and causing both Tony and Melinda to look at him.

"Are those..." Rhodey starts to say, looking out at the sky where there seems to be a lot of Iron Man suits.

"Yep, Merry Christmas Buddy." Tony says, to his friend, "JARVIS, target extremis heat signatures, disable with extreme prejudice."

"Yes Sir." JARVIS'S voice coming through every one of the armours says.

"What are you waiting for? It's Christmas, take them to church." Tony instructs, and he, Melinda, and Rhodey watch as the Iron Man suits destroy people and parts of the oil tanker, "JARVIS, get Igor to steady this thing." Tony requests, as part of the platform is destroyed.

"This is how you've been managing your down time, huh?" Rhodey asks his friend.

"Yep, Peter's been helping out too, everyone needs a hobby." Tony comments.

"Guys, we've got to go. We've got to find Pepper help the president." Melinda says, and as he does another suit arrives, which Tony climbs into.

"Nice Timing." Tony comments.

"Oh, yeah, that's awesome." Rhodey says, as he puts his gun in the waist band of his pants, "Give me a suit, okay?"

'Oh, I'm sorry, there only coded to me." Tony reveals.

"What does that mean?" Rhodey asks.

"I've got you covered," Tony says, as he puts his arm around Melinda and the two of them fly into the air while another suit grabs Rhodey.

"Sir, Ma'am, I've located Ms Potts." JARVIS says to Tony and Melinda their both their earpieces.

"About time." Tony says, and he flies him and Melinda to where Pepper is trapped under some scaffolding.

"Pepper, it's damn good to see you." Melinda says.

"It really is." Pepper responds as Tony tries to lift the scaffolding.

"Stop!" Pepper yells, and Tony quickly stops, "Put it down, put it down." Pepper requests.

"I'll climb through, help you get free from the inside." Melinda reveals,

"Can you fit through that?" Tony asks.

"I'm going to have to." Melinda says, and she starts to climb and crawl, through the scaffolding to get to Pepper so that she can help her.

As Melinda is crawling towards Pepper Killian comes out of nowhere and he and Tony start to fight. As they fight Tony cuts of Killian's arm, and due to the extremis, it is basically burning hot,
and once it is cut off it causes a hole to form in the ground, a hole that both Melinda and Pepper fall through.

As they fall Melinda and Pepper both get hung upside down as the part of the platform they are on moves.

"Pepper, I need you to stay calm, and do exactly what I say." Melinda says, as she feels her ear piece falls out of her ear.

"Okay." Pepper says, completely trusting Melinda.

Once the platform stops moving Melinda manages to get her leg free, and climb above, just as Tony get to a platform below them.

"MEL! PEPPER!" Tony yells, in terror.

"Tony stick out your arm as far as you can." Melinda instructs, and Tony does so, "Okay, Pepper, I'm going to climb down, bridge the gap between you and Tony and then use our momentum, to get onto the platform, okay?" Melinda asks.

"Just do it fast, I don't know if I'm going to start burning." Pepper admits.

"Okay." Melinda says, feeling that that is another thing to worry about, and so working quickly, but carefully, Melinda climbs down, and once she is in the right position, grabs Peppers hand, then using the distance swings over and grabs Tony, "TONY PULL." Melinda calls, and Tony does, so as he does Melinda uses her bodies momentum, and Tony's strength, to get Pepper onto the platform, and then once Pepper is on the platform she and Tony are able to pull Melinda up.

"Oh, thank god." Tony says, feeling glad as he hugs Melinda, and Pepper, being glad that his wife and friend are both okay.

"We've got to get to the ground, this whole platform is coming down." Melinda says, but before anyone can react the Iron Man suits start to attack Pepper and cause all three of them to get knocked of the platform

As Tony, Melinda and Pepper are knocked of the platform Tony manages to call a suit in time to get him and Melinda and get them to the ground okay, while Pepper becomes 'hot' and destroys suits.

"Tony, you have to do something about the suits." Melinda says, seeing Pepper managing to fight, and destroy the suits that as she makes her way to the ground, where Tony and Melinda already are, but before Tony can do Kilian, who is clearly close to exploding, comes out of nowhere.

"No more false faces, you said you wanted the Mandarin. You're looking right at him, it was always me, Tony. right from the start. I am the Mandarin!" Killian yells, and as he does Pepper, who is still fighting the suits that are trying to kill her, manages to kick a bomb towards Kilian, and after using a repulsor to destroy it, kills Killian

"Nicely done." Melinda says, with a grin, but more suits start to attack Pepper.

"JARVIS, clean slate protocol." Tony instructs, as it is the only way to save Pepper.

"Are you sure, Sir?" JARVIS asks.

"Screw it, it's Christmas, yes." Tony says, and all the Iron Man suits, except War Machine, are
destroyed.

"Pepper. You did great." Melinda says, walking over to her friend.

"No, stay back, don't touch me." Pepper says, worried about hurting Melinda, and Tony.

"Don't worry about it. You're not burning now." Tony assures his friend.

"Am I going to be okay?" Pepper asks worried, looking at Tony.

"Of course." Tony says, "I almost had this twenty years ago when I was drunk, I can figure it out." Tony reveals, and in response Pepper just hugs her friend as Melinda watches as the Iron Man suits explode, knowing that this was a big deal for Tony.

Twelve hours later Tony, Melinda, Rhodey, and Pepper, are walking into the Stark-May apartment at Avengers Tower, having spent the last twelve hours at an off the book SHIELD facility where Tony managed to stabilise the extremis in Pepper.

As they walk in Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi run up to their parents and hug them, while Bruce just looks on with a smile on his face, feeling glad.

"Are you guys okay?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"Yeah, Daze, we're okay." Tony assures his daughter, "Sorry we've missed Christmas."

"You only missed part of it." Bobbi comments, as the Stark-May's break apart.

"Did you really destroy all the suits?" Peter asks his father, looking surprised.

"I had to." Tony admits, "But I've got a few more projects in mind for us." He admits, causing Peter to grin.

"Now that you guys have made it back can we eat now?" Daisy asks curious.

"You haven't eaten?" Melinda asks, looking surprised.

"It didn't feel right without you." Peter admits.

"Then yes, let's eat." Tony says and he, Melinda, Bruce, Rhodey, Pepper, Bobbi, Daisy, and Peter head into the kitchen where they enjoy a late, but very enjoyable Christmas dinner.
Chapter 47

December 31st 2012

A week has passed since Tony destroyed his Iron Man suits and stabilised the extremis in Pepper and in that time, Tony has gone to Malibu to collect the things that weren't destroyed when the house was destroyed, things which he brought back to New York and he has gotten the Arc reactor removed from his chest.

It is New Years Eve minutes to midnight and Tony, Melinda, Daisy, Bobbi, Peter, Sharon, Antoine, Rhodey, Pepper, Bruce, Clint and Natasha are all standing by the biggest window in Avengers Tower waiting for the fireworks.

As he looks around at his family Tony smiles, before putting his arm around Melinda, who leans against his chest, where the arc reactor used to be, and smiles softly, "This is perfect."

"Almost." Melinda corrects, thinking about Phil, who should be with them.

"I know, I miss him too." Tony says, completely meaning that, as the two of them drift into silence, tony know, if Melinda's nightmares are any indication, that she still blames herself for not being there to help Coulson, that she feels that his death is her fault as she refused to go onto the Hellicarier.

"Ten." Bobbi says, about a minute later, "Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, HAPPY NEW YEAR." Everyone yells and as they do fireworks start to go off, Melinda and Tony kiss, while everyone else hugs.

"It's going to be a good year." Tony comments.

"Let's hope so." Melinda admits, as the two of, Tony still having his arm around Melinda, watch the fireworks with their family.

February 11th 2013

Over a month has passed since Tony destroyed his suit and since then he has worked on plans to make new suits, as he knows something is coming, but hasn't started working on building anything yet, and he isn't sure when he is going to, rather he has been focusing on spending time with his family.

It's a Monday afternoon and ever since they got home from school Daisy has noticed that her brother has been quiet, and very unlike himself.

"Okay, what's going on?" Daisy asks, walking into her brother's room.
"Don't you knock?" Peter asks, sounding like a teenager even though he has recently turned twelve.

"Nope. Not when there is something wrong with you. So, what's up?" Daisy asks her brother curious, as she walks over and sits near her brother, and Peter looks like he is avoiding looking at her, "Don't make me start tickling you, you know I will." Daisy tells her brother.

"Fine." Peter says, looking annoyed, "It's Flash."

"He still causing problems for you and Ned?" Daisy asks concerned, as she knows that Flash has been bullying her brother and his friend for a while.

"Yeah, but he's getting worse." Peter admits, "For the first time I don't want to go to school, but I can't tell Mom or Dad, because they'll overreact."

"That's not fair." Daisy says, with a frown, "You love school, no one should ruin that for you." She says, and as she does she gets an idea, "Don't worry about it. I'll handle this." Daisy says, standing up.

"What? Daisy? What are you going to do?" Peter asks, feeling concerned.

"Probably better you don't know." Daisy admits, "Just know you're going to love school again." Daisy assures her brother as she leaves his room.

"DAISY!" Peter yells after his sister, wondering what the hell she is up to.

An hour later what Daisy did becomes perfectly clear to Peter as he, and everyone else in his year, gets an email which is a screenshot of a message of Flash talking about people who they are in school with, people that thought they were friends with Flash.

Reading the email Peter runs into his sisters room, hugs her, and then heads back to his room to call Ned, knowing that things are going to be better for them, even if it's just for a little while.

**March 19th 2013**

Five weeks have passed since Daisy helped Peter with his Flash problem and ever since things have been better at school for both Peter, and Ned. It is a Tuesday evening and Tony who has picked Daisy and Peter up from school is in his lab working.

"Sir, Mrs Stark-May is in the Gym, and from my calculations is about to destroy a punching bag." JARVIS reveals.

"Thanks J." Tony says, growing concerned, and so he stops what he doing, and heads to the gym.

When Tony walks into the gym about a minute after he left the lab, he sees Melinda break the punching bag and calls the insides to spill out over the floor.

"Mel?" Tony asks concerned, "Do you want to talk?"

"I almost quit SHIELD today." Melinda reveals, to Tony's complete shock.

"Why?" Tony asks, knowing there must be a reason, and a pretty big one at that.

"Fury." Melinda answers, "I've known him to do a lot of things, but this…" Melinda starts to say, before trailing off.
"What's happened?" Tony asks concerned, having never seen Melinda like this, "Or can't you tell me?" he asks, as he wouldn't be surprised if that was the case.

"I'm not supposed to." Melinda admits, "But I don't care." Melinda reveals, telling Tony that this is a bigger deal than he though, "Phil's alive."

"What?" Tony asks, looking shocked, "How? Fury said Loki killed him, Loki thought he killed him."

"He did, he was dead." Melinda says, as she kicks the bag, hard, "Fury used very questionable methods to bring him back." Melinda explains.

"Phil's alive." Tony says, looking amazed, "I would have thought you would be happy about that." He notes, being pretty sure that there must be something he is missing.

"I am!" Melinda says, punching the bag, "But either I agree to go back into the field, join Phil in his team, and keep an eye on him, report to Fury, and take action if I need to, otherwise I will never see Phil again and someone who doesn't know, doesn't care, will be the ones making the call." She says, angrily, as she hits the bag harder and kicks it, knocking it of the chain.

"Fuckin Fury." Tony says angrily as he walks over to Melinda and hugs her, "I'm sorry Mel, that's not fair."

"It's not." Melinda confirms, "I can't even see Phil yet, he's wherever Fury sent him, and if he finds out what happened to him there will be negative consequences."

"What kind of negative consequences?" Tony asks concerned.

"I don't know." Melinda admits, "If I didn't know Fury knew everything I would think that maybe he didn't know." Melinda reveals, causing Tony to frown.

"What's Phil going to be told if he can't know what happened?" Tony asks, feeling confused about how Fury is going to pull this one off.

"He, and basically everyone else are going to be told that Phil's heart stopped beating for eight seconds before he was brought back, but it was kept secret by Fury to motivate the Avengers." Melinda explains, with a frown.

"And because he's such a dick that's believable." Tony comments, "When will you have to leave if you join Phil's team?"

"Not sure yet. Phil's still…. Wherever Fury sent him which Phil will believe is TAHITI." Melinda explains.

"This just gets worse." Tony says, with a frown, as it seems like Phil's memory has been messed with, "We'll figure it out, okay. We've handled you being away before, we can handle it again, especially considering I'm retired." Tony says, leaving out the 'for now' which they both know will likely be the case.

"I haven't decided what I'm going to do yet." Melinda comments, trying to believe that herself, as much as she's trying to get Tony to believe it.

"Yeah, you have." Tony says, "You've been blaming yourself for Ten months, beating yourself up, as much as you hate Fury, as much you hate what he wants you to do, you wouldn't trust anyone but you to do it, and you'll hate yourself if you don't." Tony says, knowing that because he knows
his wife so well.

"I'm just going to be the pilot." Melinda says, something which both she and Tony know won't last long, and the two of them once more embrace.

**June 15th 2012**

About three months have passed since Melinda and Tony both found out that Phil is alive, and in that time no one else have been told as Melinda and Tony decided that they wouldn't tell their kids about Phil when it was closer to when they could see him again as that is the best choice for them.

It is the first Saturday after Daisy finished her junior year of high school, and Peter finished sixth grade, and Daisy is on her room on her computer.

Since the Battle of New York, a year ago groups have cropped up online, all with theories and suspicions about SHIELD, and The Avengers, and because she is curious, and a great Hacker, Daisy has made contacted with some of the groups, and has become quite close to a group of Hacktervists and so that is what she is doing on her Saturday afternoon, hacking and communicating with them.

As she hacks Daisy hears a knock on her door,

"Go away Peter." Daisy tells her brother as while she loves Peter, and he is probably her best friend, along with Bobbi, he has been bugging her lately, and in response her door opens, "Really? Don't you know what go it away means?" Daisy asks, and in response she gets sprayed in what seems like silly string, but is clearly different, "What is this stuff?" Daisy asks, looking confused, and as she looks up she sees her father, and Peter in her doorway, it having been both of them to spray her.

"New Silly string." Peter says, "Dad and I made it." he explains, as Tony throws Daisy two cans of the substance, "Pro, its stickier and will last longer, con, it's gonna be hard to clean up." He admits.

"Good to know." Daisy says, looking between her brother and father, and then before either of them can react Daisy spray's them, and then a silly string fight breaks out between the three of them, one that spreads throughout Avengers Tower.

**August 24th 2013**

Two months have passed since Daisy, Tony and Peter's silly string fight, which took about four days to clean up after, and in that time, Daisy has celebrated her seventeenth birthday.

It is a Saturday night and Daisy, Peter, Bobbi, Sharon, and Antoine, the ladder three being home for the weekend, have all been told by JARVIS that Melinda and Tony want to see them in the downstairs living room and so they headed there, where they both Melinda and Tony.

"You should sit down." Tony says, as he and Melinda have told Bruce what they are going to say, but it is time to tell their kids, niece, and nephew.

"Is everything okay?" Bobbi asks concerned, using her powers, and realising that she cannot tell if anything is wrong.

"There's something you all need to know." Melinda reveals.

"Something good or something bad?" Sharon asks curious, and as she asks Tony and Melinda exchange the most fleeting of looks one that Sharon, Trip, and Bobbi notice, but Daisy and Peter
"Uncle Phil is alive." Melinda reveals, feeling like that is the best way to do this.

"What?" Daisy, Peter, Antoine ask, the three of them looking completely shocked.

"How?" Bobbi and Sharon ask, looking just as shocked.

"Fury lied." Tony says.

"Uncle Phil's heart stopped, but he's alive." Melinda says as while she and Tony agreed that they wouldn't lie to the kids they also agreed that they wouldn't tell them everything, as those are details that it wouldn't be fair for them to know, and if they were to tell them then it would increase the chances of Phil finding out, which cannot happen.

"He's okay?" Daisy asks, looking amazed.

"Now, he is." Tony confirms.

"That's amazing." Peter comments, looking glad.

"Uncle Phil is forming a team, and I'm going to be on the team." Melinda reveals.

"You're going back into the field?" Bobbi asks, looking shocked, as she knows how much of a big deal that is.

"Just as the pilot." Melinda answers, and as she does Bobbi, Sharon, and Trip exchange looks as they all know that if Phil or someone else needs help then Melinda will do a lot more than just be a pilot.

"When?" Daisy asks, not sure how she feels about her mother going back into the field as she remembers what things used to be like, and she also remembers what things were like right after Bahrain.

"Not clear yet." Melinda answers, "Sometime in next six weeks to two months." Melinda explains, "Not everyone at SHIELD will know about Uncle Phil so you three will be briefed about who knows." Melinda says, looking at Bobbi, Daisy, and Antoine, knowing that Fury plans to do that in the coming days.

"Sounds about right." Trip admits.

"So, will this be like before, you go on mission and then come home?" Peter asks his mother curious, remembering bits and pieces of what that was like.

"Yes." Melinda confirms, "But I may be gone for longer periods of time before I come home." Melinda admits.

"Oh." Daisy says, trying to hide her disappointment.

"At the moment this is just what's going to happen, I'll tell you more when I know more." Melinda explains to her children as she doesn't know when she will be leaving with Phil and their team.

"Okay." Peter says, and Daisy nods, as they do the room drift into silence all thinking that they are glad that Phil is alive, but worried about what Melinda going into the field is going to mean for the family.
Hours later everyone in Avengers Tower are fast asleep, or at least everyone but Daisy. As she lays in her bed unable to think Daisy is thinking about everything that was revealed, and as she does Daisy thinks about what she wants, what she thinks about her Mother going away again and as she does Daisy realises something,

"I want to go with her." Daisy thinks to herself, and as she does she knows she has to come up with a plan, and so she starts to work on it, starts to figure out what she is going to do.

**September 26th 2013**

A month has passed since Daisy, Peter, Bobbi, Sharon, and Antoine found out that Phil was alive, and finally the day has come where Melinda is leaving with Phil, and the rest of their new team, and so she is in the living room of their apartment at Avengers tower with Daisy, Peter, and Tony.

"When will you be home?" Peter asks his mother curious.

"I'm not sure." Melinda admits, "But I'll call a lot, and be home when I can."

"Can you tell us where you're going?" Daisy asks curious, knowing that that will help her a lot.

"LA, for the moment." Melinda explains, and as she does Daisy knows exactly what Melinda is going to deal with, "I love you both, so much." Melinda says, walking forward and hugging her two youngest children.

"Love you too, Mom." Peter says.

"Same." Daisy assures her mother.

"Be good for your Dad." Melinda requests, as she kisses both Daisy and Peter on their heads.

"I'll try." Daisy says, as they break apart, and once they do Melinda walks over to Tony.

"I love you, Mel, so much." Tony tells his wife.

"I love you too." Melinda says, before the two of them kiss, as their two youngest kids look away, and once they kiss he and Melinda just hug and hold each other for a few moments, both taking comfort in each other, both knowing that this isn't going to be easy, for either of them, "I got to go." Melinda finally says.

"I know." Tony assures his wife, "I'll see you when you get home." He says, giving Melinda a look which says, 'call if you need' and Melinda nods, picks up her bag, and heads to the elevator.

"Okay, you two, go get your bags, you got to get to school." Tony says, once Melinda is in the elevator and the doors are closed.

"Sure Dad." Peter says, as he and Daisy hurry upstairs. While Daisy is upstairs she collects a few things she has organized, which she puts in her bag, before she heads back downstairs where both her brother and father are.

"Okay. Let's go." Tony tells his children.

"Sir, President Ellis is on the phone for you." JARVIS reveals, before Tony, Daisy and Peter can even head to the elevators.

"Damn it." Tony says, looking annoyed, "I thought I had time before my calls and meeting." Tony says as since Christmas Government people have been wanting to talk to him, a lot, and he's
beyond annoyed.

"Dad it's okay, I'll make sure Peter and I get to school." Daisy assures her father, thinking this is perfect.

"I know you can Daze, I would just prefer you weren't going alone." Tony tells his daughter, "JARVIS, is Happy here?" Tony asks curious.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Okay. Ask him to take Daisy and Peter to school." Tony requests.

"Yes Sir." JARVIS answers.

"Have a good day at school, I will be there to pick you up." Tony promises his kids, before giving each of them a hug.

"See you Dad." Daisy says, knowing that what she wants to do will be easy to pull off with Happy, "Let's go Pete." Daisy says, and the two siblings head to the elevator.

A little while later Happy has driven Daisy and Peter to Peter's school as he always gets dropped off first,

"I'll get out here too, Happy." Daisy tells him.

"I'm supposed to take you to school." Happy tells her.

"It's a block away, and this isn't the first time I walked from Peter's school to mine." Daisy explains, "I'll be okay, Happy promise." Daisy assures her fathers friend.

"Okay." Happy says.

"Thanks for the lift, see you later." Daisy says, before getting out of the car, and walking with Peter.

"You know I'm not five right." Peter tells his sister.

"I know, you're twelve, and my little brother, and I'm senior so I don't have many chances left to embarrass you." Daisy says with a teasing smile as the two of them walk.

"Oh please, we both know you'll always embarrass me, just like Bobbi will always embarrass both of us." Peter says.

"It's the job of a big sister." Daisy says, with a grin, as she puts an arm around her brothers' shoulders, and the two siblings continue to walk together.

"NED!" Peter calls, seeing his best friend and so he moves out of Daisy's arm and goes running.

"Hey Peter." Ned greets as Peter gets to him, "Hi Daisy." He says, with a grin, as Daisy has walked slightly fast to catch up with her brother.

"Hey Ned." Daisy says, smiling slightly, honestly liking her little brothers best friend, "I should get going, have a good day at school." Daisy tells her brother before giving him a quick hug.

"You too." Peter responds, and once they break apart Peter and Ned head into school why Daisy
keeps walking.

Once Daisy is around the corner she pulls out her phone and pulls up a tracking app, "Yes!" she mutters to herself, "TAXI!" she calls and seconds later one shows up, "I love New York." Daisy mutters to herself, as she gets into a taxi.

A little while after she got in the taxi Daisy arrives at the location she wants to be at and so she pays the taxi driver and gets out. As she walks Daisy pulls out a jacket that she borrowed from Bobbi's wardrobe, which she puts on as she walks. After a couple of minutes Daisy arrives at an access gate, which she accesses by pulling out a card from her pocket, and she is allowed right in without a problem.

"Okay, which hanger do I want?" Daisy mutters to herself, checking her tracking app and knowing that no one is paying her any attention thanks to the SHIELD jacket she is wearing, and realising where she has to go Daisy heads straight there.

When she gets to the hanger her tracking app is directing her too Daisy finds a plane, and she knows it is the right one when she sees a red corvette.

"Agent? What are you doing?" A SHIELD person, the first person to bother her asks, as Daisy approaches the plane.

"I have intel for Agent May, she wanted it before she left." Daisy lies, trying to project authority.

"Then I'm sorry for stopping you, I think they're getting ready to leave, you better hurry up." The Agent says.

"I plan to." Daisy says, as she hurries towards the plane, as she gets too the plane she is able to see towards what looks to be a lab where she sees two people, a man and a women, both of whom look pretty young and seem to be arguing with each other, and so being as careful as possible just in case the people stop arguing as she doesn't want to get caught, Daisy opens the door to the back of the SVU, and climbs in, where she hides below the window line, and just waits, feeling pretty proud that her plan has managed to work perfectly.

A while after Daisy stowed away on the plane, not that Melinda knows that, she is flying the plane to Los Angeles when suddenly her phone goes off with a message. Wondering what it could be Melinda puts the plane on autopilot so that she can check her phone and when she does she sees 'This message is to inform you that your child Daisy is not at Midtown School of Science and Technology, are you aware of this?' reading the message Melinda feels both concerned and confused and so she uses her phone and calls Tony.

"Mel? What's wrong?" Tony asks, stepping out of his meeting.

"Why isn't Daisy at school?" Melinda asks concerned.

"She is. Happy took her and Peter there." Tony explains.

"Then why have I gotten a message saying Daisy's not at school?" Melinda asks concerned, knowing that Tony not knowing where their daughter is makes things even more concerning.

"Give me a second." Tony requests, and he quickly does something, "You're on a plane right now, right? Flying towards LA."
"Yeah."

"Well so is Daisy's phone, so I'm assuming she is too." Tony explains.

"What about Peter's?" Melinda asks.

"His is right where it should be, at school." Tony comments, "So I'm guessing you only have one stow away."

"Okay, I'll deal with it. Thanks Tony." Melinda says, before hanging up, and once she checks to make sure the autopilot is correctly locked she heads out of the cockpit, walking like a woman on a mission.

"May?" Phil asks concerned, as he is sitting on a computer by one of the windows, "What's wrong?" He asks, being able to tell that something is wrong.

"We have a stow away." Melinda explains, heading downstairs, and feeling confused Phil gets up and follows behind her.

Once she is down in the cargo bay Melinda heads directly to the area between Lola and the SVU, "Daisy Lin Antonia Stark-May, get out here this second." Melinda says, having kept her voice long enough so that Jemma Simmons, and Leo Fitz, the two scientists, who came out of the lab to see what was going on couldn't hear what she said.
Chapter 48

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: So, as you would have figured by the last chapter we are up to AOS, up until the Hydra reveal things are going to seem similar to cannon, though there will be differences and episodes taking place very differently, and post Hydra reveal things will be very differently.

AN: Thank you for the support. PLEASE, PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT/REVIEW.

When Daisy was making her plan the one thing she didn't consider is how boring it would be to just sit in a car, as she knows she cannot use her computer as it would risk getting caught, and so she just lays in the back seat waiting; listening to what she can.

Suddenly Daisy hears footsteps, angry footsteps if she had to guess, and the hears,

"Daisy Lin Antonia Stark-May, get out here this second." And as she knows that tone of voice, as it is the one that tells her she is in deep, deep trouble, Daisy sits up and opens the door and climbs out, holding her back pack.

"Hey Mom, what up." Daisy greets with a grin, and then she sees who is standing a little way down, "UNCLE PHIL!" Daisy says, excitedly, as while she knew Phil was alive, seeing him for herself is another thing all together, and so she runs towards him, and hugs him, "I've missed you so much."

"I've missed you too, Daisy." Phil says, as he hugs his niece and as he does Fitz and Simmons come out from the lab, and Ward, who heard noises, came from upstairs.

"Um? Who are you?" Simmons asks kindly as Phil and Daisy break apart.

"My daughter, Daisy." Melinda explains, "Who is supposed to be at school right now." Melinda says, walking towards her.

"I decided this would be more educational." Daisy explains, and as she does Melinda looks at Phil, who realises exactly what Melinda is asking.

"Feel free to use my office." Phil says, and Melinda nods.

"Upstairs." Melinda instructs and Daisy and Melinda head upstairs, walking past Ward as they do.

"is Agent May's daughter supposed to be here?" Fitz asks curious.

"No." Phil answers, with a frown, "No, she's not."

About a minute later Melinda and Daisy walk into Phil's office and once Melinda has closed the door, securing it, she also video calls Tony who has called a break for his meeting.

"Daisy? Mel? What's going on?" Tony asks.

"I was just about to find that out, Daisy?" Melinda asks her daughter, giving her a look.

"I want to join SHIELD." Daisy explains, "School's not for me, it never has been, even after the
help you got me, Dad, but I feel like being a SHIELD agent is something I could do." Daisy admits, "I knew neither of you would like it if I brought it up so I snuck on the bus and was planning on proving that I can do this." Daisy explains, this having not been part of her plan as she was hoping for a little longer before she got caught.

"How'd you even pull this off?" Tony asks his daughter curious.

"I put a tracker on Mom's phone weeks ago." Daisy explains, "And Dad, I knew you had a SHIELD access badge through being a consultant, and so I borrowed that, cloned it, returned it, and increased the access level, and then borrowed one of Bobbi's SHIELD jackets." Daisy explains, "Because none of that were things JARVIS was supposed to warn you about I got away with it."

"What did you do today?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"I told Happy that I was going to walk to my school from Peter's and so once I said goodbye to him and Ned I called a TAXI and got it to drop me near the base, and then I put on the SHIELD jacket, got onto the base, and made my way onto the plane… it was easy." Daisy explains.

"Wow, Fury should get better security, that was a pretty simple but very effective plan." Tony says, with an almost proud look on his face.

"Thanks Dad." Daisy says, with a grin.

"Tony." Melinda says, in a less than impressed tone of voice.

"It was a dangerous thing to do, Daisy." Tony tells his daughter, "Can you turn back to New York?" he asks, looking at Melinda.

"No, we've got a mission, a time crunched one." Melinda explains, "And you've got meetings and have to pick up Peter." She realises.

"Screw the meetings, I'll fly to LA and bring Daisy home." Tony says.

"Or you can let me just stay on the plane during this mission and then take me home after, I won't get in the way." Daisy says, knowing that this is what she wants a chance to prove that she can be a help.

"It does seem like a logical idea." Tony comments, not sure whether he likes that fact.

"I need to talk to Phil first." Melinda says, hating the idea with a passion, but feeling like it is the idea that makes the most sense, "I'll be right back." She says, before heading downstairs.

"What were you thinking?" Tony asks his daughter.

"That this was the best way to do this." Daisy explains, "Dad, at seventeen you had several degrees and Mom was already training to be an agent, I feel like in comparison being on a plane and helping with missions is okay." Daisy admits.

"You want this." Tony realises, seeing Melinda's stubbornness in his daughter.

"Yeah." Daisy confirms, "I really do, Dad." Daisy confirms, and a few moments after she does Melinda walks into the office, "So, what's the verdict?" Daisy asks curious.

"You can stay on the Bus, but just for this mission, and you have to do as you're told." Melinda explains to her daughter.
"Great." Daisy says, with a grin, "I'm assuming that the mission you're doing is bringing in the Hooded Hero I'm seeing everywhere online." Daisy comments.

"It is." Melinda confirms, "Go downstairs, Uncle Phil wants to introduce you to everyone. Your Dad and I have to talk." She explains.

"Okay." Daisy says, "Love you, Dad." Daisy says.

"Love you too, Tiny Toni." Tony responds, and once he does Daisy heads out of the office, heading downstairs.

"You know this isn't going to be the end of it. once this mission is over we're going to be in for a fight." Melinda comments.

"I know." Tony confirms, "But it could also go the other way after a few days observing Daisy could decide that this isn't something she wants."

"Maybe, but after everything she's seen I'm not sure if that is likely." Melinda admits, looking concerned.

"You're probably right about that." Tony says, looking concerned, as he wonders what they are going to do, as he knows he doesn't want his seventeen-year-old daughter to be in such a dangerous situation.

While Melinda and Tony are talking upstairs Daisy walks downstairs where she sees Phil, Fitz, Simmons, and an Agent whose name Daisy doesn't know waiting together.

"Thanks for letting me hang around Uncle Phil." Daisy comments.

"It seemed like the best option." Phil admits, "But there's rules."

"I know, Mom said." Daisy admits, "Hey, I'm Daisy." She says, to the other agents.

"Daisy these are Agent Jemma Simmons, Agent Leo Fitz, and Agent Grant Ward." Phil introduces, pointing to everyone, "Daisy's going to be observing us on this mission."

"Sir! That can't be a good idea." Ward objects as he was prepared for a lot of things, May's daughter wasn't one of them.

"Maybe not, but it's what happening." Phil explains, there being no room for questioning in his voice, "I believe there is a spare bunk at the moment?" he asks.

"Yes, between mine and Simmons." Fitz answers, "That one." He says, pointing to the one in the middle.

"Great. I'll go sit in there on my computer, stay out of everyone's way." Daisy comments.

"You should read this first." Ward says, handing Daisy a brochure, and she takes it as she walks over to the bunk.

Once Daisy is inside the bunk she pulls her laptop out of her backpack and starts working, knowing that her way to help is to find out who the hooded hero is and how to find him.

A bit over an hour later Daisy is still in the bunk Fitz pointed out as being free trying to find the person who is being called the Hooded Hero, and while she has found some leads she is currently trying to find him, when she hears a knock on the bunk door.
"Yeah?" Daisy asks curious, and the door opens revealing Ward.

"Agent Coulson wants to see everyone in the command centre, he said it included you." Ward explains.

"Okay, be right there," Daisy says, locking her computer, before getting up and following Ward to the command centre where Fitz, Simmons, and Phil already are, and a few seconds after Daisy and Ward walk in Melinda does, and both Daisy and Ward notice Melinda and Phil exchange looks and nods.

"We'll be landing in Los Angeles in about an hour." Phil reveals, "Once we land Agents Fitz, Simmons, you'll be going with Agent May to investigate the lab that exploded." He says, "Daisy you'll stay with Agent Ward and myself while we continue to attempt to find the attempted gifted." He explains, "Any questions?" he asks, and everyone in the room shakes their heads, "Okay, you can go," Phil says, and everyone heads out of the Command Centre, Daisy seeing her mother hang back so that she can talk to her daughter.

"Are you still mad?" Daisy asks her mother.

"No, I can't believe you would do this. You know how dangerous these missions can be." Melinda tells her daughter, as they walk a little way out of the command centre.

"Yeah, I do, and I still want to be here. My eyes are wide open Mom." Daisy explains, then she realises something, "Does this plane have automotive flight controls? Like Dad's jet?"

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "Daisy while on the plane…"

"Limit how much I say about our family, I know." Daisy confirms, as she assumed that would be the case.

"I need to go check the autopilot, do you want to come sees how it works?" Melinda asks her daughter curious.

"Not right, now I'm in the middle of a game on my computer." Daisy explains, completely lying.

"You mean you're in the middle of hacking something." Melinda realises, and she glances around to see if Ward, Fitz, or Simmons are anywhere near, "Daze, just because JARVIS isn't around to warn us doesn't mean you can hack anything."

"I know." Daisy confirms, "I'm just checking some of the underground sites to see what people are speculating out Tony Stark's children." Daisy explains, as while that is something she does a lot, it isn't what she is currently doing.

"Has anyone come close?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Nope." Daisy says.

"Good." Melinda says, looking concerned, and while she heads to the cockpit Daisy heads to the bunk she is internally calling hers, and continues to try and find what she really wants to find.

A while later the Bus has landed in LA, and Melinda, Fitz, and Simmons have gone to investigate the lab where a gifted person was spotted at, leaving Daisy, Phil, and Ward on the plane.

In her bunk Daisy is pretty positive that she has found the gifted individual, thanks to using some S.H.I.E.L.D resources she knows she probably shouldn't have used, as well as some connections
and so has heads out of the bunk she is in.

Once she has exited the bunk Daisy can hear Phil and Ward talking and she realises that they are up in the office, and after a moment of hesitation, a moment of doubting whether what she is thinking is a good idea, Daisy heads back to the bunk to quickly write a note. Once she has written the note Daisy leaves it on her bunk, but then instead of heading upstairs to where her Uncle Phil, and Agent Ward are Daisy sneaks’ downstairs, not just thinking that this is a chance to prove herself, but also thinking of Bobbi, and the kind of person she would want to approach her sister if she was ever caught on tape using her powers.

Once she has successfully managed to sneak out of the bus Daisy looks around as she does Daisy realises that they must have landed at an airport belonging to SHIELD. Coming to a decision Daisy heads over to one of the S.H.I.E.L.D sedans, which she finds unlocked.

Sitting in the driver's seat Daisy starts to look for a key, and isn't that surprised when she doesn't find one, though she is annoyed.

"Okay, I'm going to be in trouble either way, might as well." Daisy says, and even though she is pretty sure this isn't what Hunter had in mind when he taught her to hotwire a car, she also knows that it is the only chance to do what she wants to do and so she hotwires the car.

Once she has gotten the car started Daisy drives out of the hanger, knowing it might not be the smartest thing to do, but she is beyond wanting to prove herself, rather she really can't stop thinking about Bobbi, and how if it was Bobbi she wouldn't want her to chased, and overwhelmed, by a team, she would want her to approached by someone who wants to help her, someone who understands, and so that's what she is going to do for this man she is going to try to help him.

A while after she left the hanger where the Bus is Daisy arrives at a dinner and sees the person who she is completely sure is the man that people are calling, 'the hooded hero,' and so she walks over to him, and slides into the booth across form him.

"Um, Kid, I think you're lost." The man, Mike Peterson, says to Daisy, who resists the urge to roll her eyes at being called 'kid'.

"Nope, I'm exactly where I want to be, you're exactly who I want to talk to." Daisy explains, causing Mike to give her a confused look.

"Okay Kid, maybe you should go back to your parents." Mike suggests.

"I'm here to help you." Daisy says, stopping herself from saying Mike's name, which she knows thanks to what she looked into.

"You're here to help me?" Mike asks, sounding disbelieving.

"Yep, and if you give me thirty seconds I can tell you why I'm here, and exactly how I'm gonna do that." Daisy admits, trying to sound more confident than she feels, honestly channelling her father who is always confident, at least in public.

"Okay, thirty seconds." Mike says, leaning back against the booth more curious than anything.

"I know you're the hooded hero, don't even try to deny it, there's no use." Daisy says, speaking as Mike goes to say something, "And I may be here first because I'm amazing with computers, but that doesn't mean that others can't find you, in fact I'm sure they can and will, which is a really bad thing." Daisy reveals.
"You think so, do you?" Mike asks, wondering who the hell Daisy is, and why she seems to know so much.

"I know so." Daisy corrects, "The Avengers aren't the only powered people in the world." Daisy says, choosing her words, "There are others, but for everyone powered person there are two, three, times as many who will want to exploit them, you, or worse hurt you or anyone you care about." Daisy says, having overheard enough conversations over the years to know that, though she doesn't know that her biological father is one of the powered people she is talking about, but she does know how Bobbi got her powers.

"Are you threatening me?" Mike asks, sounding angry.

"No!" Daisy exclaims, "I'm trying to help." Daisy says, realising that this isn't going the way she was hoping, "Look, my point is that there are people in this world who will want to take advantage of someone like you, but there are also people, an organization, who can help you, that can protect you, who can help you understand what you can do, maybe even help you to do some good if that's what you want." Daisy says.

"That's a great speech Kid." Mike admits "And maybe if you were more than a kid I'd listen." Mike says, moving to stand up.

"Mike, please! You're in danger!" Daisy says, as Mike stands up.

"You're thirty seconds are up." Mike says, walking away from Daisy there being a part of him that can't help but wonder if Daisy is right.

"That went well." Daisy mutters sarcastically to herself, hoping she did enough to help Mike while she knows for sure she is bound to be in serious trouble with her mother… and her father when he finds out.

While Daisy is at a dinner talking to Mike Peterson Ward and Phil are still on the bus, in Phil's office, trying to find Mike, having no idea that Daisy already has and has left the bus.

"We should have found something by now." Ward comments, being glad that they haven't found anything as that could be very bad for Garrett.

"Not necessarily, he's probably hiding, especially after how popular the videos have become." Phil explains.

"He has powers, he can't really stay hidden for long, can he?" Ward asks.

"He can if he's had powers for a while, he would have learnt to." Phil admits, and as he does he realises something and gets a look on his face.

"Sir? What is it?" Ward asks curious.

"We haven't heard anything from Daisy since the others left." Phil realises, "That's not like her." He says, standing up and heading out of the office, Ward right behind him, as he was honestly expecting Daisy to come into his office as soon as Melinda left.

After leaving his office Phil hurries down the stairs, and to the bunk Daisy has been in which he knocks on the door off,

"Daisy, it's Uncle Phil." Phil calls as he knocks, and he gets no response and so he opens the door, finding an empty bunk and because for that he starts to feel worried.
"Coulson, it looks like she left a note." Ward says, pointing to the note Daisy left which Phil picks up and reads,

I found the hooded hero. I'm gonna go talk to him, try to help.

Don't worry about me,

Daisy

"Damn it Daisy." Phil says, feeling worried about her and also worried because he knows that Melinda's, and Tony's when he finds out, reactions are going to be very far from good, and he isn't even sure he'll be able to keep them calm.

Having no idea that her daughter has gone after someone who could potentially be dangerous, because she thinks she can help him Melinda is with Fitz and Simmons driving back to the Bus, completely unaware that she is in for a shock when she arrives.

Seconds after Phil found the note, with Ward, in Daisy's bunk Phil has hurried to the command centre, with Ward right on his tails.

"You're worried." Ward notes.

"Of course, I am." Phil tells him, "Daisy is out there, on her own, having no idea what she could be facing." Phil says, sounding worried as activates coms, "May, you there?" Phil asks.

"Yeah." Melinda's voice responds.

"Are you almost back at the bus?" Phil asks curious.

"Yeah, we should be back in about five minutes." Melinda responds, "Something wrong?" Melinda asks, being pretty sure she can hear something off in Phil's voice.

"No, I'll see you when you get back." Phil says, before quickly ending the call.

"You just lied to May." Ward notes, wondering if he could use that to his advantage at some point.

"Out of necessity." Phil admits, and as he does he makes another call, this time on his cell phone.

"Coulson? What's up?" Tony asks, feel confused and concerned.

"Daisy's left the plane without telling anyone, and I don't know where she is, or if she's okay." Phil explains, feeling worried about Daisy, and hating that he is the one telling Tony this, and deciding that it wold be better not to tell Tony what Daisy has gone to do, "Can you track her phone?"

"Give me a second." Tony responds, trying to keep his voice steady as he feels worried for his daughter, "She's moving, I'd say driving, and heading towards a… I'm assuming the SHIELD base you're at."

"Good. Thanks." Phil says, knowing better than saying Tony's name.

"Get Daisy to call me when she gets back, and once Mel's talked to her." Tony requests.

"Will do." Phil says, before hanging up, "Daisy's on her way back." He informs Ward.

"How do you know?" Ward asks, feeling confused, wondering who he would have called.
"I called Daisy's father." Phil explains, being pretty sure that one day a member of the Stark-May family is going to give him a heart attack, but he's not sure which one, "I've got to go wait for May." Phil says, before heading out of the command centre and downstairs, Ward watching him go and taking note of everything that has happened because he doesn't know what may come in handy.

For a few minutes Phil waits for Melinda in the cargo bay, until Melinda drives the SUV up, faster than most people would, and parks. Seconds after Melinda parks Fitz and Simmons get out the car, Phil seeing a look he is familiar with, the look of a person experiencing Melinda's driving for the first time.

"Sir? Is everything alright?" Simmons asks, and it is clear that Fitz is wondering the same thing.

"Everything's fine. I just need to talk to Agent May." Phil explains, glancing at Melinda who is getting out of the car.

"What's going on?" Melinda asks, as Fitz and Simmons head to their lab.

"Let's take a walk." Phil suggests.

"Phil, what's going on?" Melinda asks, feeling worried as she is reasonably sure that Phil wouldn't be waiting for her in the cargo bay for a good reason.

"It's Daisy." Phil says, knowing better than telling Melinda to stay calm, and honestly, he was surprised by how calm Tony was.

"What happened, is she okay?" Melinda asks, it being more than clear to Phil that she is worried.

"As far as I know she's fine, she went to talk to the hooded hero." Phil explains, knowing they really need to find out his real name.

"She what?" Melinda asks, her voice not raised, but Phil can tell that Melinda is angry, and worried, which will likely make her angrier.

"She must have been tracking him. So many people uploaded videos so with her computer skills she probably found something Ward and I didn't." Phil assumes, "I called Tony and he tracked her phone, found out she is on her way back here." Phil explains

"Okay." Melinda says, turning and starting to walk down the ramp, clearly going to wait for her daughter.

"May." Phil says, and Melinda turns back around, "From her note it was clear that Daisy was trying to help, that's a good thing, even if the way she went about trying to help wasn't." Phil points out, feeling the need to point that out to Melinda.

"I know." Melinda says, before continuing to walk after Phil so that she can wait for her daughter.

About five minutes later Daisy, in the car she hotwired is driving into the hanger where the Bus is and as she does Daisy sees her mother, clearly waiting and because Daisy knows her mother so well she knows that she is far from happy,

"Oh shit." Daisy says, suspecting that this might be even worse than she thought, though truthfully a part of her thought there was a tiny chance she was going to be able to pull off sneaking back onto the plan without anyone realising she was gone, even though she really should know better and so she stops the car a few feet away from her mother and once she does Melinda walks up to her side
"Out." Melinda says simply, through the open window, and Daisy does that, "Keys."

"Um, about that." Daisy says, gesturing to the car, where Melinda sees that there are no keys in the ignition.

"You hotwired a car?" Melinda asks her daughter, looking her in shock, though most people wouldn't be able to tell that.

"Yeah."

"How do you even know how to do that?" Melinda asks her daughter, as she had no idea that that was something Daisy knew how to do as Bobbi, Peter and Hunter all kept up their 'not telling Melinda and Tony' thing.

"Hunter taught me." Daisy explains, being tempted to grin, but she knows better than to grin when she is in trouble.

"Of course, he did." Melinda says, realising she should have known that her former son in law would have something to do with this new-found talent, "What were you thinking Daisy?" Melinda asks, her tone of voice being one of controlled anger.

"At first, that this was a chance to prove myself, to prove that I can train to be an agent." Daisy admits, "But then I thought about Bobbi." Daisy admits, "If it had been her caught on camera using her powers I wouldn't want her to be chased by a whole scary team, I would want someone who understands to find her, someone who can help; that's what I was trying to do." Daisy explains.

"Daisy not everyone with powers are like your sister." Melinda points out, thinking about Bahrain, and Cal, though she doesn't portray that to Daisy, "Or Bruce for that matter." Melinda adds as she knows her daughter has become close to the scientist in the last year, "People are unique and can be dangerous, that's whether or not they have powers. You didn't know what this man would do, how he would react to being found, you could have been seriously hurt."

"But I wasn't. I was trying to help." Daisy points out.

"I know you were, and that's an incredible thing, but Daisy you said you'd do what you're told, and within a few hours you've already done the opposite." Melinda says, "Finding this man was a good thing, but going after him alone, not telling anyone, that wasn't. You could have been hurt, you could have gotten someone else hurt, you might have even ruined the only chance S.H.I.E.L.D had to find this man, bring him in, and help him." Melinda points out to her daughter, knowing she is being harsh, but she wants Daisy to understand just what she did.

"I'm sorry." Daisy answers, having not even thought about that, "I did want to prove myself, but helping was more important."

"Like I said, I know that, but Daze, while you're on this plane you have to do what you're told, it's too dangerous otherwise." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"I will; I want to help." Daisy explains, "I found things on the man, can I tell the team?" Daisy asks, and as she does Melinda's phone starts to ring.

"Once you talk to your Dad." Melinda explains, handing her phone over to her Daisy.

"Hey Dad." Daisy answers.
"Daisy, what is going on?" Tony asks, sounding shocked.

"I found out who the hooded hero is; so, I went to talk to him." Daisy explains.

"Do you know how dangerous that was?" Tony asks sounding shocked.

"Yeah, but it wasn't threatening a terrorist dangerous." Daisy comments.

"Not funny Tiny Tony, or even close to the point." Tony tells his daughter, "And it could have been just as dangerous, you couldn't have known."

"I know, Mom said." Daisy explains.

"Good, just listen to your Mom, I'll see you soon." Tony tells his daughter, "I love you, Daisy."

"Love you too, Dad." Daisy says, before hanging up, and once she hangs up Daisy goes to hand her mother back her phone and Melinda just hugs her.

"I'm glad you weren't hurt." Melinda says, as she hugs her daughter tightly.

"I'm fine, Mom." Daisy says, as Melinda places a kiss on her head, being able to tell that while her mother isn't happy about what she did she was more worried than anything.

"That's good, how about we head up to the command centre and you can tell the team what you've found on this man." Melinda suggest, knowing that as much as she doesn't like it is the best thing to do.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a grin, and the two of them head upstairs, Daisy feeling like this is it, the chance to prove that she can be of help, that she should get to stay on the plane as that is what she wants most.
A few minutes later, Daisy has collected her laptop and she and Melinda have both headed to the command centre, having joined by the others, and Daisy has connected her laptop to the bus's systems so that she can put things up on the screen.

"Daisy, you've found who this gifted individual is?" Phil asks.

"Yep." Daisy confirms, with a nod, "But I also think I might have found out how he got his abilities." Daisy explains.

"You do?" Ward asks, thinking that there is no way that Daisy could have found out about centipede.

"I think so." Daisy admits, looking between her mother and Uncle who are both looking at her in interest, "When I was scrubbing all the videos for info I started to read chatter about something called Centipede, it seemed like it was an organization, but before I could investigate further every single mention of it disappeared, and I couldn't find any trace." Daisy explains.

"That's not easy to do." Fitz reveals.

"It's really not." Daisy says, knowing that for a fact.

"That could be a problem, but not our biggest one right now." Phil reveals, "Daisy, what else have you got?" Phil asks, and Daisy starts to type and puts things up on the screen.

"His names Michael 'Mike' Peterson, he's a factory worker, married, and has a son." Daisy explains, "A few months ago he was injured, got laid off and his wife left." Daisy reveals.

"Sounds like a good guy with bad breaks." Phil admits, "Someone probably approached him saying they could make him strong again." He says, and Melinda nods in agreement.

"Daisy, you talked to him, what kind of impression did you get?" Melinda asks, knowing that Daisy would have noticed a lot more than the typical seventeen-year-old, even if she didn't realise it.

"What Uncle Phil's saying sounds right." Daisy admits, "I think he's a good person. He didn't want to admit who he is, but the only time he really got upset, or close to it, was when he thought I threatened him." Daisy explains, purposely not looking at her mother as she explains that, and because she is not looking at her computer she notices when she gets an alert, "What?" she asks, feeling confused.

"Daisy, what is it?" Melinda asks, feeling concerned about her daughter.

"I'm… not sure." Daisy says, pressing the alert and the entire team watch as Mike attacks a man, injuring him, "No, that's not right. That's not the man I met. I swear." Daisy says, looking at his mother, feeling like maybe this was her fault for not getting Mike to accept her help.
"That's means he's losing control." Phil realises, "Daisy, you found him once, do you think you can find him again?" Phil asks.

"I can try, Uncle Phil." Daisy says, starting to type on her computer, and as she does Phil turns to Fitz,

"Fitz, what do we have from the security footage before the blast?" Phil asks, and Fitz presses a few buttons on the touch screen and very, very bad security footage appears on the screen.

"That's painful to see." Daisy mutters, really not liking the quality, wondering if JARVIS could help improve it, but not knowing how to ask without giving away who she is.

"What are we seeing?" Melinda asks, as she really can't tell anything from the footage.

"Well, the man is angry at the other man." Fitz says, and as he does both Melinda and Phil gives him a less than impressed look.

"The data is very corrupt." Simmons explains.

"Yeah, like cold war Russia corrupt." Fitz comments, "I can't sync the timecode without…” Fitz starts to say, and as he does Daisy gets an idea, one that doesn't involve JARVIS.

"What if you had the audio?" Daisy asks curious.

"It could help, but we don't have it." Fitz points out.

"That doesn't mean we can't get it." Daisy says.

"What are you thinking?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Near the lab, where Mike was filmed there were plenty of cameras, that's why there are so many videos, so chances are there's bound to be some microphones too." Daisy explains, "I could hack in get the audio from the time of the explosion from any microphone I find." Daisy explains, and as she does Fitz and Simmons look at each other,

"That would be good." Simmons says, a few seconds later.

"Do it Daisy." Phil says.

"Um, there's kind of one problem." Daisy admits.

"Just one?" Ward asks, hoping that there are more.

"What is it?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"It's something I can't do from here, I have to do it from the area where the lab is." Daisy explains, and once she does Phil and Melinda exchange looks, and while it just looks like a brief look to everyone else to Melinda and Phil they are having an entire conversation.

"Okay, you and your mom will go there in the SUV." Phil instructs, to Daisy's surprise.

"Okay." Daisy says, closing her laptop and looking to her mother.

"Let's go." Melinda says, and once she does she and Daisy head out of the command centre, and another beep goes off.
"What's that?" Ward asks.

"Test results." Simmons answers, taking a look and as she does she gets a shocked look on her face.

"What is it, Agent Simmons?" Phil asks.

"We found a substance at the lab, and according to the test results it's very similar to the serum Doctor Erskine developed in the forties for…." Simmons starts to say, but Phil doesn't need her to finish.

"Super soldiers." Phil finishes, knowing that Bobbi has someone's attempt at that formula in her, and that apart from her every other attempt, including with Doctor Banner, has ended horribly, and it's not clear why it didn't with her.

"Exactly, but it's not just that." Simmons reveals, "According to this there are traces of alien metal, gamma radiation, the serum, other traces that can't be identified, it's every known source of superpower thrown in a blender." Simmons reveals.

"We really need to see exactly what happened in that lab." Phil says.

"Then let's hope days can pull of something to help." Ward says, not portraying the fact that he is hoping the opposite.

In New York Tony is waiting for Peter to get out of school when his phone goes off, with a message from Melinda, 'Daisy and I are going to go get some footage, we're going to have to talk later. I don't think getting her to go home is going to be as easy as either of us think.'

'I'm thinking the same thing.' Tony sends back, and once he does he looks up from what he is doing and sees Peter hurrying out of his school.

"Hey Dad!" Peter greats, and as he does he realises something, "Where's Daisy?"

"Let's talk in the car." Tony says, and wondering what is going on both Peter and Tony head there.

"Dad? Is Daisy all right?" Peter asks concerned, once both father and son are in the car.

"She's fine." Tony assures his son, "Peter did you know what Daisy was planning?"

"What are you talking about?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"Daisy's on the SHIELD plane with your Mom, she snuck on board, had a plan to do it. Did you know that that's what she was going to do?" Tony ask his son.

"No! I swear Dad, I didn't." Peter assures his father.

"Okay." Tony says, with a nod, believing his son.

"Is Daisy in trouble?" Peter asks curious.

"Yeah, Pete, she is." Tony confirms, and he starts to drive, Peter not being able to help but feel hurt that his sister didn't tell him what she was planning.

A little while after they left the plane Daisy and Melinda are in the S.H.I.E.L.D SUV, which Melinda has packed right near the building where the lab was, where the streets are still blocked
"So, what exactly are you going to do?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"I'm going to try to find microphones or anything recording sound, they be on one of a few specific frequencies, so I know at least where to start." Daisy reveals, as she opens her laptop, "if I find anything I should be able to hack in, go back through the internal archive to the time of the explosion and send that back to Fitz and Simmons." Daisy explains, as she starts to type.

"How long do you think it will take you?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Not sure, and I won't know until I try." Daisy admits.

"Okay." Melinda says, as Daisy continues to type, it being more than clear that Daisy is completely focused on what she is doing.

For a while Daisy and Melinda sit in the SUV together, while Daisy is trying anything she can think of to find audio, while texting with her brother who is mad at her, and Melinda is going between looking at her daughter and looking around for any danger.

"Fitz, are you there?" Daisy asks, activating the coms that her mother gave her.

"Of course." Fitz responds.

"I've found audio, I'm sending it through." Daisy explains.

"Great, I'm getting it now. Good job Daisy." Fitz says, causing Daisy to smile.

"We should get back to the bus." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Um, actually we might want to hold off on that." Daisy informs her mother.

"Why?" Melinda asks, looking at Daisy.

"There are fibreoptic cables running below us." Daisy explains, "With a bit of time I can hack in, determine if any are connected to the lab, and get any possible data." She reveals, and as she does Melinda activates her coms,

"Coulson?" Melinda says.

"Yeah?" Phil asks.

"Daisy and I have something else we have to handle at the lab. We'll be back at the bus when we can." Melinda reveals.

"Okay, see you when I see you." Phil responds, and once he does Melinda turns off her coms and goes back to watching both her daughter and for signs of danger.

'Pete, I'm sorry, don't ignore me.' Daisy sends to her brother, but to her disappointment she doesn't get a response back and she is pretty sure that her brother is beyond pissed.

Back at the bus Phil, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons are all in the lab, where Fitz has set up a holo chamber.
"The audio Daisy found is exactly what we need, we should be able to see exactly what happened." Fitz reveals.

"Then we need to see the origin of the blast." Phil requests, "Run it back from the last point recorded." He requests, and once he does Fitz does that and they all watch an explosion, which seemingly comes from a man.

"Extremis." Phil says, recognizing it, as he read Melinda's report about what happened over Christmas, "It's new, completely unstable." He explains.

"Poor man didn't bring an explosive he was one." Fitz realises.

"And Mike has the same stuff in his system." Simmons realises.

"Judging by his strength level, a lot more." Ward corrects.

"So, any minute now, Mike is gonna..." Fitz starts to say.

"He'll take out anyone within a two-block radius." Simmons realises, looking horrified.

A little while later Phil is heading toward the command centre when Fitz and Simmons run up to him.

"Sir?" Simmons asks, and Phil just gives her a look telling her to continue, "He didn't explode because he was angry. The two are connected... It's kind of a chemical surge." Simmons explains. "But calming him down will buy him a minute at most. He will detonate within the next few hours." Simmons explains.

"Solution?" Phil asks.

"Isolate him, get him away from people." Simmons suggests.

"Or?" Phil asks.

"Put a bullet through his brain." Fitz suggests.

"If he's dead, the irradiated metabolic process will stop." Simmons says.

"We need to come up with a third option." Phil says, needing that, "One that doesn't involve Mike's son losing a father."

"We have a couple of hours at most. There's no way that we could..." Simmons starts to say.

"Don't ever tell me there's no way!" Phil exclaims, "It's on you. Get it done." He says, before walking to the command centre where Ward is.

A little while later Daisy and Melinda are still in the SUV with the lab, where Daisy is hurriedly typing, clearly completely focused on what she is doing, honestly, she is so focused as she is trying not to think about how hurt she is that her brother is so angry with her, or how sorry she is for hurting him.

"YES!" Daisy suddenly exclaims.

"You found something?" Melinda asks her daughter, having not even reacted to Daisy's loud
"I found a lot." Daisy corrects, "This data may take some time to go through, but it's bound to be useful."

"Good job, Daisy." Melinda tells her daughter, it being more than clear that she completely means that.

"Thanks Mom." Daisy says, smiling slightly, but before she can say anymore, the door Melinda's side of the SUV is pulled open and Melinda is pulled out, forcefully.

"MOM!" Daisy yells in terror as she opens her own door and gets out of the car as quickly as she can, almost throwing her laptop onto the driver's seat.

Once Daisy is out of the car she tries to hurry over to her mother who is on the ground of the footpath where her mother is lying, but before she can get closer she is stopped by Mike.

"You! Why are you here! You're working with them, your part of this! Aren't you?" he asks, grabbing her shoulders, tight enough that she can't move, but not tight enough to actually hurt her.

"NO! I'm trying to help you!" Daisy exclaims, clearly afraid, but at the same time she'd still like to help Mike if she can.

"Phil, get here now, Mike Peterson is here." Melinda says through the coms, the second she hears Daisy's voice, knowing she has to help her daughter as she gets to her feet.

"Hi, you're Ace, aren't you?" Melinda asks, walking up to the boy, knowing the name of Mike's son as she read the file, not wanting to use Mike's son, rather wanting to help Mike see that he has someone who needs him, and the boy nods.

"DADDY!" Ace yells once more, and Mike does nothing, "What's wrong with my Daddy?" Ace asks, sounding confused, looking at Melinda.

"I don't know." Melinda admits, really wishing she had Tony's scientific knowledge, but she knows there is no point in calling at the moment, "Stay next to me, okay?" she asks the boy and Ace nods, looking upset, and Melinda knows that while she can't get Ace out of the line of fire right now she will the second she can, "Mr Peterson." Melinda says, and Mike turns around, still holding Daisy and while she is worried Melinda can also tell that Daisy is okay, though she suspects that if Daisy didn't grow up with a superpowered sister, a mother who is an agent, and a father who is an Avenger, then she would possibly not be handling the situation as well, and could potentially be in pain, "I know how you feel, I know you just want to do what's best for your son."

"You know nothing! You don't know what I'm feeling." Mike reveals.

"You know nothing! You don't know what I'm feeling." Mike reveals.

"I do, because that's my daughter you're holding." Melinda reveals, "I don't want her to get hurt, just like I know you don't want your son to be hurt." Melinda says, "So how about you tell me what you do want before either of our kids get hurt or see something they can't recover from." Melinda suggests, watching Daisy carefully so that she can tell the second she is hurting, feeling like they could really use an Iron Man suit right now, something which she hasn't through before.
"I just want to be left alone! I want to go somewhere they can't find me." Mike reveals, "You said you're good with computers." Mike remembers, looking at Daisy, "Can you make it, so I can't be found, can't be tracked?" he asks, looking at Daisy, and as he does Melinda gives her daughter the briefest looks, hoping she gets the meaning off.

"Yeah, I can, but it will take some time." Daisy explains, realising what her mother is trying to tell her, "And I need my laptop." Daisy explains.

"I'll get it." Melinda tells her daughter, "And how about Ace sits in the car while Daisy does what she needs to do." Melinda suggests, it being the best way she can think off to try and protect Ace, as she doesn't want to engage with Mike if Ace is in the line of fire can clearly see what is going on and looking hesitant Mike nods.

Once she sees the nod Melinda starts to move slowly back towards the car, and once she is there she reaches in and grabs Daisy's laptop of the front seat.

"Ace, why don't you sit here." Melinda says to the little boy, as she gestures to the front seat, and Ace climbs in and sits down. Once he is sitting down Melinda closes the door, leaving Ace in a basically indestructible car, before walking slowly back towards Daisy and Mike.

"Stay back!" Mike says, as he quickly moves and takes the laptop from Melinda, "Do what you have to do." He says, handing the laptop to Daisy, who puts it on the car and starts to type. As she does Melinda realises that with how Mike is standing she wouldn't be able to get a clear shot without risking Daisy, which she won't do, and so she's going to have to wait for another opportunity.

While Melinda and Daisy are with Mike and his son, Melinda trying to make the situation better Phil, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons are driving towards where they are, Phil being the one behind the wheel,

"Damn it May, turn your coms back on." Phil mutters, too quietly for Fitz and Simmons in the back to hear, but Ward does, and he realises that what Garrett told him is right, and that Phil and Melinda are weaknesses to each other.

"It's done." Fitz suddenly says, talking about the weapon that he and Simmons are working on in the back of the SUV.

"The gun, it will work against Mike?" Ward asks, turning to look at the two scientists, as Phil continues to drive erratically.

"It should." Simmons answers.

"Should?" Ward asks, giving the two scientists a look, looking less than happy.

"This is untested." Simmons informs him, "But the theory is solid."

"Great." Ward mutters sarcastically, trying not to think about what will happen to Garrett if things go very wrong.

While Phil, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons are speeding towards where they are Melinda, Daisy and Mike, with Ace in the car are still sounding around said car, as Daisy hurriedly types on her computer, being sure she can't risk doing anything else other than what Mike wants, Mike is standing close to her and Melinda is standing a little way away, still trying to spot an opportunity
that she can use to her advantage to get Daisy away from Mike.

"What are you going to do once you can disappear?" Melinda asks Mike.

"What?" Mike asks, looking at her.

"Even if Daisy deletes everything on you there's still a chance you can be found, do you want that life for you? For your son?" Melinda asks.

"I don't have a choice!" Mike reveals, "I'm a good man, I'm strong, but If I rise up they'll squash me, just like everyone else who's been made an example of." Mike reveals.

"You do have a choice Mike." Melinda says, doing everything she can not to think about Bahrain right now, and only managing not to because Daisy is so close, and still in danger.

"What choice?" Mike asks, "You said if we worked hard, if we did right, we'd have a place. You said it was enough to be a man. But there's better than man. There's gods. And the rest of us, what are we? They're giants. We're what they step on." Mike reveals.

"Not all of them." Melinda says, thinking about what she has heard Tony say, as she realises that she isn't completely sure how to finish that sentence and so she thinks about what Phil would say, and decides this is his department, not hers, "There are good ones out there Mike, the real deals, and they're not heroes because of what they have, they're heroes because of what they decide to do with it." Melinda asks, thinking about Tony who she thinks is the biggest hero she knows, because of the choices he's made, "You can make a different choice, you can choose to be a hero." Melinda says, and once she does Mike takes a couple of steps, moving closer to Melinda and away from Daisy.

"I want to be." Mike answers, but before Melinda can say anything a shot runs out and Mike falls to the ground, the second he does Melinda runs to Daisy and hugs her,

"Are you alright?" Melinda asks concerned, as she hugs her daughter tightly.

"Yeah, I'm okay." Daisy assures her mother, feeling just as safe in her mother's arms as she always has, as Simmons runs up to Mike and checks on him. After checking a couple of things Simmons looks up, nods at Fitz and Ward who are standing together, smiles and nods.

Phil on the other hand is just getting to Melinda and Daisy as they break apart.

"Are you both alright?" Phil asks, looking between two of the people he consider to be family.

"Yeah, I'm okay, Uncle Phil." Daisy confirms as Melinda just nods.

"Good." Phil says, looking relieved, and he activates his coms to talk to Maria, "All clear, we're all good here." He says.

Over the next few minutes things start to happen quickly, and Daisy realises that her mother is trying to stay extremely close to her, while she thinks, though she isn't quite sure, that her uncle is trying to stay close to her and her mother.

"Daisy." A voice says, and Daisy sees Ace with some police offices, so she walks over to him, being pretty positive that her mother is watching her.

"Hey Ace, you okay?" Daisy asks the boy, realising that this the first actual conversation the two of them have had, as she bends down a little so that she is closer to his height.
"They say my Daddy's going to be okay." Ace says, looking glad about that.

"That's good." Daisy tells him.

"Thank you." Ace says, not sure exactly what happened, but he thinks that Daisy helped his Dad.

"I'm not the one you need to thank, that's my Mom." Daisy reveals.

"She's nice." Ace says, it being clear that he means that, "She's like a hero."

"She really is." Daisy says, smiling slightly, as to her both her parents are heroes, not that she admits that much, "You're going to be okay Ace, you're going to stay with your Aunt, and your dad will come home." She says, trying to think of something comforting to say, and so she says what she wanted to hear when her dad was missing in Afghanistan, and in response Ace just leans forward and hugs her.

A while later the entire scene has been cleaned up, Mike has been taken to a S.H.I.E.L.D facility where he can get help, and learn to control his abilities, while his son has been taken to his aunts, the place he'll be staying, just like Daisy said.

Even though what she went through was hard Daisy knows, without a doubt, that she wants to stay on the plane, and now she just has to get her mother, father, and Uncle Phil to agree, and so Daisy is just sitting on one of the couches running over in her head everything she wants to say.

"Daisy." Melinda says, walking up to her daughter, with Phil, while Fitz, Simmons, and Ward are downstairs, "We'll be leaving soon, and we'll take you home to New York before we leave on our next mission." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay, but I don't want to go back to New York." Daisy argues.

"Daisy…." Melinda starts to say.

"I told you I want to be an agent, and I meant it." Daisy admits, "Mom, I feel like I belong here, on this plane, and I can help. I proved that." Daisy says, "I know you and Dad, want me to be safe, but you've always taught me that I could do whatever I want, and this is what want." Daisy says, "Today I saw that you're just not a hero to me, you're just plan a hero, and I want to be a part of that." Daisy admits, "I want to protect people, please let me." Daisy says, "I will follow any rules you want, I will even do school work online, so I finish senior year, just let me stay." Daisy requests, and as she does Melinda and Phil exchange looks.

"This isn't my call." Phil admits, "Whatever you and Tony decide is okay with me." He reveals.

"I know you hate the idea, but consider it, talk to Dad. Please." Daisy requests, and from the look on her daughter's face Melinda is pretty sure Daisy will find a way around things if she and Tony say no.

"We'll talk." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Feel free to use my office." Phil says, and Melinda nods, and heads up there, "I should go check on Ward, Fitz, and Simmons."

"Okay Uncle Phil." Daisy says, and once she does Phil heads downstairs.

After Phil heads downstairs Daisy pulls out her phone and attempts to call her brother, but after a
few rings, she is forwarded to his voicemail.

"Pete, it's me, again. Please talk to me." Daisy requests, "Look, I get it, you're pissed. I didn't tell you because I didn't want you to get in trouble for what I was planning, I was trying to protect you." Daisy tells her brother, "Please answer your phone, please talk to me." Daisy says, and then sighs, "I'm not going to stop calling." Daisy says, before hanging up, and leaning back on the couch.

While Daisy is downstairs, trying to get her brother to talk to her, her parents are on video call together.

"So, she wants to stay." Tony, who Melinda has explained what is going on too, says.

"Yeah." Melinda explains, "And she did help, we wouldn't have been able to help Mike without her, but…"

"It's dangerous and she's still a kid." Tony argues.

"She's seventeen. Think about what the two of us were doing at seventeen." Melinda points out.

"Mel are you honestly saying you want to agree to this?" Tony asks, feeling surprised by that.

"I'm saying I hate this idea, and what I want is to take Daisy home, to you, where she would be safe, but I saw the look on her face. It's the same look I know I had on my face every time Mom told me I couldn't do anything." Melinda admits, "It's a look which I know to mean that she will find a way to do what she wants anyway, no matter what we say."

"Damn it, I think you're right." Tony admits, "Do you have a plan?"

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "We give it six weeks, and after that we'll review, decide where to go from there." Melinda explains.

"That's probably the best plan we've got." Tony admits.

Downstairs Daisy is just sitting on the couch waiting, when Ward walks up,

"What's wrong with you?" Ward asks, not because he wants to know, but because he thinks it could help with his cover.

"Well let's see… my little brother won't talk to me, and my parents are upstairs deciding what to do with me." Daisy explains, with a frown.

"You have a brother?" Ward asks, wanting to know more so that he can use that information.

"Yeah." Daisy confirms, "And he's pissed because I didn't tell him what I was planning."

"Daisy." A voice says, from the stairs, and Daisy sees her mother and so she hurries over to her, and the two of the head upstairs.

"Hey Dad." Daisy greets, when she sees her father still on video chat.

"Daze, I heard you helped, a lot." Tony says, to his daughter.

"Yeah, I did. Which is why I want to stay." Daisy reveals.
"Your Mom and I talked about that." Tony reveals.

"And?" Daisy asks, looking between her parents.

"You can stay." Melinda reveals, to Daisy's joy, "But there will be conditions. You will have to do your schoolwork, and we're only agreeing to six weeks, after that we'll reconsider everything."

"Okay. I'm good with that." Daisy admits, "But I want the entire six weeks. No sending me home because you change your minds or think things have gotten too dangerous." Daisy requests, and as she does her parents exchange looks.

"Okay." Tony says, and Melinda nods.

"Great." Daisy says, grinning, "Thanks Mom, Dad. I know you guys don't like this, but this is what I want, so thank you for giving it to me."

"You're welcome." Tony says, though he can't help but wonder how long will pass before he regrets it, "I should go. I love you both." Tony says, to his wife and youngest daughter.

"Love you too." Daisy says.

"I love you too." Melinda says, before ending the video call, and once the video call ends Daisy hurries over to her mother and hugs her.

"Thank you." Daisy says, feeling glad.

"The Bunk next to mine is going to be yours. Not the one you were in earlier." Melinda reveals, as she wants Daisy close, "I'm going to go get your Uncle Phil because there's some rules he's going to go over with you." Melinda explains as they break apart, "We'll head to New York, so you can get some stuff, unless we get called on another mission."

"Okay, but I can last a few days, I have some clothes and stuff in my backpack." Daisy admits, as she was planning this so she made sure to be prepared.

"Okay." Melinda says, before heading downstairs, and a couple of minutes later Phil walks up.

"So, you're staying." Phil says, to his niece.

"Yeah, and I'm so glad for many reasons, one of which is because I've missed you Uncle Phil." Daisy admits.

"I've missed you too." Phil admits, "Now, sit down, there are some things we have to go over." Phil says, and he starts to explain a few basic rules and procedures, things he needs to know, to his niece.
Chapter 50

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: So sorry that it's been so long. I've been distracted by Law School and not writing much, hope you like this chapter.

September 27th  2013

Being well aware that his sister keeps trying to call and text him Peter is just sitting in his room with his phone on silence across the room. When he hears a knock on his door.

"Come in, Dad." Peter says, and Tony walks in.

"Hey Pete." Tony says, as he walks in, "Why is your phone all the way over here?" he asks confused.

"I don't want to talk to Daisy, and she keeps ringing." Peter explains.

"Ah." Tony says, as he walks over to his son, "You're mad that she didn't tell you what she was planning." He realises, as he sits down on the edge of Peter's bed.

"Daze said she didn't tell me because she was trying to protect me, but we've always talked to each other." Peter admits, "I don't like it." Peter admits.

"I'm sorry." Tony tells his son, "I just talked to your sister, she is going to stay with your mom on the plane for a little while."

"Daisy's going to be on the mission?" Peter asks, sounding surprised.

"For a little while." Tony confirms, "So it's going to be just us, and Bruce, and Pepper, Uncle Rhodey and Happy on occasion, for a little while."

"Huh." Peter comments, and the two of them drift into silence,

"Want to come down to the lab?" Tony asks his son curious.

"Definitely." Peter confirms, and the two of them get up and head down to the lab.

On the bus Daisy and Phil are together, in Phil's office, going though the rules Daisy will have to abide by while she is on the bus.

"Understood?" Phil asks curious.

"Yeah, Uncle Phil, I understand." Daisy confirms.

"Um Sir?" Ward says, from the open doorway.

"What is it, Agent Ward?" Phil asks, looking at him.
"We just got a call. There's an O84 in Peru." Ward explains.

"Is that confirmed?" Phil asks, looking surprised.

"They want us to go in and confirm it." Ward explains.

"Okay. Does May know yet?" Phil asks.

"Not yet."

"I'll tell her." Daisy says, as she wants to get some more info, "We're done right?" Daisy asks, looking at her Uncle.

"Yeah, we are." Phil says, feeling like Daisy has a good understanding of the rules.

"Okay, see ya Uncle Phil." Daisy says, before getting up and heading out of the office.

After leaving Phil's office Daisy heads straight to the cockpit so that she can talk to her mother.

"So, I was in the office with Uncle Phil when Ward walked in and said that there's an O84 in Peru, which we have to go in and confirm, which is cool because I've never been to Peru." Daisy admits, as she walks across the cockpit and sits down in the co-pilots seat, "What's an O84?" Daisy asks curious, as that is something she doesn't know.

"We never know." Melinda answers.

"Seriously?" Daisy asks, looking at her mother in surprise who nods.

"An O84 is an object of unknown origin, and that could mean anything." Melinda admits, "Weapons, tech, even beings." Melinda answers, "I've seen some rather interesting ones over the years, Thor's hammer was one."

"Cool." Daisy says, with a grin, then she realises something, "That was why Uncle Phil and Uncle Clint went to New Mexico, right The Hammer and then Thor came later?" Daisy asks curious.

"Exactly." Phil says, walking into the cockpit, "May, I assume Daisy has told you, we need to set a course to Peru." Phil explains.

"Already have." Melinda answers, "We'll be there in a few hours. You should strap in." Melinda tells Phil.

"Okay." Phil says, before heading out of the cockpit.

"You too Daisy." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Um, okay." Daisy says, and she spends a few seconds figuring out the straps before she buckles herself in.

Looking at her daughter Melinda makes sure that Daisy is properly buckled in and once she is sure that Daisy is Melinda chances the course of the plane in mid-air.

"Awesome." Daisy says, with an amazed look on her face.

A little while later Daisy is in the bunk that is now hers, getting changed, and as she gets changed
she decides to try to call her brother again, but once more it goes straight to voicemail.

"Hey Pete, it's me, again." Daisy says, "Dad's probably told you I'm staying with Mom. We're on our way to Peru and I really want to tell you everything that's going on. It's still you and me against the world. Please talk to me, please Pete." Daisy says, getting upset, before hanging up.

While Daisy is attempting to call her brother, Melinda is still in the cockpit, and after setting the new course to Peru Melinda makes a phone call.

"Hey? Have you landed?" Tony asks curious.

"No. We've been redirected to Peru." Melinda explains. "I'll let you know when we're on our way back to New York."

"Okay." Tony says, sounding concerned, "Be careful Mel, both you and Daze, I love you." Tony says, as he knows that where Melinda and Daisy is going may not be the safest place.

"Love you too." Melinda responds, before hanging up, and once Melinda hangs up she double checks to make sure the autopilot is running properly before she heads out of the cockpit and up to the office.

"You're worried about Daisy being in Peru." Phil says, before Melinda says anything.

"It's a war zone." Melinda reminds him, feeling worried and she knows Tony was too.

"I know." Phil says, "I would suggest her staying on the plane, but I don't think that would be a good idea." Phil admits, it being clear that he has thought about that.

"No, it wouldn't be." Melinda confirms, "But Ward and I have to keep an eye out on the area, guard it, just in case."

"Daisy can stay with me, I'll be with Fitz and Simmons, it will probably be the best option." Phil realises, taking a step forward, "I'll keep her safe, Melinda." Phil promises.

"I know." Melinda says, as both she and Tony have always known that they could trust Phil to look after their kids.

A while after Melinda and Phil's conversation, the entire team, all of whom with the exception of Melinda have gotten changed, are in Peru and getting ready to head to the site where the 084 is.

"Daisy." Melinda calls and once she does Daisy walks over to her mother.

"Yeah? What's up?" Daisy asks curious.

"Where we're in country you need to stay by Uncle Phil's side unless told otherwise." Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay." Daisy says, sounding slightly confused, "Why Uncle Phil and not you?" she asks curious.

"It will be better, safer with Uncle Phil." Melinda says, "Just stay with Uncle Phil, Daisy, and be careful." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Sure, okay, I can do that." Daisy says, with a nod.
"Good, let's go." Melinda tells her daughter and the two of them start to walk so that they can meet the others.

A little while later the group have arrived where the 084 is and so Daisy, Phil, Fitz and Simmons are walking towards the temple where the unknown object is while Ward is making sure they are alone, and Melinda is finding a better place to park the Bus.

As they walk around Daisy can't help but look around with an amazed look on her face as while she has travelled to some place this place is truly beautiful.

"So, this is what you and Mom have been doing longer than I've been alive. Flying off to beautiful countries and calling it work." Daisy says to Phil, who she is walking right next to.

"It's a bit more complicated than that, Daisy." Phil informs her.

"I guess." Daisy says, with a shrug.

"Stay close." Phil tells Daisy, who rolls her eyes, as the two of them approach the Professor who found the 084.

"I know." Daisy says, rolling her eyes, really wanting to explore but deciding it would probably be best not to test her mother, or Uncle Phil.

"Don't roll your eyes." Phil says, without even looking at her.

"Every time." Daisy mutters to herself, as Phil gets to the professor,

"Good morning, Professor. I'm Agent Coulson with S.H.I.E.L.D. I understand you've made an interesting discovery." Phil says, as Daisy takes some photos of the environment with her phone, figuring that she saw Fitz and Simmons taking a selfie, so she can't really get in trouble, and this way she can send photos to Peter so that he can see where she is.

"I-I'm not sure how to explain it. This temple dates back at least five hundred years. It's filled with pre-Incan artefacts. One of them is impossible and looks like it might be dangerous." The professor says.

"Well, that's why we're here." Phil reveals, and he, Daisy, and the professor head into the temple where Fitz and Simmons are.

"Awesome." Daisy says with a grin, and she goes to take a picture, but she can basically feel the look Phil is giving her, so she stops herself before she raises her phone, and instead looks around everywhere and makes notes of the things she wants to tell Peter.

"Exactly as we found it." The professor says.

"Who else knows about this?" Phil asks.

"Just the ministry. I believe they are the ones who contacted you." The Professor says.

"Sir, I need you and your team to evacuate the site until we determine the risk associated with the object." Phil says, as Fitz and Simmons start to use their DAWFS to find out information, "Now, for your own safety." Phil says, leading the professor out, pretty forcefully.

"You could have been a bit nicer Uncle Phil; the guy was clearly shocked." Daisy informs him, "I thought Mom was the one with bad people skills." Daisy says, knowing that only applies to people
Melinda doesn't know well, and honestly wanting to mention her father but knowing better.

"Fitz Simmons what can you tell?" Phil asks, ignoring Daisy's comment, doing what he wouldn't do if it was anyone other than someone he considers family making the comment.

"The object's placement in fossiliferous rock formations suggests it's been here for at least 1,500 years." Fitz explains.

"That pre-dates this temple by a millennium." Simmons says, looking excited. "Maybe it's alien."

"That would be cool." Daisy admits, even though she knows her father have been scared of Alien's since New York, not that he would admit that.

"Yeah, but the shape and the craftsmanship, it's almost German." Fitz admits.

"So maybe not alien." Daisy says, looking slightly disappointed as she takes a few steps forward, and trying to run though everything that her father, Peter, Bobbi, and Bruce have said about science.

"Stay back, Daisy." Phil says, and Daisy stops walking, "Can it be moved?" Phil asks, looking at Fitz and Simmons, but before either can answer everyone who is in the temple hears,

"Sir." Being said by Ward.

"Go." Phil responds once he lifts the walkie talking up.

"We have a situation." Ward reveals.

"Mom…" Daisy says, looking worried and going to run out, but Phil grabs her arm stopping her,

"No, stay here." Phil tells her.

"But…" Daisy starts to say.

"I'm serious Daisy, stay put." Phil tells her, letting go off her arm, and making sure she doesn't move, "Keep working and keep an eye on Daisy."

"Yes Sir." Fitz and Simmons say.

"Uncle Phil!" Daisy objects, "I'm not a little kid."

"Maybe not, but you're not doing what you're told, even though you agreed to." Phil informs her, "I'm on my way." Phil says, though the coms and he leaves the temple, and seconds after he leaves Daisy goes to follow, but Simmons stands up and puts a comforting hand on her shoulder,

"You should listen to your Uncle and stay here." Simmons tells her.

"Easier said than done. I'm not good when people I love are in danger." Daisy reveals, "I've experienced it way too many times." She adds, her tone of voice sounding slightly lower.

"You have?" Fitz asks, having heard what Daisy said, even though she lowered her voice.

"Oh yeah." Daisy confirms.

"You still need to stay here, even if you're worried." Simmons says.
"I know." Daisy says, looking less than happy.

"Simmons you've got to see this." Fitz suddenly says.

"What is it?" Daisy and Simmons asks, as Simmons moves to have a look at the screen.

"It has a functioning power source." Fitz reveals.

"Seriously? That's kind of incredible." Daisy says, having heard her father talk enough to know that.

"That's not the only thing that's incredible." Simmons admits, "Sleepy's reading radionuclides, but they don't match any known isotope." Simmons reveals.

"I get temporal matches, but even then, they seem to shift. Is that even possible?" Fitz asks, looking between Daisy and Simmons.

"No clue, you're talking way beyond what I'm learning in my Physics class." Daisy reveals, knowing that her little brother would be able to understand every word.

"You're studying physics?" Fitz asks, looking excited about that.

"Yep, but I still have no clue what you're saying." Daisy admits, as Ward walks in, "Are my Mom and Uncle Phil okay?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"They're fine." Ward assures her, "The National Police decided to pay us a visit." He explains.

"Why would they do that?" Fitz asks, looking surprised.

"They heard about the object, they're probably here to protect it." Ward explains.

"Or steal it." Daisy says, causing everyone to look at her, "What? It's possible. What with the corruption and rebel rising up to unit in an attempt to change things It would make sense for the police to want what could potentially be a weapon." Daisy admits, causing Fitz, Simmons and Ward to all look at her in surprise, "What? I may be seventeen, but I still know stuff." Daisy reveals, knowing that thanks to everything that happened with her father, and once she does, because of the truth he knows, Ward decides it would be best not to engage and so he turns to Fitz and Simmons.

"How much longer?" he asks.

"What's the hurry? Are we in danger?" Fitz asks, and the second he finishes the question Daisy, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons all hear the sounds of gunshots.

"You had to ask." Daisy says, looking at Fitz, trying to hide the fact that she is worried about her mother and Uncle.

"They're coming for it, let's move!" Ward says, knowing they have seconds and that to keep his cover he has to keep the three kids, because that's what they are, safe.

"Give me your spare gun." Daisy tells Ward, realising what she has to do.

"What?" Ward asks, looking at Daisy in surprise.

"The gun you have in your ankle holster, give it to me. You can go first, and I can go last and cover us." Daisy explains, remembering everything that her sister, and Aunt Natasha taught her.
"Yeah, I'm not doing that, you probably don't even know how to use it." Ward says, heading to where the object is imbedded in the rock.

"I spent my entire life around S.H.I.E.L.D agents, do you really think none of them taught me to use a gun?" Daisy asks, not mentoring that she has also spent her life around military personnel, CIA agents, and a former weapons manufacture.

"I don't care, I'm not giving you my gun." Ward says and as he does there is an explosion, "Sorry, science class is over." He says, before pulling the object out of the wall.

"Whoa! Whoa, whoa, whoa!" Fitz says, sounding shocked, as Ward, carrying the object, walks over to him, "Wait. You did not just pull that out of the wall. What is the matter with you?" Fitz asks, as Ward puts the object into a bag, "Do you realize we do not know the amount of photon emissions coming out of this?" Fitz asks, as Ward hands him the bag, "We don't know what will happen if it gets excited." Fitz explains.

"Stay close." Ward says.

"You should really give me that gun." Daisy tells Ward.

"No." Ward says, as they head out of the cave, Ward in the front and firing as Fitz, Simmons and Daisy are behind him.

Over the next few minutes Ward fires at the people who are firing at him, Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, Ward doing everything he can to protect the others, until he uses a device that looks like a stick which knocks most of the people who Ward is firing at down.

Seconds after the people get knocked down Melinda drives the SUV into the middle of the fight, so that it is between Ward, Daisy, Fitz, Simmons and the people who are firing at them.

"Get in!" Melinda yells, looking at her daughter, and feeling glad when she realises that she is okay, and as soon as she does Ward, Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons run to the SUV and get in.

Over the next few minutes Melinda drives Ward, Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy back to the bus, while Phil is with the local police. As they drive both cars are fired upon and it is more than clear that Fitz is worried about the device, but Ward will hear nothing about it.

"How fast can you have the wheels up?" Ward asks Melinda as the SUV pulls into the bus.

"Fast." Melinda says, as everyone starts to get out of the SUV, "Ramp." She instructs, looking at Ward as Melinda hurries to get the bus into the air.

"On it." Ward says, heading over to the button to get the rump up.

"What are you doing? Uncle Phil is still out there!" Daisy says, concerned, going to run down the ramp, and to her uncle, as she cannot lose him again, but Ward grabs her arm.

"Get of the ramp. You're in the line of fire." Ward says, pulling Daisy out the way, and as he does they hear the sounds of gun fire and shouting, until Phil and some of the local police walk into the plan.

The second she sees Phil Daisy pulls her arm out of Ward's grasp and runs to him, and hugs him once she is close enough.

"I'm okay, Daisy." Phil assures her, as he returns the hug.
"Good." Daisy says relieved as they break apart, knowing that she couldn't go through losing her Uncle twice.

"Cut it pretty close, Sir." Ward reveals, noting that even though Phil and Daisy have broken apart Daisy is still walking close to Phil.

"Didn't want to leave anyone behind." Phil explains.

"I think I've heard that before." Daisy comments.

"Probably." Phil admits.

"Fitz, what was the problem?" Ward asks, looking at the scientist.

"As I said before, this device has a high-frequency, fluctuating, sub-material compression." Fitz explains.

"Fitz, in English." Ward requests, as he didn't understand a word.

"The 0-8-4 is fuelled by tesseract technology." Fitz explains and as he does Phil and Daisy know how bad that is, while Ward thinks it could be a good thing, "Hydra. World War II. Captain America. It's full of lethal amounts of gamma radiation." Fitz explains.

"Gamma - you're saying it's nuclear?" Ward asks.

"No. He's saying it's much, much worse." Phil says, as he takes a step away from the object and pulls Daisy back, knowing things just got a thousand times worse than he thought.

Since the realisation that they have a horrible device in their possession Daisy, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons have gone to the lab while Phil has gone to the cockpit with Melinda, and the Peruvian soldiers are in the cargo bay.

"And the 084 is in your possession?" S.H.I.E.L.D HQ, who is on the coms with Phil asks.

"It's on board, and contains a tesseract fuel cell, so there's that." Phil answers.

"Copy. You are a go for check-in guidance though restricted airspace. Safe travels." The S.H.I.E.L.D control officer responds, "Top speed's a priority, May. Obviously." Phil says, and Melinda doesn't say a single word, "I know you didn't want to see combat. I apologize for that. Do you need anything else before I go check on the device fuelled by evil that's sitting in our cargo hold?" Phil asks and as he does Melinda just flicks a button the simple gesture saying so much to him, "This was fun." Phil says, starting to leave, and he goes a few steps before turning back to Melinda, "We could use any extra info right now." He says, before leaving.

After Phil leaves Melinda knows exactly what she has to do and so she pulls out her phone and calls Tony.

"Mel? What's wrong?" Tony asks, sounding confused.

"I'm really sorry to have to ask this, but how much of your Dad's old research do you have?" Melinda asks curious, knowing that this will be very hard for Tony.

"A lot, what's going on?" Tony asks, looking concerned.

"We've got something on the plane, something that seems to be a Hydra weapon, or at least the
same tech, any info your Dad had on how to stop them, how they worked, would help." Melinda admits.

"I'll see what I can find." Tony answers, "Mel, are you and Daisy safe?"

"Yeah, I think so." Melinda admits, even though she is concerned.

"Okay. I'll find anything I can, get it to you as soon as possible." Tony tells his wife.

"Thanks Tony." Melinda says, before hanging up, knowing that Tony is probably the best source of information at the moment.

While Phil is upstairs down in the lab Daisy and Simmons are in the lab, Simmons taking the device out of the bag.

"Not to worry. The device is stable." Simmons says, trying to be comforting.

"I think you want to add an 'at the moment' to that." Daisy assumes, as that's what it seems like to her.

"Probably." Simmons admits, looking like she regrets leaving the lab, as the door to the lab opens and Ward and Fitz walk in, clearly in the middle of an argument.

"Are you mental? I did explain in great detail exactly what I meant, using the queen's bloody English!" Fitz explains.

"I use normal English, words like "duck" and "run" and "might blow us to pieces." Ward explains.

"Oh. Oh! Well, congratulations, Agent Ward. You managed to string three words together in a sentence." Fitz says, and Daisy has to fight a smile at that.

"Do we have a problem in here?" Phil asks, walking into the room.

"No, sir. Just working on our communication." Ward lies, "Not everyone was prepared for a firefight." Ward says.

"We would have been more prepared if you had given me the gun like I asked." Daisy argues, causing Ward to give her an annoyed look.

"That was Agent Ward's call, Daisy." Phil says, knowing he probably would have given Daisy a weapon, as he knows all about Natasha and Bobbi teaching her to use one, "What we need to focus on is that we got out, didn't lose anyone, saved a few of theirs, I'd say we did all right." Phil explains, "Anything else?" he asks.

"Um yeah, I'm no rocket scientist but even I can tell that this team is never going to work like this." Daisy comments.

"What do you mean?" Fitz asks, looking at her.

"Well, for one Ward seems to be incapable of telling you and Simmons apart, and you two have clearly never been in the field, and no one listens to each other." Daisy points out, "Seems like a disaster in the making to me." She says, and Phil has to hide his amusement as he knows she sounds just like Tony when he first talked about the Avengers, and he can only hope that this team end up working as well as that one did.
"I've got to agree." Ward says, "I'm a specialist. Today, I could have eliminated the enemy threat myself if I was working alone, but I had non-combat-ready agents ...." Ward starts to say.

"I told you to give me a gun, but you're too much of a control freak." Daisy comments, looking annoyed as she hates that Ward is blaming her for not succeeding when she could have helped if given the chance.

"Whoa, whoa. Wait. You work alone?" Fitz asks, looking just as annoyed as Daisy.

"So typical. Who do you think designs your equipment?" Simmons asks.

"Or the polymers for your weaponry." Fitz adds.

"Yeah, people like us do." Simmons says, signalling to her and Fitz, "Try going into the field with just your bare bum."

"Enough!" Phil says, putting an end to the discussion, "I get it, we still needed to iron out the kinks, but Ward you can speak six languages, Simmons, you have two PhD's in fields I cannot pronounce, Daisy you're one of the best hackers in the world, and Fitz you are a rocket scientist." Phil says, "So work it out." He says, before leaving.

Seconds after Phil leaves the lab Ward does too and deciding she doesn't really feel like staying in the lab Daisy leaves the lab as well, heading up to her bunk, as she needs some time to think and make a couple of phone calls.
Chapter 51

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: So, I have realised that I have 12 chapters of this unposted. I do intend to come back to this story soon, I just want to finish my Criminal Minds one, or at least get closer to the end. Until then I will update some of the chapters of this story every couple of weeks or so, maybe sooner if I get back to writing this story sooner than I expecting. PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.

After leaving the lab Daisy heads straight up to her bunk, and once she is there she lays down on her bead, and after a few moments of debating she pulls her phone and tries to call her brother again, but once more he doesn't answer.

"Pete, it's me, again." Daisy tells her brother, "I'm back on the plane. Peru is pretty, I'm gonna show you pictures when I see you. I think you'd love the science we're dealing with, you probably would have hated the gunfire though." Daisy admits, "Please talk to me, Pete, answer your phone." Daisy requests, "I'm not going to give up, it's still you and me against the world, not each other." Daisy says, and after hanging up she sits down on her, bunk and after a few moments of debating she makes another phone call, and after a little while Daisy hears Bobbi's voice saying,

"If you have this number you know who I am. Leave a message and I might get back to you."

"Hey, um, it's me, Daisy." Daisy says, even though she guesses her sister will be able to tell that, "I should have realised you're busy, I just kind of wanted to talk, but it's okay, um, bye." Daisy says, before hanging up, after hanging up with her sister Daisy just turns and looks out of the window in her book, thinking about her siblings, and how much she would love to talk to one of them right now.

After a while of just lying in her bunk Daisy decides to head out to the main area of the plane, feeling that some company will do her well, taking her history book, out of her bag and taking it with her. As soon as she exits her bunk Daisy sees Ward up the other end sitting on the couch and reading and so, instead of heading to the cockpit where she was going to head, she heads over to him.

"Hunger Games?" Daisy asks curious.

"Matterhorn, one of a hundred books my SO gave me that I'm just getting around to," Ward explains.

"Sounds like an interesting supervising officer." Daisy comments.

"He is." Ward confirms, knowing that that is an understatement.

"I've never read Matterhorn, and I'd still happily swap it for what I have to read right now." Daisy says, walking over to Ward.

"Why? What have you got to read?" Ward asks, actually being a little curious, and Daisy just hands
the book over, "American history?" he asks, reading the front, it being clear that what he is really asking is why she is reading it.

"Yep, one of the conditions of me being on this plane, even if it's just for six weeks, is I have to keep up with my school work online." Daisy explains, as she sits down on the coffee table in front of Ward.

"Good luck with that." Ward comment, as he is pretty sure that she might have issues finding the time to do that.

"Thanks, I'm gonna need it." Daisy admits, "But this teams going to need some good luck to actually be a functioning team so I'm in good company." She reveals.

"Why's it so important to you that this team functions?" Ward asks, wondering if Daisy knows something he doesn't.

"You mean apart from the fact that I'm on it, even just temporary?" Daisy asks, and Ward nods, "I've been around S.H.I.E.L.D agents my whole life." Thinking of her mom, uncles, aunt, and Maria, "I know specialists do amazing work alone, but I've seen, firsthand how incredible teams, and partners, can be." Daisy reveals, thinking of not just the team her mother was in but the team her father was in, and the team her sister and cousins are, "Chances are one person won't have the whole solution, but two people with fifty percent, or ten people with ten percent, or even a hundred with one percent will get it done." Daisy reveals, "Pieces solving a puzzle, that's how miracles happen." Daisy reveals, thinking it would be too corny to say, 'maybe this team could be a miracle' so she stops herself.

"You have a very unique view of the world." Ward admits.

"Kind of have to with the way I grew up." Daisy admits, and as she does Ward leans forward to grab his cup so that he can have a drink and Daisy notices blood on his white t-shirt, "Wait, did you get shot?" Daisy asks concerned.

"Skin deep. Nothing to worry about." Ward assures her.

"You got shot." Daisy repeats, "That wouldn't have happened if you had given me your spare gun like I suggested." Daisy informs him.

"You're never going to let that go are you?" Ward asks.

"Nope. I may be a seventeen-year-old girl but you'd be surprised what I can do." Daisy reveals, and truthfully Ward believes her, which makes things so much more complicated, and once she does everyone on the plane feels it turn, "We're turning." Daisy comments.

"We've entered restrict airspace." Ward reveals, "So…"

"We have to follow certain regulation flight paths, I know." Daisy says, as she does pay attention when her mother, father, Bobbi, Antoine, Uncle Rhodey, and Uncle Clint talk about flying, mainly because she finds it kind of interesting, "I'm guessing that means I can't go sit with Mom." She assumes.

"No. The cockpit doors can't be opened with this many guest on board." Ward reveals.

"Right." Daisy says, with a nod, and as she does Ward looks around and notices something.

"Daisy move the second I tell you too." Ward instructs, having kept his voice low.
"Okay." Daisy says, confused, as she draws out the word.

"Move." Ward says, and Daisy quickly moves as Ward attacks one of the Peruvian soldiers. As Ward fights the soldiers one of the men come towards Daisy and she kicks him in the crotch.

"Mom." Daisy mutters, sounding worried, and she goes to run towards the cockpit to talk to her mother, but before she can she is grabbed from behind, and seconds later it becomes clear that the plane is being hijacked.

About five minutes later Phil has been tied to a pole in the command centre while Daisy, Ward, Fitz, Simmons, and Melinda who is unconscious have been tied to the Cargo Bay doors.

"This is my fault." Fitz says, "Should have learned Kung Fu." He says.

"I shouldn't have pushed you into the field in the first place, you weren't ready." Simmons says.

"It was my job to make a proper threat assessment." Ward says.

"This whole everyone blaming themselves does nothing to help." Daisy comments, "Besides, none of this would have happened if Mom wasn't flying." Daisy admits, "If she wasn't she would have kicked everyone's ass." Daisy comments, knowing that all too well.

"Your Mom?" Fitz asks, looking confused, "She transferred from administration." He comments.

"Well duh, but before that she was a kick ass specialist." Daisy reveals, "And she can still beat anyone in a fight." Daisy says, knowing that, as she has watched her mother and Aunt Natasha spare enough to know that, plus has overheard enough conversations that confirm that.

Feeling completely confused Fitz and Simmons turn to Ward, who is grinning slightly.

"You've heard of the Cavalry?" Ward asks.

"The What?" Daisy asks, looking confused as she has never heard anyone call her mother that.

"She's the Cavalry!" Fitz and Simmons both say, looking amazed.

"I told you never to call me that." Melinda says, as she wakes up, "Daisy, are you alright?" Melinda asks, her daughter, who she is next to, concerned.

"I'm fine." Daisy assures her mother, "Are you?" Daisy asks, and Melinda nods, to Daisy's relief.

"Oh, we're sure to get out of here now." Simmons says.

"Yep." Daisy confirms.

"Um, how do we get out of here?" Simmons asks curious, as Melinda sits up.

"Can't go through the doors. They're bolted, tied to the pressurization lines." Melinda explains, "You two geniuses have nothing?" Melinda asks, looking between Fitz and Simmons.

"Yeah, well, it's hard to concentrate in these intense situations." Fitz comments.

"Hey, don't freeze up. Take a breath." Ward suggests, "You don't need to come up with the whole solution, just part of it, right?" Ward asks, looking at Daisy.
"Yeah, pieces solving a puzzle." Daisy says, with a grin, and Melinda recognizes the words being something which Daisy has been fond of saying lately.

Over the next few minutes everyone discusses a plan and together they finally come up with one. Thanks to her track record of bad plans, usually thought up by some combination of her, Phil, Natasha, Clint or Maria, or by Tony, Melinda actually thinks the plan is a pretty good one, even though the others think it's a horrible one.

"Well, that's clearly the worst idea we've heard yet." Fitz says.

"But it could work." Daisy points out.

"Reyes is gonna kill us the minute we land, regardless, and blame it on rebels. This way we have a fighting chance. I'll take it." Ward reveals, "What's first?" he asks.

"We can't get upstairs without going in the lab." Simmons says. "And the only way to release the lab doors is from upstairs."

"The first thing is, we're tied to the cargo door, so unless you can…." Fitz starts to say, until everyone suddenly hears a crack, "What the hell was that."

"Her wrist." Daisy and Ward both say, both knowing the sound.

Within seconds Melinda takes out the person who was on the platform above, and then the team work together on their plan which involves Melinda crashing the car though the lab doors, and Fitz, Simmons, Daisy and Ward securing ropes and chains around each other as for what they are going to do their gonna need it.

Finally, while Melinda is sneaking to the cockpit Simmons, Daisy, Fitz, and Ward are standing by the doors that will be unlocked once Fitz does what he is about to do.

"Simmons forget what I said before. This is the moment we'll regret." Fitz says, pressing something on the tablet and seconds later the doors open.

"It worked." Daisy says, looking relieved.

"The drop in cabin pressure released the doors." Fitz says.

"I'll take care of the soldiers. You guys get the 084." Ward instructs.

"And Uncle Phil?" Daisy asks.

"Let's hope he can handle himself." Ward says, and the group head into the main are of the plane, which now has a hole in the side of it.

Over the next few minutes Ward and Phil fight the soldiers as Fitz and Simmons collect the 084, and because she thought of something Daisy gets the inflatable raft and lets it go as it inflates, causing it to fly and cover the hole, and because of that everyone is able to stand up and they walk over to the bar.

"No other way in, huh?" Phil asks, looking between the others, "Was just starting to warm up to this place.

"The 084 is cooling and stable, but we should all HQ and get it to the Slingshot as soon as possible." Fitz says.
"Told you they were good." Phil says, to Camila who is tied up nearby.

A little while later the plane has landed and Daisy is walking up to Phil, who is unsurprisingly checking Lola, as Melinda and Ward are checking supplies, neither of them talking.

"Not a scratch, but the planes totalled." Daisy comments, "But I'm guessing this isn't the first S.H.I.E.L.D plane that has been hijacked."

"Nope, it's not even the first S.H.I.E.L.D plane your mother and I have been on that's been hijacked." Phil admits, as he can practically feel the disapproving look Melinda is giving him.

"I not even surprised." Daisy admits, though she is trying to hide how concerned that makes her.

"Are you alright, Daisy?" Phil asks, clearly concerned.

"Yeah, I'm fine Uncle Phil." Daisy assures him.

"You know it's okay if you're not, what just happened could be considered pretty traumatising." Phil admits.

"Maybe, but I'm good." Daisy says, "How much is Dad going to be told about what happened?" she asks, and as she does Ward becomes more interested, wondering if he can get some intel about who Daisy's father is.

"Everything. I'm not going to lie about this, Daze." Melinda tells her daughter.

"I figured." Daisy admits, but before she can say more Fitz and Simons hurry down from upstairs, both looking very excited.

"Hey come on. You guys don't want to miss this." Fitz says, and everyone walks down the plane to the end of the ramp where Melinda, Ward, Fitz and Simmons all sit down, all four of them taking beers out the esky that Simmons brought.

"Here Daisy." Simmons says, going to hand Daisy a coke but Daisy just shakes her head.

"So, it'll take about 180 days to reach the sun." Fitz explains, "Now, yes, of course, it would have been faster if they'd used hydrogen-fueled APUs, but they're having fun." Fitz reveals.

"How many of those have you guys had?" Daisy asks curious, as from her experience it seems like a lot.

"Da… Daisy, it's It's important when in the field to unwind from time to time." Simmons says, with a laugh.

"Yeah, yeah, especially after a hard day of everyone almost dying." Fitz explains.

"Which doesn't happen every day, right?" Simmons asks, and Melinda decides it would be best not to burst her bubble, "It's an anomaly, an irregularity. Not the norm." Simmons explains as Phil, who was talking to someone else walks up to them.

"Speaking of "not the norm," whose idea was it to blow a hole in the plane?" Phil asks curious, and everyone exchanges looks.

"Mom said that the doors were tied to the pressurization, so I thought…" Daisy starts to say, trailing off as she can feel the look her mother is giving her.
"So, we thought it was the only way to release them." Simmons explains.

"It was everyone's idea, sir." Ward explains.

"Yes, quite genius, really." Fitz says, and as he does Daisy's phone starts to ring.

"I've got to take this." Daisy reveals, once she checks the caller ID.

"You're going to miss the show." Ward says to her.

"It's my sister." Daisy explains, to the surprise of everyone but Melinda and Phil.

"Tell her I said hi." Phil requests.

"And that I'll call her later." Melinda adds, as she knows she has to talk to her daughter, husband, and likely Peter as well.

"Of course." Daisy says, before answering her phone, "Hey, can you hold on a sec." she says, before Bobbi can say anything and she hurries upstairs.

Not long after she left the cargo bay Daisy gets to her bunk and closes the door behind her.

"Hey, sorry, I can talk now." Daisy informs her sister.

"Are you okay? You didn't sound okay when you called." Bobbi informs her sister.

"I'm okay."

"Daisy, what's going on?" Bobbi asks, knowing her sister isn't saying something.

"You haven't talked to Dad, have you?" Daisy asks her sister, as she knows that if Bobbi has then she would know more.

"I've been on mission, what's going on?" Bobbi asks curious.

"It's a long story, but I snuck onto a SHIELD base, and onto the plane Mom and Uncle Phil are on." Daisy explains, "I helped with the first mission, did something kind of stupid, and am now on the team for six weeks."

"Seriously?" Bobbi asks, sounding shocked.

"Seriously. It took a lot for Mom and Dad to agree, and Peter's not talking to me, and now the planes been partly destroyed and….." Daisy starts to say, speaking fast.

"Daze, breath." Bobbi tells her sister, "Are you okay?"

"A little freaked, banged up, but yeah, I'm okay." Daisy admits, "I just wish Pete would talk to me."

"Daze, you and Pete have never been able to stay mad at each other." Bobbi tells her sister, "You know our family; we might fight but we'll always make up, things will be okay."

"I hope so." Daisy admits, "Mom's going to call you later, I miss you, Bobbi."

"Miss you too, Daisy." Bobbi responds, completely meaning that, "Look, I've got to go, but I'll call you tomorrow, and you can always call me, okay?"
"Okay." Daisy with a nod, "What's that thing you and Hunter used to say to each other… oh yeah, don't die out there."

"You either." Bobbi responds, knowing that she has to talk to her parents to figure out what is going on, "Bye Daisy-Lin."

"Bye Barbara-May." Daisy, before hanging up.

After hanging up with her sister Daisy waits a few moments before heading back out of her bunk, planning on heading back downstairs, but as she heads towards the stairs down she sees her mother walking towards her,

"I wanted to check, are you okay?" Melinda asks her daughter concerned.

"Yeah. Mom, have you talked to Peter?" Daisy asks.

"No, but I will." Melinda tells her daughter, "Daze for the next six weeks we're going to increase your self-defence training, I'm going to teach you some more advance things." Melinda explains as if Daisy's going to be on the bus then that's the least she can do.

"Sure." Daisy says, with a grin, '"Thanks Mom." She says, and as she does Melinda's phone starts to ring.

"It's your Dad." Melinda explains.

"Okay. Tell Dad I said hi." Daisy says, before heading downstairs.

"Hello." Melinda says, answering the phone.

"Mel? What's going on? I've been trying to call you for the last few hours." Tony says, clearly worried, as honestly, he's been running through all of the worst possibilities in his head.

"Before I explain I want to assure you that both Daisy and I are okay." Melinda assures Tony.

"What happened?" Tony asks, feeling terrified.

"The plane was briefly hijacked." Melinda explains, and she can hear Tony gasp, "We fought back, and were both okay." Melinda assures Tony.

"It was because of the weapon, wasn't it?" Tony asks worried.

"Yeah." Melinda confirms, "I'll arrange for us to come home while the plane is being repaired."

"Good." Tony says, "Is Daisy okay with everything that happened?"

"I think she might need time, but she's okay." Melinda explains.

"Good." Tony says, "God Mel, I miss you, and Daisy." Tony admits.

"I miss you too." Melinda says, it is feeling strange to be apart after so many years being together, and the two of them drift into silence while staying on the line with each other.

Hours later Melinda, Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, Phil, and Ward are still at the Slingshot, and Fury has just yelled at Phil about what happened. After he yells at Phil he heads downstairs to where
Melinda and Daisy are.

"Daisy, Melinda." Fury greets.

"Nick." Melinda says, with a simple nod.

"You're not going to kick me off the plane, are you? Mom and Dad said I could stay for six weeks." Daisy explains, knowing that Fury would be the one person who could send her home if he wanted to.

"Really?" Fury asks, looking at Melinda.

"Really." Melinda confirms, giving Fury a look, "Daisy wants to be a SHIELD agent."

"Good to know." Fury says, feeling that having another Stark-May as a SHIELD agent could only be a good thing, "Unless it becomes a problem I have no objections." Fury reveals, before walking away, leaving Daisy and Melinda in the cargo bay.

"Awesome." Daisy says, with a grin.

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**September 29th 2013**

After spending a little while at the Slingshot base Melinda and Daisy used another SHIELD plane to fly back to New York. As they walk into the living room of the Stark-May apartment they find Tony waiting.

"Dad!" Daisy says, running forward and hugging her father.

"I've missed you." Daisy says, as she hugs her father.

"I've missed you too." Tony says, as he hugs his daughter, and kisses the top of her head, "Are you okay?"

"I'm good." Daisy assures her father as they break apart, "Is Pete in his room?" Daisy asks curious.

"Yeah." Tony confirms, and Daisy heads upstairs, and as she does Tony just walks over to his wife and once he is close enough he just kisses her, and once they break apart hugs her, "God, I've missed you soo much." Tony admits.

"I've missed you too." Melinda confirms, and the two of them drift into silence as they hold each other.

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Upstairs Daisy has tried knocking on her brother's door but as he just ignores her, after confirming with JARVIS that Peter is in his room, she just walks in.

"Go away." Peter says, from where he is lying on his bed.

"Nope, you're going to listen to me." Daisy tells her brother, "I'm sorry, okay. I didn't mean to hurt you, I never want that." Daisy admits, "I planned all this because I felt like I could belong at SHIELD." Daisy reveals, "You know that I don't feel like I belong at school, that I never have, and that the only place I do feel like I belong is with our family, but I feel like this could be different." Daisy admits, "We've done two mission, and I already love it. Pete, I'm happy, and I want to share this with my little brother, please stop hating me." Daisy requests.
"I could never hate you." Peter assures her sister, "Daze, you know you could go to college, you're smart."

"Not book smart, not like you, or Bobbi, or Dad." Daisy says, as she walks over to her brother, "Pete, my hacking helped someone on our first mission, and I worked with people to save us all on our second mission, this is good for me." Daisy reveals, and as she does Peter can see how happy his sister is.

"That's great, Daze." Peter tells his sister, "Your message said you took pictures?"

"Yeah, do you want to see them?" Daisy asks her brother.

"Defiantly." Peter confirms, "And I want to hear all about this team you and Mom are with."

"Deal." Daisy says, as she sits down next to her brother, and together the two of them sit together and Daisy shares all about what she has been up to over the past few days, and honestly it makes Peter so happy to see that his sister is so happy.

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**October 7th 2013**

About a week has passed since Daisy and Melinda came home and, in that time, the two of them have enjoyed spending time with their family, including Bobbi who had been home for a few days, but it's time for the two of them to go back to the Bus, though Melinda and Tony have hoped that she would want to stay home, but it's clear that it's not what she wants.

It's a Monday morning and all four of them are in the garage at Avengers Tower as Tony is about to leave to take Peter to school while Melinda and Daisy are about to leave to go back to the bus, Daisy having packed a bag to take with her.

"You know you don't have to do this." Tony tells his daughter as he hugs her.

"Yeah, but I want to." Daisy assures her father, "I want this, Dad, so much."

"Okay." Tony says, as he hugs his daughter and kisses the top of her head, "Be careful, I love you."

"Love you too." Daisy responds, and Tony just continues to hug his daughter.

While Tony and Daisy are hugging Melinda and Peter are also hugging and saying goodbye,

"I love you Pete, be good for your Dad." Melinda tells her son.

"I will." Peter assures his mother, as they break apart, and as they do he walks over to Daisy, while Melinda walks over to Tony, "Keep calling, I'll answer this time, I want to hear all about everything that's going on." Peter tells his sister.

"You got it." Daisy promises her brother as she hugs him, "I love you, Pete."

"Love you too, Daze." Peter responds, and the two of them break apart, just as their parents break apart.

"Time to go, Daze." Melinda tells her daughter and the two of them head to their car, while Tony and Peter head to Tony's and all four of them leave Avengers Tower, going in two very different directions.
Four days have passed since Melinda and Daisy returned to the Bus, which has been repaired, and since then Daisy, Melinda, Phil, Fitz, Simmons, and Ward have been getting used to living together in a small confined space.

It's early evening and Daisy and Melinda are in the cargo bay, doing Tai-Chi. Over the years there have been times where Daisy would occasionally join her mother when doing Tai-Chi, but over the last four days have been the time that Daisy has been taking it seriously.

"See, leaving Tai-Chi to evening is way better than doing it at five am." Daisy informs her mother, as they have been training earlier in the day, which Daisy hates.

"Okay, then tomorrow you'll be jogging laps of the bus, both levels, at five am." Melinda informs her daughter.

"You're kidding." Daisy says, looking at her mother in shock.

"Do I look like I'm kidding?" Melinda asks.

"You never look like you're kidding." Daisy informs her mother, "Except when you're teasing Dad." She adds.

"There's a good reason for that." Melinda informs her daughter.

"True, but you are the biggest prankster there is, or is it after Uncle Clint? I'm never sure whether you two came to an agreement about that." Daisy reveals, and in responds her mother just gives her a look, "So, were you kidding? Or am I gonna have to run laps of this plane."

"You'll find out." Melinda responds.

"That's just mean." Daisy says, with a pout, but the look does nothing to her mother, "You do realise that jogging around this bus would be dangerous." She points out.

"When has that ever stopped you from doing something?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Fair point." Daisy says, with a nod, realising it may not have been the best strategy to go with.

"Sorry to interrupt." A voice says, before Melinda or Daisy can say anymore and they look up to see Phil standing on the platform, "May, I need to talk to you." Phil reveals, and Melinda stops what she is doing and hurries upstairs.

For a few moments Melinda and Phil talk in whispers before Melinda nods, and heads into the main area off the plane.
"What's going on?" Daisy asks, looking curious.

"Get Fitz and Simmons, bring them upstairs, we've got a new mission." Phil informs Daisy.

"Okay." Daisy says, feeling confused, but trusting her uncle she heads into the lab where Fitz and Simmons are playing with lasers, "Guys, apparently we have a mission. Uncle Phil wants us all upstairs." She explains, and once she does Fitz and Simmons both just look excited, and the three of them hurry upstairs.

Once they are upstairs Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy all sit around, while Phil and Ward stand, and once he sees that everyone, except for Melinda who is flying and has already been briefed, are in the room Phil starts to talk,

"A few minutes ago, a S.H.I.E.L.D transport was attacked while carrying a priority red protected asset off route 76 Sterling." Phil explains.

"Priority red?" Simmons asks, with a whistle, looking impressed.

"Big deal?" Daisy asks curious.

"One of the biggest." Ward comments, knowing that this is going to be interesting.

"The asset was Canadian physicist Doctor Franklin Hall, know for his work…." Phil starts to say, and Daisy is pretty sure that she has heard her father and Bruce, and potentially Peter, talk about him, and she is also pretty sure there is a picture of him up at Midtown.

"Oh, no, not Frank." Simmons says, sounding shocked.

"Doctor Hall? He was our chemical kinetic adviser our second year." Fitz explains.

"Yeah, he's so enthusiastic about science, we just adored him." Simmons explains, "We can rescue him, can't we?" she asks, needing to know.

"He's one of ours. We're gonna try." Phil admits.

"And the attackers?" Ward asks curious.

"Invisible." Phil answers.

"Wait, invisible?" Daisy asks, looking amazed, "Cool." She says, with a laugh, causing Ward to give her a less than impressed look, "Cool, but terrible." Daisy says, as everyone starts to head off, "UNCLE PHIL." Daisy calls, hurrying towards him.

"Something wrong, Daisy?" Phil asks concerned, as he stops at the foot of the stairs that lead up to his office.

"Yeah, I need your help." Daisy admits.

"What with?" Phil asks curious.

"Figuring out if Mom was joking or serious about making me run laps of this plane at five am." Daisy answers.

"What makes you think I'll be able to tell you?" Phil asks, as he can see Melinda being serious about that, but he can also see her joking.
"Because you're Mom's best friend and seem to always know what's going on with each other." Daisy comments, and Phil has to hide his amusement.

"You should get changed, Daisy. We'll be landing soon." Phil explains, as he heads upstairs.

"You and Mom can't avoid answering me forever, it's not nice!" Daisy calls, as Phil walks upstairs, and as she turns she sees Ward watching. "What?"

"Nothing." Ward responds, feeling like if he ever had to the key to causing chaos and pain would be to turn May, Daisy, and Phil against each other.

"Good." Daisy says, before heading to her bunk to get changed, but as she heads out her bunk she pulls out her phone and sends a message to her brother saying,

'Do you think Mom would wake me up at 5am to run laps?'

And seconds later Daisy gets a response back saying,

'Probably, have fun :)'  

"Great." Daisy mutters to herself, as she sends another message to her brother saying, 'ur mean.', and then once she sends the message she drops her phone on her bed and gets changed for the mission.

Not long after Phil and Daisy's brief conversation the Bus hand landed in Colorado and Phil, Melinda, Ward, Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy are walking towards the sight where Doctor Hall was taken.

"Doctor Hall was an asset?" Daisy asks, curious as she knows bits and pieces about S.H.I.E.L.D, and this isn't something she knows.

"One of a few select scientists S.H.I.E.L.D has been protecting, people our enemies would love to get their hands on." Phil explains.

"We keep them hidden, keep them on the move." Melinda explains to her daughter, who nods.

"Which is why Fitz and I were so lucky to have him." Simmons explains.

"We don't have him anymore." Phil comments.

"You know none of you have actually explained what Priority red means." Daisy admits.

"It means security should have been…. Heavy." Phil says, sounding shocked as the group sees a truck stuck in a tree.

A while later everyone is back on the plane, and everyone but Ward is in the lab, waiting for some kind of clue about what is going on, as at the scene it was clear that both Fitz and Simmons are surprised, and even a little confused, by what is going on.

"Either someone cracked our comms system or Doctor Hall's movements leaked from inside S.H.I.E.L.D." Phil says to Melinda, though because she is close Daisy can hear it too.

"You really think we have a mole?" Melinda asks curious, knowing that would be a very, very, bad thing.
"I think you should go through the communication logs, rule it out. We'll work the tractor tread that we found on the scene." Phil explains to Melinda, who nods, and heads out.

"I can do that." Daisy says, standing up, "Otherwise I have to do my homework." Daisy says, really not wanting to do that.

"Already done." Ward says, walking into the lab, causing Daisy to frown as she was really looking for an excuse not to do her work.

"Daisy you're gonna have to do your school work eventually." Phil reminds her.

"I know, I know." Daisy says, looking less than happy.

"I matched the tire tread to a 2010 model. Found a list of purchasers within a five-hundred-mile radius, narrowed down to those with priors, financial troubles, or propensity for risk taking." Ward says, pressing buttons to get images on the screen, "Three suspects." He explains.

"Who may have sold their construction equipment to the kidnappers. We'll ask." Phil says, and Ward nods, and leaves.

"So, can you talk to Mom?" Daisy asks curious, walking over to Phil, "Find out if she was kidding about the making me run laps thing?" she asks.

"No. You'll have to wait and see." Phil explain, before walking away.

"Not fair Uncle Phil!" Daisy says, being pretty sure she should stop complaining about it as experience tells her that her mother and Phil will purposely keep not answering her because of the way she is reacting.

"Daisy." Melinda says, walking toward Daisy, who turns around and gets handed a giant binder.

"Um, what?" Daisy asks, looking at her mother in confusion.

"You're gonna read it." Melinda informs her daughter, "It's every communication out of HQ since they decided to transfer Doctor Hall."

"Is this punishment for complaining about my school work?" Daisy asks curious, as it seems like it to her.

"You wanted to help. This is helping." Melinda tells her daughter before walking away.

"Not the kind of help I was imagining." Daisy mutters to herself, before walking over and sitting down at one of the tables with the very large binder, and while she reads she texts her big sister,

"Hey, Mom told me to she's gonna make me run laps tomorrow. Do you think she was kidding?" Daisy texts to her sister, and within seconds she gets a response back from Bobbi.

"Hard to say, let me know what happens."

"Thanks." Daisy responds, looking annoyed before texting her brother too.

Back in New York Tony and Peter are having dinner together, and as they eat Peter suddenly bursts out laughing,

"What's so funny?" Tony asks curious.
"Daze wanted to help with the case they're working, Mom gave her a binder of paperwork to read." Peter says, looking amused.

"Wow." Tony says, looking amused, "Guess Mel and I aren't going to have our nightly phone call." He comments, looking sad at the thought.

"I miss them." Peter comments.

"Me too." Tony confirms, and father and son drift into silence.

A while later Ward and Phil have gone to talk to her person who sold their equipment where they found the man with gold bars that come from a mind owned by Quinn Worldwide. While Melinda, Phil, and Ward are spread out through the plane Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy who is still going through the communications logs are in the lab together.

"Gravitonium. It's an extremely rare high-atomic numbered element." Fitz explains.

"That powers the device. It's so extremely rare that most people didn't believe it existed, much less the theory that an isolated positive charge…" Simmons starts to say.

"Would turn the flow from isotropic…" Fitz starts to say.

"Guys, physics is my least favourite class, gonna need more of an explanation." Daisy explains, knowing that no matter what explanation she is given she is probably going to call her father, or brother so that they can explain things in a better way as they both know how to help her understand something sciency.

"How can Physics be your least favourite class?" Fitz asks, looking insulted, and Simmons looks just as shocked.

"Do you two hate me now?" Daisy asks, looking concerned, as she thought that she Fitz, and Simmons were starting to become friends, and she wouldn't want that to change.

"Of course not." Simmons answers, speaking quickly.

"No." Fitz says.

"How exactly does the device work?" Daisy asks curious, knowing enough incredible science genius to know that if you get a scientist talking about science then everything else will be forgotten.

"Well, Gravitonium disorts gravity fields within itself, causing an undulating, amorphous shape." Simmons explains.

"Which causes these, um, wiggly bits here." Fitz explains, using hand gestures and pointing to what he is talking about. "But when the electric current is applied the Gravitonum solidifies, and those gravity fields erupt, randomly changing the rules of gravity around it." Fitz explains, "Well, so, now you can imagine what would happen to a big rig at 100 kilometres per hour. Or, uh, well, you could just remember, 'cause we saw it already, didn't we?" Fitz asks.

"Yeah, and guess which genius published every theory about Gravitonium and possible applications, years go?" Simmons asks.

"Doctor Franklin Hall." Daisy guesses, as that's what makes sense.
"Correct." Simmons confirms.

"And Doctor Hall attended the University of Cambridge at the same time as Ian Quinn." Fitz explains.

"I don't say this often, but Uncle Phil may be off on this." Daisy comments, "I mean I know there are people who consider Quinn to be a dick, but his charity endowment's something like eight billion." Daisy comments, knowing that because her father hates Quinn, but still talks about his charity endowment.

"Yes, with money made from leeching the earth of its resources." Simmons comments, looking less than happy, "Looks like he's dug up another." She reveals.

Hearing Simmons's words Daisy can't help but frown, realising that Simmons has a very good point, and she should have realised it herself, especially after the conversations she's had with her father.

A little while after Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons talked about Gravitonium and Quinn the three of them, along with Phil, Ward and Melinda are all up in the command centre discussing a plan. Phil, Fitz, Simmons and Melinda are all around the holocom while Daisy and Ward are both standing back a bit.

"The man's a prisoner, and it's up to us to get him out." Phil instructs.

"We've checked the specs." Ward says, speaking for him and Melinda as that's what the two of them were doing while Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons were in the lab, "There's no way into Quinn's compound without a large S.H.I.E.L.D strike force or a man inside." Ward explains, "He's got neodymium laser fencing surrounding the property." He explains.

"They'll never allow a strike force into Malta." Phil says, saying what everyone but Daisy knows, "Plus, this weekend, Quinn's worldwide's got it's annual shareholding gathering. We'd risk global outrage, but…." Phil starts to say, and as he does Daisy gets an idea and starts to use her phone to do two different things.

"If we go in alone…" Melinda continues.

"S.H.I.E.L.D can disavow us, claim ignorance." Phil says, as Daisy continues to do two things on her phone.

"Without a man inside, it's impossible." Melinda says, finishing Phil's sentence, and everyone on the plane, with the exception of Daisy who has seen it many times, are impressed with Phil and Melinda finishing each other's sentence, "Unless you're immune to pulse laser emissions." She says, looking at Phil.

"If we had a monkey we could get in." Fitz comments.

"Ugh, Fitz!" Simmons objects, having needed to deal with the fact that Fitz wants a monkey a lot.

"If we had a small monkey, he could slip through the sensors and disable the fence's power source with his adorable little hands." Fitz suggests.

"I could go in." Daisy says, when she finishes the first thing she is doing on her phone, and continues to work on the second.
"Daisy…” Melinda starts to say.

"Drop me in the halls outside of Valletta. I'll spend a few weeks establishing a cover, gathering intel…." Ward starts to say, as he walks towards the holocom.

"Hall doesn't have a few weeks." Phil reminds him.

"And to restate, any Agent off S.H.I.E.L.D caught on Maltese soil can be shot to death with bullets, legally." Simmons reminds everyone.

"Not me, I could go in." Daisy says, looking up from her phone to speak, but then going right back to it.

"Daisy, this is serious." Ward informs her.

"And there is no way you're doing this." Melinda informs her daughter.

"I'm thinking if we want to save Doctor Hall then I kind of have to." Daisy admits, "I'm not an Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D so If I go in I won't breaking all these stupid rules…”

"International laws." Simmons corrects.

"Whatever." Daisy says, "My point is that Hall clearly doesn't have time for us to figure out another plan. You said you could go in with a man inside, well I can be your women inside."

"Girl." Ward corrects, causing Daisy to give him a less than happy look.

"No, you can't be." Melinda tells her daughter.

"I can be. I can do this Mom." Daisy reveals, looking straight at her mother, "Hell I already have the invitation, or e-vite technically." Daisy reveals, showing everyone her phone.

"No." Melinda tells her daughter, not planning on changing her mind any time soon, "You may have an invitation but there is absolutely no way you're going in, especially not alone." Melinda informs her daughter.

"I knew you were going to say that." Daisy says, smirking slightly it being more than clear to both Phil and Melinda that she has a plan, "Which is why I also messaged a friend, someone who can use my plus one invitation with me, and not break international law, but only if I'm with him." Daisy explains, purposely putting it like that as she doesn't want her mother or Phil to just suggest that her friend goes in alone.

"Who?" Phil and Melinda ask together, both wanting to know who the hell she is talking about, as Melinda knows, considering the fact that he and Quinn hate each other, that it cannot be Tony.

"Hunter." Daisy answers simply, "He's already on his way to Malta, he'll meet me." She explains, to the shock of Phil and Melinda while everyone else is just confused about who Hunter is.

"Daisy, May, let's talk upstairs." Phil suggests, figuring that that may be best for everyone, and as both in response both mother and daughter nod and head upstairs, leaving Ward, Fitz, and Simmons alone, Ward feeling annoyed that he isn't being included in this discussion.

About a minute after they left the command centre Daisy, Melinda and Phil walk into the office, and Phil closes the door behind them.
"No, no way, you're not doing this." Melinda informs her daughter.

"I want to, I need to." Daisy informs her mother, "Mom, I know you want to protect me, I get it, but I'll be with Hunter, do you really think he'll let anything happen to me?" Daisy asks, as Hunter has been like a big brother to her.

"You really don't want to be using that argument right now." Melinda informs her daughter.

"If Hunter's willing to help then he can be the inside man." Phil says, as while S.H.I.E.L.D isn't happy with using Mercenaries they will when necessary, and it's definitely necessary now.

"No, he can't." Daisy explains, "The only way he can get into the event is as my plus one, I need to go."

"I'll go as your plus one." Melinda tells her daughter.

"Aren't we trying to avoid a visible S.H.I.E.L.D present?" Daisy asks, "You've been a S.H.I.E.L.D agent for what, thirty years? There's a pretty good chance that someone at Quinn's part would recognize you, either of you." Daisy says, looking between her Mom and Phil, "And if it's not as a S.HIELD agent then it could be as Dad's wife, he and Quinn hate each other, it would make sense for him to have done research." Daisy explains, and as she does both Melinda and Phil know she might have a point, and they both know there would be very little chance of him being able to tell who Daisy is as her identity is more protected than Melinda's. "Look Hunter thinks people there might be known him, rouge hacker and a mercenary, it will be a pretty great cover." She explains.

"It's too dangerous. Even with Hunter going with you." Phil tells Daisy.

"It's a risk we need to take, a risk I'm willing to take." Daisy explains, looking between her mother and Uncle, "Doctor Hall's been abducted, they could be hurting him, or forcing him to do things he doesn't want to do." Daisy explains, "Mom you taught me, Dad taught me, you and our entire family taught me." Daisy adds, looking at Phil, "To help people, to protect them, and that's exactly what I want to do." Daisy explains, "So let me do what I've been watching you two do my whole life, please." Daisy asks, it being more than clear that this is something she really wants to do.

"Phone." Melinda says, and Daisy hands it over. Once she has the phone Melinda makes a phone call.

"Yello." Hunter answers after a few rings.

"If she gets hurt it's on you." Melinda says to Hunter.

"Yes Mum." Hunter answers, recognizing the voice, "I'll keep her safe." He says, and because Melinda knows Hunter so well, and the fact that he called her 'mum', Melinda knows that Hunter is telling the truth.

"You better." Melinda says, before hanging up.

"So, does that mean you're gonna let me do this?" Daisy asks curious.

"I am." Melinda says, it being clear to Phil that she thinks it is a bad idea, "Which is why I'm going to show you how to do a few things." She explains.

"Okay." Daisy says, with a nod.

"I'll brief the rest of the team." Phil explains, Melinda nods, and the two of them and Daisy head
Once Phil, Melinda and Daisy are downstairs Melinda and Daisy continue to walk downstairs while Phil heads into the command centre where Ward, Fitz and Simmons still are.

"Sir? What's going on?" Ward asks curious.

"Daisy's going to be the inside person. She's going to infiltrate Quinn's compound." Phil explains.

"Alone?" Fitz and Simmons ask together.

"No." Phil answers.

"Is this Hunter going with her? Who is he?" Ward asks, needing to know for many reasons.

"A family friend." Phil answers, being pretty sure that is an understatement, but it is what he feels comfortable calling Hunter, at least to people who don't know about the Stark-May family.

"S.H.I.E.L.D?" Ward asks.

"No." Phil answers, not being able to imagine a world where Hunter is a S.H.I.E.L.D agent, "But he is trained. He'll be able to keep Daisy safe." Phil says, before leaving the room leaving Ward, Fitz, and Simmons to wonder what they're missing, though Ward follows Phil seconds after he leaves.

Downstairs Melinda and Daisy is standing in the cargo bay and Melinda is walking towards her, carrying a training gun, which is basically the same as a regular gun but can't fire live ammunition.

"I'm going to teach you a simple way to disarm someone." Melinda informs her daughter.

"Yeah, Grandma kind of already beat you to that one." Daisy explains.

"When?" Melinda asks, as she didn't know that, though a part of her isn't overly surprised by the fact that her mother taught her daughter how to disarm someone.

"09, March." Daisy explains, "She said she was going to teach Peter how to eventually too." she reveals.

"Then show me that you remember." Melinda says, taking a step back and pointing the gun at her daughter, it feeling incredibly wrong for her to do so, in fact the only reason she is doing it is because it's a training gun.

"Okay." Daisy says, and with a quick movement she disarms her mother, something she is only able to do as Melinda wasn't being as careful as she can.

"Nicely done." Melinda says, proud of her daughter.

"Mom, what happens when I get the gun? What if I can't pull the trigger?" Daisy asks curious, looking a little embarrassed about the question, but she also can't help but remember what Natasha said.

"It's not something to be embarrassed about Daisy, pulling the trigger can be hard." Melinda tells her daughter.
"You, Bobbi, Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, Uncle Rhodey, Uncle Phil, Hunter and most of the other people I've spent my life around makes it seem so easy." Daisy comments, "At least from the stories I've heard anyway."

"We probably should have told different stories." Melinda says, knowing that they did filter the stories, but it seems like Daisy got an impression anyway.

"Mom."

"Let's sit down." Melinda says, gesturing over to the seats and she and Daisy both walk over and sit down, "Daisy pulling the trigger of a gun is never easy, and it shouldn't be." Melinda informs her daughter.

"Really?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised.

"Really." Melinda assures her daughter.

"Then what do I do if I have the gun and realise I can't pull the trigger?" Daisy asks her mother curious.

"Whatever you have to do to get out of the situation." Melinda tells her daughter, "Daisy, if things go south and you need to remember two things."

"Okay?" Daisy asks, looking confused.

"The first is that you won't be alone." Melinda assures her daughter, "I know, without a doubt, that Hunter will look out for you, and keep you safe if needed." She says, knowing that as while she doesn't like Hunter she does know he will protect her family, her daughters especially.

"What's the second?" Daisy asks curious.

"That I believe in you." Melinda tells her daughter, "I may not want you to do this, but don't think that that's because I don't believe in you, because I do; remember that." Melinda assures her daughter.

"Thanks Mom." Daisy says, looking amazed, before she leans in and hugs her mother, "I love you."

"I love you too." Melinda assures her daughter, as the two of them break apart.

"Can we call Dad?" Daisy asks curious.

"Sure, but we can't go into details about the mission." Melinda tells her daughter.

"I thought you and Dad don't lie to each other." Daisy comments, as she knows enough to know her parents agreed to that.

"We don't. So, I will tell him, once the mission is over." Melinda explains, as she pulls out her phone, and makes a video call to Tony.

"Hello." Tony answers, and as he does both he and Peter appear on the screen.

"Hey Dad." Daisy greats, "Pete."

"Mom! I got an A + on my calculus test." Peter reveals, looking extremely excited, and proud.
"That's great Pete." Melinda says, with a proud smile.

"Did you get Ice Cream?" Daisy asks curious.

"Yep." Peter says, with a grin, "Where are you guys?"

"Cargo Bay." Daisy answers.

"Are you on a mission?" Tony asks curious.

"About to be." Melinda answers, "We're going to be out of calling range for a few hours, so we thought we'd call."

"How big is this mission?" Tony asks concerned.

"Pretty big, but we're going to be as safe as possible." Melinda explains, and she can tell that Tony is worried about that, "We should go, we just want to call you and say hello."

"Okay." Tony says, planning on getting the information about what is going on from Melinda next time they talk, "I love you both."

"Me too!" Peter says.

"Love you too." Melinda and Daisy both say, before hanging up.

"We've got some time before you have to go, how would you like to learn some things that I'm sure your grandmother wouldn't have had a chance to teach you?" Melinda asks.

"Um, yes please." Daisy says, looking excited, and together mother and daughter start to work together Melinda working to teach her daughter the things that she may need on this mission, a mission that Melinda would rather her daughter not do.

After Phil left Ward, Fitz, and Simmons in the Command Centre her heads straight back to his office, and he isn't at all surprised when Ward follows.

"You've got questions, Agent Ward?" Phil asks, assuming so.

"Who is this Hunter?" Ward asks, having no clue who this person is, which is honestly a concern.

"A friend." Phil answers, "That's all you need to know."

"Sir…." Ward starts to say.

"No more questions about who Hunter is, Agent Ward, that's an order." Phil instructs.

"Yes Sir." Ward answers, and because of that he decides to answer another question, "Sir are you sure it's a good idea to send Daisy in alone, she doesn't have any training." He comments.

"She has more training than you think." Phil says knowing that over the years Daisy has learnt various things from members of their family, her parents, grandmother, cousins, sister, Uncles, Aunts, Maria, and Hunter, "And she won't be alone." He points out, "Hunter won't let anything happen to Daisy, partly because he cares about her, and partly because he'd be terrified of what May would do to him if he does let her get hurt." Phil say, knowing that, also knowing that Hunter would be terrified about how the rest of their family would react.
"I still don't think this is a good idea." Ward admits.

"Your concern will be on record." Phil reveals, "Anything else?" he asks.

"No sir." Ward says, being pretty sure that he can't raise any more objections without things being suspicious.

"Good." Phil says, as he sits down at his desk. Seeing Phil's actions Ward realises that he is being dismissed and so he leaves Phil's office, hating the fact that he doesn't know what is going on, as it is his job to know everything that is going on the bus so that he can report it back to Garrett, and right now it seems like he is failing that mission.
Chapter 53

Chapter 53

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: I am so sorry that it has been so long since there has been an update. I am going to try to get back to all the stories I haven't updated in a while, and I'll see how I go. I'm also in my last year of Law School so it may not happen how I am imagining it, but for now I am going to attempt to alternate between updating this and updating To Make a Better World.

A little while after Melinda started to teach Daisy a few new things she has taught Daisy several things that she will remember and the two of them, Ward, Phil, Fitz and Simmons are all back in the command centre, discussing the plan for the mission.

"Daisy, with Hunter as her plus one, will walk in the front door," Phil explains, "The only external access point to Quinn's underground facility is from a beach cove," Phil explains, "A two-man extraction team could slip in there, but it's not easy," Phil explains and as he does Melinda knows what Phil is going to say, and she knows what she has to do, even though it is hard for her, "Fitz-Simmons," He says.

"The perimeter is surrounded by a twenty-foot-high neodymium laser grid. Touch it and your toast," Fitz explains.

"Dead toast," Phil corrects, "The only way to disable the grid is to crack the system and trigger a reboot," Phil explains, "This would give the team three seconds to cross," He says, "Of course, Quinn's too smart to allow any wireless access on his property," Phil explains.

"That's where I come in," Daisy realises.

"Yes, working compact, holds up under x-ray," Simmons explains, showing Daisy a compact mirror.

"Desert rose to match your complexion," Fitz says to Daisy.

"Huh, I didn't know I was desert rose," Daisy admits, and Melinda gives her daughter a look, "What?" she asks, and Melinda just shakes her head, and as she does Daisy has a closer look, thinking it's kind of cool.

"It's also a readout," Fitz explains, clearly talking about the compact. "Turns green if you're in close enough proximity to a computer to gain wireless access," Fitz explains.

"When it does you just drop this nearby and walk out. We'll do the rest, easy as pie," Simmons explains.

"Or it will be if you stick to the plan," Ward adds, and Daisy rolls her eyes.

"I've got it Ward, plan, green, drop walk, pie," Daisy explains, as her Mother and uncle walk away from the others. "Let me see that thing," Daisy requests, wanting to get a better look at the tech, as she has spent so long listening to her father and brother talk about various tech that she is a little interested, and Fitz and Simmons show it to her.
"Phil," Melinda says, walking towards him. "I will be on that two-person team," Melinda informs Phil, who is a little surprised, but he also completely understands Melinda's reasons.

"I thought you wanted to avoid combat?" Phil asks.

"I do, but if Daisy is going in then so I need to as well," Melinda explains.

"Okay," Phil says, with a nod. "You and Ward will be the two-man team," He says.

"We can't be. There needs to be someone on the plane who can pilot just in case," Melinda points out.

"Then it will be you and I," Phil says, resisting the urge to make a comment about the old days. "Ward will stay on the plane," He says, and that gets Ward's attention.

"Sir, do you really think that's a best idea, you're not a specialist," Ward points out.

"May's right, we need a pilot on the plane," Phil explains. "And I saw plenty of action with the Avengers," Phil says, before walking out of the command centre.

"And you died," Melinda mutters to herself, knowing she will do whatever she has to do to make sure that doesn't happen again, as if she was there then maybe it wouldn't have happened in the first place.

Realising something Daisy quickly leaves the command centre through the door closest to her,

"MOM," Daisy calls as she runs towards her mother, who turns around. "You don't want to do field work, you've made me clear, but you're doing this for me, aren't you?" Daisy asks, and her mother nods, "I... thank you," Daisy responds, before hugging her mother. "You don't have to do this for me. Uncle Phil and Ward can be the two person team," Daisy assures her mother, knowing that this is a big deal, as the two of them break apart.

"Actually, I do," Melinda says, as she plays with her daughters' hair and pushes it behind her shoulder. "If you're going to do this then I am too," Melinda assures her daughter. "But that's not on you Daisy, it's my choice," She explains, as she doesn't want Daisy to feel bad about her decision because knowing her daughter she likely will.

"Okay," Daisy says, "I love you Mom, so much."

"I love you too," Melinda says, hugging her daughter, and holding her close.

"I should go get ready, I guess we both need to," Daisy realises, as the two of them break apart.

"We do," Melinda confirms and Daisy heads to her bunk while Melinda goes to check to make sure they have all the supplies they need for the mission; while resisting the urge to call Tony back and tell him everything as she knows he would go to Quinn's party if he knew, even if he has to crash.

A while after Daisy and Melinda's conversation Daisy has changed into a pink dress and is sitting at a café in Malta drinking an iced coffee and waiting for Hunter,

"Hey Trouble," A very familiar voice says and Daisy turns to see Hunter walking towards her wearing a suit, though no tie.

"Lance," Daisy says, happily running towards him and hugging him. "I've missed you soo much."
"I've missed you too, Daze," Hunter says, as her returns the hug of the person who will always be a sister to him, no matter what his relationship with Bobbi is, as the two of them break apart. Once they do they both walk back over to Daisy's table and sits down. "So, you want to explain how the hell you got involved in something like this?" he asks curious, as he can't imagine how this would have happened.

"Mom went back into the field. I snuck onto the plane and got Mom and Dad to agree to let me stay for six weeks. I help out where I can," Daisy explains, having first checked to make sure no one is around.

"Really?" Hunter asks, having heard enough from Bobbi to know that that is a very big deal.

"Really," Daisy confirms. "It's been fun."

"Does..." Hunter starts to ask, before trailing off, but Daisy realises exactly what he is asking.

"Bobbi knows," Daisy reveals. "Last time I talked to her she seemed good, busy, but good," Daisy explains, knowing that Hunter will likely want to know that but won't want to ask.

"Oh good," Hunter responds, and Daisy isn't overly sure if he means that.

"Have you guys talked lately?" Daisy asks curious, doing so hesitantly.

"We've crossed paths," Hunter answers, doing so because Daisy is Bobbi's sister, and that is the only thing that stops him from talking the way he usually would.

"Right, vague answer means I don't want to know the truth," Daisy realises.

"You really don't," Hunter assures her. "So, what's the mission?" he asks as all he needed to hear from Daisy before he agreed is that she needed his help in Malta.

"Someone has been taken by Ian Quinn. I've got an invitation with a plus one to his party," Daisy explains. "We're gonna go in, use a readout to get wireless access to Quinn's system to disable his security so Mom and Uncle Phil can get....."

"Did you just say Uncle Phil?" Hunter asks, looking shocked.

"Yeah," Daisy confirms. "He's alive, Fury lied to everyone." Daisy explains. "He's good." Daisy explains, with a grin, it being clear that she is glad about that fact.

"Bloody hell," Hunter says, looking shocked. "Bob didn't tell me," He reveals. Honestly, considering he was there for Bobbi after Phil died, after the Battle of New York, he would have expected her to tell him something like that.

"She probably didn't know yet when you two 'crossed paths'," Daisy admits. "Once Mom and Uncle Phil have gotten in they're going to rescue the person who's been abducted and get us out," She explains.

"Okay, sounds like a simple plan," Hunter admits. "But you do realise plans often turn to rubbish, right?" he asks.

"Yeah, the stories I've heard tell me that much," Daisy reveals.

"Good," Hunter says, with a grin. "We should get going, we've got a party to crash," Hunter says, looking excited.
"Pretty sure it's not crashing when we have an invitation," Daisy comments, as she stands up.

"Pretty sure it is," Hunter responds, as he too stands up and the two of them start to walk. Hunter knowing he will do whatever he has to do to keep Daisy safe, while Daisy knows that she doesn't want to need Hunter's help, she wants to prove that she can do this.

A little while after Daisy and Hunter left the café the two of them have gotten into Quinn's party without a problem.

"Um, what do we do?" Daisy asks Hunter in a whisper, realising that she didn't ask that.

"Mingle," Hunter says, taking two glasses of champagne and handing one to Daisy, who gives him a look. "You're seventeen, that's close enough," he reveals, with a shrug.

"No, it's not," Ward says, through the coms, having realised what is going on. "Don't even think about it, Daisy," He says, in a warning voice. "Just because your Mom isn't on coms right now doesn't mean you can get away with drinking," He says, it being more than clear that he will tell Melinda if Daisy drinks.

"Drinking age in Malta is sixteen Ward," Daisy informs him, through the coms. "But I better not chance it," Daisy says, putting the full glass back on the tray, as she is pretty sure that her mother wouldn't take that as an excuse once Ward tells her, though she suspects that her father will either be amused or furious, and considering his history with alcohol she honestly isn't sure which is the most likely reaction.

"Then you should at least eat to blend in," Hunter says, handing Daisy a hors d'oeuvre.

"I'll happily eat free food," Daisy says, before taking a bite.

"Same," Hunter admits, and the two of them exchange amused looks, and once he takes and swallows the bite of food he had, Hunter realises something. "Daisy, there's the big guy, that's who you're looking for, right?"

"Right." Daisy confirms.

"Do you want to talk to him, or do you want me to?" Hunter asks, knowing it's Daisy's call, but he is completely willing to help.

"I've got this," Daisy answers.

"Okay, I won't be far away," Hunter assures her.

"Thanks," Daisy says, looking relieved, before walking over to Quinn who is talking to other guests. "Ian Quinn, I'm your last-minute party crasher, Skye," Daisy explains, sticking out her hand to shake, and using her hacking name as that's who got the invitation.

"Oh, wow. Great to meet you," Quinn says, looking surprised. "Um, this is Skye, a member of the Rising Tide," He explains, not knowing that that is a lie as Daisy made a cover making it seem like that's what she is. "They're a group of hackers. They've gotten some pretty big secrets out to the public," Quinn comments.

"I prefer 'hacktivist,'" Daisy says, as she really does think that's a better term, and she is pretty sure her Dad could help with getting a better one. "I'm glad you've heard of our site," Daisy says, as it helped her a lot as while she suspected that Quinn was a fan of the Rising Tide she knew there was
a chance that she was wrong.

"I read it," Quinn reveals. "We think very much alike, more freedom of information, less government infringing on everyone's right, I'm a fan," Quinn says.

"That explains the invite, this is a tough party to get into," Daisy admits.

"Not as hard to get into as the encrypted back channel you contacted us through to request the invite," Quinn says, and Daisy laughs.

"That's sort of where I live," Daisy admits, smiling slightly.

"You've got to show me how you did that," Quinn says. "I mean, if you sign on," Quinn explains.

"Sign what, now?" Daisy asks, looking confused, as she can't imagine what Quinn is talking about.

"I've been known to turn a few black hats into white hats, not just for vulnerability analysis, but for very creative thinking," Quinn says.

"A...are you offering me a job?" Daisy asks, looking shocked, not being able to imagine a world where she would accept that offer, as if she would want the kind of job Quinn is offering then she would just go her Dad and Pepper, and ask for a job at Stark.

"Well, I didn't invite you here for your adorable face. I didn't know you had an adorable face," Quinn says, and Daisy has to fight to pull a face. "Yes, I want to hire you before someone else snatches you up," Quinn says, before walking away, leaving Daisy standing in surprise as she wasn't expecting that.

"Did that go well?" Hunter asks, walking up to Daisy.

"I'm not sure," Daisy admits.

"Want me to kick his ass?" Hunter asks curious, being able to tell that Daisy is bothered by something.

"That would screw with the mission, and we can't have that," Daisy responds.

"You sound just like your sister," Hunter comments.

"I'm gonna take that as a compliment, even if you didn't mean it as one," Daisy admits, as both she and Hunter start to listen to Quinn's speech,

"... This country where we are allowed to pursue progress and profit without the stranglehold of regulations that are now choking our world. The United States government, the E.U., the DRTC, S.H.I.E.L.D. ..." Quinn starts to say.

"This is the best chance we're gonna get. Go, I'll make sure you're not followed," Hunter whispers to Daisy.

"Okay," Daisy says, and she carefully disappears through the crowded and heads into the building, and as she does Hunter watches carefully to make sure she's not followed.

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While Hunter and Daisy are inside Quinn's property Melinda and Phil are just reaching the beach cove.
"You and me, together again, like the old days," Phil says, and Melinda gives him a look, one that he is very familiar with the meaning off, "When we get in I'll talk to Hall."

"That would be best," Melinda says, and the two of them continue to walk in silence.

Not long after she left Hunter Daisy has made her way to Quinn's office, but has found a complication,

"Um, we've got a problem. It's locked, but there's no lock," Daisy explains, wishing she could talk to JARVIS right now as he could tell her exactly how to get in.

"Check for a keypad," Fitz tells her and Daisy looks.

"Nothing," Daisy comments. "Could you hack a keypad?" she asks, curious.

"No, not over the phone," Fitz admits.

"Is there a reception desk?" Ward asks, and Daisy looks around.


"What are you trying to do?" a voice asks, and Daisy turns to see Quinn who managed to get passed Hunter.

"Looking for a pen," Daisy says, trying to cover and it is the first thing she can think off. "Here we go," Daisy says, finding a pen and picking up. "Got to write down all those good ideas, you know what I mean?" Daisy asks, realising that she is starting to ramble but not sure what else to do. "Of course, you know what I mean. Probably have like ten pens for all your ideas," Daisy says, as she quickly tries to wrack her brain for a plan, as she wonders where the hell Hunter is.

"What are you really doing?" Quinn asks, and as he does Daisy gets an idea, the question is whether she can pull it off.

"All right. I'm busted. I was trying to get a glimpse behind your office doors, see how things really operate," Daisy covers.

"I invite you hear as a guest, and you treat me like another corrupt institution, looking for trade secrets to leak online," Quinn says, as he raises his phone to his mouth, Security..." he starts to say, and Daisy reaches over and puts her arm on his,

"No, no, wait," Daisy says, trying to keep the panic out of her voice. "It's just, with all these la-di-da people you have to be so guarded, so careful," Daisy says, turning and starting to write on a piece of paper. "What you say, what secrets you reveal," Daisy says, as she continues to write.

"And I was hoping that you and I could be honest with one another. If you know what I mean," Daisy says, showing Quinn a piece of paper that has 'S.H.I.E.L.D Is listening' on it as honestly it is the only way she can think of that will enable her to still pull of her mission.

Seeing what is on the paper Quinn nods and leads Daisy into the office, "Wow, a view of the ocean and the pool," Daisy comments.

"Not a bad place to do business," Quinn responds, as Daisy takes out her ear piece and drops it in champagne, knowing her mother and Uncle Phil are likely going to worry, but it's the best way to do what she has to do.
"Much better. Haven't felt that 'someone's watching my every move' feeling since I failed my drivers test," Daisy comments, drawing on every single one of the stories that members of her family have told and realising that telling 'half-truths' is the best option at the moment.

"You want to tell me what the hell's going on?" Quinn asks. "S.H.I.E.L.D got to you?" Quinn asks, and Daisy has to stop herself from reacting to the irony in that comment.

"They picked me up in LA, I helped them, and now they want to recruit me," Daisy explains, continuing to go with her half-truths in hopes she can stall long enough for her to either be able to pull of her mission or for Hunter to show up.

"Of course, they did," Quinn says, not looking all surprised.

"So, I played along, talk about inside info, I have a bunk on their plane," Daisy explains, being pretty sure that thanks to the way she grew up she knows more intel than most lower level S.H.I.E.L.D agents. "I've been biding my time until I could become useful. I thought this qualified," Daisy admits.

"Why would they trust you with a covert operation like this?" Quinn asks, finding things suspicious, and once more Daisy has to stop herself from reacting the way her instincts are telling her to.

"Something about S.H.I.E.L.D not breaking international laws. They had no other option, whereas I like to keep mine open," Daisy explains, sitting down on the couch.

While Daisy is inside Quinn's office Melinda and Phil, to their horror, have found out that Daisy is offline and both of them are extremely worried about that, especially because they know they are Daisy, and Hunter's, way out.

Inside Quinn's office he has explained to her what he suspects is the reason why Daisy was 'recruited' by S.H.I.E.L.D, and Daisy knows that while he made a couple of good points he is completely wrong.

"You stay with us, there's no secrets, no lies, and no agender. You're free to do what you do without big brother watching over you," Quinn explains. "But first, you have to tell me exactly what agenda S.H.I.E.L.D sent you in here with," He explains, and as he does Daisy realises that this may be the opportunity she has been waiting for.

"Well, they wanted me to do whatever it takes to get in here," Daisy says, opening the compact, making it look like she is just checking her reflection.

"Get in here and…." Quinn starts to say.

"But my eyes, get you talking," Daisy says, once the read out turns green she closes it and puts it on the table.

"No, you can't be the only angle, S.H.I.E.L.D's thorough enough to know about me and my exploits." Quinn says. "It takes more than a pretty face to disarm me," He says.

"Sir, we have a security breach," A man says, running into the room.

"Oh, the timing on that was perfect," Daisy says, with a laugh, before Quinn grabs a gun from one of his men and points it at Daisy, who quickly gets to her feet, as Quinn moves closer to her.
"Don't you get it? S.H.I.E.L.D's against everything you stand for, they're big brother," Quinn says, and as he does the door to the room opens and Daisy sees Hunter, which automatically makes her feel better.

"No, S.H.I.E.L.D's family, and family always has each other's back," Daisy says, not realising the huge clue she gave away, before using what her grandmother taught her so that she can get the gun of Quinn.

Before Quinn can even react to the fact that Daisy has the gun Hunter is pulling Quinn back from Daisy and punches him, knocking him to the ground.

"Where the hell were you?" Daisy asks, looking at her former brother in law with an annoyed look on her face.

"Ran into someone who I may own money to," Hunter admits.

"Of course, you did," Daisy says, as she hands the gun over to Hunter knowing it is the better choice.

"Let's get out of here," Hunter says, taking Daisy's hand as more security hurry into the room, and knowing it is the best way out Daisy and Hunter run out into the balcony, over it and they both land in the pool.

Seconds after they landed in the pool both Daisy and Hunter make it back to the surface.

"Are you okay?" Hunter asks concerned.

"Yeah," Daisy says, with a nod. "Mom and Uncle Phil should be here by now," Daisy realises.

"Then let's go meet them," Hunter says, as he swims over the edge, making sure Daisy is right besides him.

"Stay close, okay," Hunter tells Daisy as he throws the gun back into the pool, realising that it would be no use right now.

"Okay," Daisy says, and the two of them hear gunshots and so Hunter once more grabs Daisy's hand and the two of them start running, Hunter knowing he is going to do whatever he can to protect his little sister.

Over the next minute or so Daisy and Hunter run until they find themselves surrounded by Men and knowing what he has to do Hunter pushes Daisy behind him, doing what he can to protect her, but before he can start to take them down several of the men get taken down by Melinda and so Hunter takes down the last one.

"Mom," Daisy says, looking relieved, as she runs towards her mother and hugs her.

"Are you hurt?" Melinda asks her daughter worried.

"No, I'm fine," Daisy assures her mother.

"Then just stay with me. I'll get us out of here," Melinda assures her daughter. "Let's move we've got to meet up with Uncle Phil," Melinda says, looking between Daisy and Hunter, and ladder of whom nods.

Over the next ten or so minutes Melinda, Daisy, and Hunter meet up with Phil who was with
Doctor Hall, and once it becomes clear that Doctor Hall isn't going to reverse what he did, something which had the potential to sink the entire compound, Phil is forced to shoot out the floor below Doctor Hall, causing him to fall into the Gravitonium.

After failing to save Hall Phil, Melinda, Hunter, and Daisy make it back to the beach cove, where they are all getting ready to leave.

"It was good seeing you again, Daze," Hunter says, as he hugs Daisy.

"You too," Daisy says, as she and Hunter break apart. "Do you need a lift anywhere, we've got a pretty cool plan, and I'm sure we can take you where you need to go," Daisy says, looking between her mother and Phil.

"Of course, we can. Thank you for your help today, Hunter," Phil says.

"I was happy to help," Hunter admits, "And thanks for the offer, but I already have my next job not far from here," He reveals, and then deciding to try his luck he quickly gives Melinda a hug too, "Mum," Hunter says, as Melinda pushes him a way, in a joking way, not being as annoyed as she seems to be. "Coulson, I'm glad you're okay, Mate," Hunter says, sticking out his hand.

"I am too," Phil admits, even though he is pretty sure he is feeling a little rusty, as he and Hunter shake hands.

"I'm sure I'll see you soon," Hunter says, before going in one direction while Melinda, Daisy, and Phil go in another.

A while later Daisy, Phil, and Melinda are back on the bus, and Daisy is lying on her bed in her bunk. After a few moments of hesitation Dais pulls out her phone and calls her father.

"Daze? What's wrong? It's the middle of the night," Tony says, sounding worried.

"Sorry, I didn't realise it was that late, I'll go," Daisy says.

"Daze wait!" Tony exclaims. "What's going on, Tiny Toni?" he asks concerned.

"You're right about Ian Quinn, he's not just a dick, but evil," Daisy comments.

"Daisy, what happened?" Tony asks, feeling more worried the more his daughter said.

"Quinn is a bad guy. We found out. He had a party earlier. I managed to get invitation, for me and Hunter, we went undercover," Daisy explains.

"What happened?" Tony asks worried, knowing that his daughter wouldn't be sounding freaked if nothing happened. "Daze, talk to me."

"Quinn, he found out I was spying, pointed a gun at me. I did what Grandma taught me and got it off him, pointed it at him, and thankfully before I had to make a decision Hunter punched the guy, but I don't know if I could have pulled the Trigger," Daisy admits.

"Daze that's okay," Tony tells his daughter. "What did your Aunt Nat tell you when she taught you to use a gun?" he asks, having heard all about what happened.

"That not pulling the trigger is okay, but Dad I was on a mission, a mission I talked Mom and Uncle Phil into letting me do," Daisy explains.
"And doesn't change anything," Tony tells his daughter. "You have an amazing heart Tiny Toni, you have since the day you were born, and so it's okay if you can't pull the trigger of a gun," Tony tells his daughter. "Hurt someone, even if it's to protect yourself or someone else should be hard, it means you're human," Tony assures his daughter.

"Have you ever hesitated?" Daisy asks curious.

"Yeah, I have," Tony assures his daughter. "And you know what everyone, me, your Mom, Bobbi, Antoine, Sharon, your Uncles and Aunts, have all hesitated at some point. It's normal," Tony assures his daughter.

"Yeah?" Daisy asks.

"Yeah," Tony confirms.

"I love you, Dad. I should let you get back to sleep," Daisy tells her father.

"We can keep talking I you want," Tony tells his daughter.

"Nah, it's okay. Night Dad," Daisy says, before hanging up before her father can object further.

While her daughter is on the phone Tony Melinda is walking into Phil's office where she finds her friend attempting to take a gun apart but failing to do so.

"Used to have this down. Should be just muscle memory," Phil comments to himself.

"You're making a habit of it, Phil," Melinda comments, from the doorway.

"Trying," Phil answers. "Guess I'm a little rusty."

"Of these close calls I mean," Melinda answers, as she walks towards Phil. "I don't like not being there to watch your back, nor do I like watching Daisy in danger."

"You want off the plane?" Phil asks, knowing it will be hard for him to say goodbye to her. "Go ahead."


"You committed to the cause or just watching my back?" Phil asks curious.

"Same thing, and you are a little rusty," Melinda says, before heading out of Phil's office, and as she walks out of the office her phone rings and seeing Tony on the caller ID Melinda goes into her Bunk.

"Hey," Melinda says, as she walks into her bunk and closes the door. "It's late, what are you doing up?"

"Daze called me," Tony explains. "She told me what happened, Mel, she doesn't seem okay."

"Damn it," Melinda says, with a sigh. "I tried to talk her out of this mission, but she's stubborn, wouldn't say no, and with her was the only way we could do the mission."

"She's just like you," Tony comments.

"Sometimes, I'm not sure that's a good thing," Melinda admits.
"I am," Tony comments, and Melinda smiles slightly. "So… Ian Quinn's a bad guy."

"I know, I know. You can say I told you so," Melinda comments, looking amused.

"Nah, I'm bigger than that," Tony jokes. "How'd Hunter get involved on the mission?"

"Daisy called him," Melinda explains. "And honestly, I'm glad he was here."

"Huh, guess he can be useful," Tony comments, and the two of them drift into silence.

"Tony, I volunteered for combat, next time it's up," Melinda tells her husband. "I can't just run back end while Daisy and Phil are doing missions."

"I know. I figured it would only be a matter of time," Tony admits. "How you feeling about it?"

"Scared," Melinda admits, knowing that if it was anyone other than Tony then she probably wouldn't admit that. "But I know this is what I have to do," She reveals. "How's Peter?" Melinda asks, clearly changing the subject.

"Good," Tony admits, with a smile that Melinda can hear in his voice, and he starts to explain everything that's been going on with their son and Melinda explains what's been going on with their daughter.

Well over an hour later Melinda and Tony only just finished talking, the two of them ending up talking about everything about their children. After hanging up with Tony, Melinda who is about to go to sleep heads to Daisy's bunk to check on her.

Walking into her daughter's bunk Melinda sees that Daisy is lying in her bed, but she has clearly been tossing and turning and so her blanket has fallen on the floor.

Seeing that Melinda walks over and picks up the blanket, which she uses to one more cover Daisy up,

"Sweet dreams, Sweetheart, I love you," Melinda says, kissing her daughters head as she tucks her in.

"Mommy, don't go," Daisy says as Melinda goes to walk away, opening her eyes. "I mean…can you stay?" Daisy asks, looking slightly embarrassed.

"Of course, I can," Melinda says, moving and lying in bed next to her daughter, as even though it has been a while this is clearly what Daisy needs right now. "Go back to sleep, Daisy, I'm right here, I'm not going to leave," Melinda assures her daughter, who snuggles into her side and before long Daisy is fast asleep feeling safe next to her mother, even after the day she just had.
Chapter 54

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support. I really hope you enjoy this chapter.

It has been a few days since the mission in Malta and ever since then Daisy has been learning more from her mother, so that she is more prepared next time she is in a dangerous situation. It's about midday and Daisy is sitting on her computer in the living area of the Bus,

"OH, COME ON, THAT'S CHEATING!" Daisy yells at her computer.

"Is there a problem, Daisy?" Phil asks, walking towards her.

"Yeah, I'm playing an online shooting game with Peter and Uncle Clint, and Uncle Clint is beating all the records. He's so cheating, and Pete agrees," Daisy explains, as she is also talking to her little brother on a separate chat window.

"Probably not," Phil answers. "What made you, and Peter, think playing a shooting game against the best marksmen in the world would be a good idea?" he asks curious.

"We thought it would be fun, and neither of us have seen Uncle Clint in a while so we thought this would be a good compromise," Daisy admits, looking down. "I'll beat him," Daisy responds, sounding determine. "Did you need something Uncle Phil?" Daisy asks curious.

"Yes, if you're not too busy with your game I'd like it if you could help your mom and I with something," Phil explains.

"Sure, Uncle Clint's beat me fifteen games in a row, I could probably use a break, he can beat Peter for a while," Daisy admits, closing her computer. "What's up?" she asks curious.

"Somebody's stealing millions of dollars in diamonds. They've found a way to crack the security systems. I want you to figure out their exploit," Phil explains.

"Sounds fun," Daisy says, with a grin, a grin that in Phil's opinion makes her look a hell of a lot like her mother.

A little while after Daisy and Phil's conversation Phil, Daisy, and Melinda are in a subway car in Stockholm, Daisy feeling very much like her mother is doing a SHIELD version of 'Take your Daughter to work day'

"Yesterday, twenty-five men, all military, were hired by one of the largest gem brokers in the world," Phil explains. "They dressed the men in identical outfits, gave each one a randomly assigned briefcase, and sent them along twenty-five different routes here in Stockholm," He reveals, "No one knew which briefcase contained the diamonds but they were still stolen," Phil explains.

"Why the Kabuki theatre?" Melinda asks.
"They were afraid because somebody's targeting diamonds, an armoured car in Milan, a safe in Monte Carlo, and now this, over thirty million total," Phil explains, "Each theft occurred despite heavy security," Phil explains.

"They sound like inside jobs," Melinda notes.

"A lot of people share that opinion," Phil comments.

"You don't," Daisy says, being able to tell that, "CCTV cameras catch any of the action?" Daisy asks curious.

"Fitz-Simmons is checking," Phil admits. "The system went dark for an hour. They think it was hacked," He admits.

"It was the same thieves each time?" Melinda asks.

"Yes, but it was just one thief, a woman, and she did it all with her eyes closed," Phil explains.

"Eyewitnesses ID her?" Melinda asks, and Daisy watches her mother and Phil going back and forth, feeling like her mother suspects something, she doesn't, but she isn't sure what.

"Black, athletic build, late 20s, early 30s," Phil explains.

"So, you asked about she could have cracked the system. I have a pitch, but it's way out the box," Daisy admits.

"I live out the box," Phil says.

"So lame," Daisy says, with a fond smile, knowing perfectly well that Phil has always been amusing, but that's who he's always been. "Look, all three of us know from firsthand knowledge that there are people in this world with powers, what if this woman has ESP or something?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and uncle, both of whom give her less than impressed looks in return.

"Daisy there are no credible studies that support, precognition, telepathy, or extrasensory perception," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Okay, so science says 'no', but this women knew impossible things, and why did she close her eyes?" Daisy asks. "That's either random or totally important. Was she listening, or was she reading minds?" Daisy asks, putting her hand to her head, and once more Phil and Melinda give her less than impressed looks. "I'm gonna go play with my phone now," Daisy says, walking over to one of the seats and sitting down.

"Why does HQ want us to investigate these heists?" Melinda asks Phil, getting the feeling that there is something he's not saying, in fact she would bet good money on that.

"They don't, I picked this op," Phil says, causing Melinda to frown. "Any luck?" Phil asks, looking at Daisy.

"Yep. I'm getting full bars, which means if I was down here and twenty-five guys were in scary red masks, you know what I would do? Instagram," Daisy explains, showing her mother and Phil her phone.

A little while later Phil, Melinda, and Daisy are back on the plane in Phil's office, looking at all the
images that were taken around the time of the heist.

"It's amazing, every year this part of our job gets easier," Phil comments, remembering with perfect clarity how hard things were when he and Melinda started out. "Between Facebook, Instagram and Flickr people are surveilling themselves," Phil explains.

"With many filters to choose from," Daisy says. "You know this tech is awesome, there are so many people who would kill to be able to tag and search like this," Daisy admits, knowing that people will often kill for her father's tech, but she isn't going to mention that as both her mother and uncle know that.

"Which is exactly why we're the only ones who have it," Phil reveals.

"Do you want me to run facial-recognition software on the photos, cross reference them with our criminal database?" Daisy asks curious.

"You don't have to," Phil says, recognizing someone. "That's the thief, her name's Akela Amador," Phil reveals, and Melinda recognizes the name.

"You're certain?" Melinda asks.

"I should be, I trained her," Phil says, saying what Melinda already knows, but Daisy doesn't. "Akela Amador was a S.H.I.E.L.D agent," Phil says, as he, Melinda and Daisy turn and head out of the office. "Seven years ago, she led a raid on one of Vanchat's gulags," Phil explains, "Everyone believed that she and the two other agents on the mission were killed. I had my doubts, so I sent in a second team, just in case," Phil says, as he, Melinda and Daisy walk down the stairs. "They found a lot of carnage but couldn't confirm that any of it was Amador, left the possibility open,"

"That's why you chose this op, when you heard about the heists," Melinda realises.

"There are only a few women in the world who could pull of something so impossible, since you're on the bus I thought it had to be her," Phil explains, and Melinda nods as if to say, 'sounds about right.' While Daisy just looks at her mother impressed and Phil walks into the command centre, followed by Melinda and Daisy.

"Swedish customs confirmed that Amador left the country using an alias on a Swedish passport," Ward explains. "She flew into Belarus, bought a train ticket to a town called Zloda," Ward explains, "I've also put together a list of individuals who could fence that many diamonds," Ward explains, as something beeps. "There's been no contact or activity,"

"Maybe she's saving them for a rainy day, buying something special," Phil suggests, "Let's focus on finding Amador," He instructs.

"I'll let HQ know she's alive so they can assist with the manhunt," Melinda says.

"I'd like to hold off on that, until we know more, contact Belarus authorities, find us a place to park the bus," Phil says, looking at Melinda, "Put together a list of inns, hotels, and pensions near Zloda, they're can't be many of them, we'll find her," Phil says, and once he does Melinda and Ward leave.

"Don't do that to yourself Uncle Phil," Daisy says, recognizing the look.

"Do what?" Phil asks.

"I know that look, you're blaming yourself because you trained Amador, but what she did isn't your
fault," Daisy says, knowing that. "Uncle Phil I know you would have done your best to teach her, so if she went to the dark side then that's on her, not you," Daisy says, before leaving the command centre, leaving Phil to his thoughts.

After leaving Phil and the command centre Daisy heads to the cockpit, so that she can talk to her mother. Once she gets to the cockpit Daisy sit down in the co-pilots seat and doesn't say anything as she tries to figure out how to say what she wants to say.

"Did you need something Daisy?" Melinda asks, being able to tell that Daisy wants to ask something but is hesitating.

"I'm worried about Uncle Phil," Daisy admits.

"There's no need, Uncle Phil's fine," Melinda says, though she knows that he is taking this case personally.

"Is he?" Daisy ask, sounding disbelieving. "It seems like he is blaming himself for what this Amador is doing," Daisy admits, it being more than clear that she is concerned, and so Melinda puts the plane on autopilot and turns to look at Daisy.

"Uncle Phil cares, Daisy, you know that," Melinda says to her daughter. "Amador was his student so if she has gone bad he'll keep wondering what he could have done differently, he'll want to try to save her," Melinda explains.

"That sounds like Uncle Phil," Daisy admits, smiling slightly. "How can we help him?" she asks curious, "How can I help him?"

"There's not really anything you can do," Melinda admits, though she is going to keep Phil from doing something stupid. "But you can just be there for him," Melinda suggests, and Daisy just nods, feeling like she would like to do more.

A while later Daisy, Phil, Ward, Fitz and Simmons have travelled to a town in Belerus and while Phil and Ward are looking for Amador Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons are still in the van that the group were traveling in.

In the van Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy have found a strange signal in the area and so the three of them are trying to find out more.

"I can't stabilize it," Fitz reveals. "There's an encrypted local signal competing," He explains.

"Mirror it over," Daisy requests. "There's a couple of exploits that I know of that might work," She explains, planning on using a few things that her father taught her, and Fitz does just that and so Daisy types on her computer for the next minute or so, feeling close to her father like she always does when she does computer related stuff. "One last thing, ta-da, and you're welcome," Daisy says, as the new signal starts to play on both Daisy's computer and the screen Fitz and Simmons are looking at.

"What kind of TV show is this?" Fitz asks, asks he, Daisy, and Jemma see an image of something getting closer to a van. "That looks a bit like our van," He realises.

"What are we looking at?" Daisy asks, hoping her suspicion isn't correct as the image changes to what looks like x-ray vision, as Fitz gesturers.

"Us," Fitz says, and seconds later the van is hit.
"Let's get out of here," Daisy says, hurrying to the front of the van, but she can't reach the peddles. "Oh, stupid tall person," She comments, as she looks out and recognizes the driver. "Call Uncle Phil, get the gun, it's her," Daisy explains, as Simmons hands her the gun. "Just breath, Daisy," She says, thinking about what her Aunt Natasha and Big sister told her before she squeezes the trigger, firing four shots at the van coming towards them, but it seems to do nothing as their van is knocked over, and everyone, and everything, inside of it are thrown around.

"FITZ! DAISY!" Simmons's voice yells seconds later.

"I'm okay, Jemma," Fitz says, getting to his feet. "Are you?" he asks, concerned, helping her to her feet.

"I'm fine," Simmons assures him.

"Me too," Daisy confirms, sitting up as while she feels a little sore she doesn't think she's hurt. "We should get out of here, we're too vulnerable," Daisy says, as she picks up the gun and puts the safety on.

"We can't drive the van," Simmons points out.

"So, we walk," Daisy suggests. "I just think we should get out of here," Being pretty sure that that's what either of her parents would recommend doing in this situation.

"I agree," Fitz says, as Daisy finds her phone. "Let's go," He suggests, and the three youngest members of the team climb out of the van, Daisy making a call as she does.

"Daisy?" Phil asks, answering the call.

"Amador was here. She attacked us," Daisy explains.

"Are any of you hurt?" Phil asks concerned.

"A little banged up, but okay," Daisy assures him.

"Ward and I will be right there, if it's safe stay with the van, if not we'll find you," Phil tells Daisy.

"Okay," Daisy says, nodding even though Phil can't see, before she hangs up. "Uncle Phil and Ward will be here soon," She explains.

"Good," Fitz and Simmons say, both of them sounding very glad about that fact.

A little while later Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, Ward, and Phil walk back onto the bus, where Melinda is waiting on the platform, it being more than clear to Daisy and Phil that she is more than happy, and while Phil and Ward head upstairs and Fitz, and Simmons head into the lab, Daisy waits near Lola, and her mother walks down the stairs to her, past Phil who she is clearly not happy with.

Once she is close enough Melinda hugs her daughter, tightly, before they finally break apart,

"Are you alright? Are you hurt in anyway?" Melinda asks her daughter concerned.

"I'm fine," Daisy answers.

"Maybe you should let Simmons run some tests," Melinda suggests, showing her protective side, as she has always been protective of her children.
"Mom, really I'm fine, there's no need to do that," Daisy assures her mother. "But um, what do I do with this?" Daisy asks, pulling the gun from the back of her pants.

"I'll take it," Melinda says, as she does exactly that. "You used it," she realises.

"Yeah, didn't slow down Amador though," Daisy admits.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Melinda asks, knowing there is no point in pushing Daisy and so she makes the offer.

"It was hard, but I knew I had to do it," Daisy admits. "Which is exactly why I want to work to figure out exactly what was going on with that signal, maybe even figure out a way to track it,"

"Are you sure you're up for that?" Melinda asks.

"Positive," Daisy answers. "Today was scary, and pulling that trigger was hard, but I'm okay, Mom, really," Daisy promises her mother.

"Wǒ jiānqiáng de xiǎo nǚhái," Melinda says. (my strong little girl)

"Mom," Daisy says, drawing out the world, looking embarrassed, knowing exactly what was said as all of the Stark-May children were taught to speak fluent Chinese (mandarin, Cantonese and the dialect from where Melinda's parents are from) and Italian, and enough Russian and Sign Language to get by. "Aren't I getting a little old for that?"

"Never," Melinda informs her daughter, before once more hugging her and it is clear from the hug that Melinda doesn't want to let her go, but she finally does.

A little while after breaking apart from her daughter Melinda heads up to her bunk, and once she is in her bunk she pulls out her phone and makes a phone call.

"Hello," Tony says, answering the phone after a few rings.

"It's me,"

"Is everything okay?" Tony asks concerned.


"What! Why? Is she okay!" Tony asks, sounding terrified for his daughter.

"Yeah, she's okay.' Melinda assures her husband.

"Good, that's good," Tony comments. "When can you come home? Even if it's just for a visit?" He asks curious.

"I'm not sure," Melinda admits. "We're busy at the moment," She admits, a level of sadness to her voice, "I miss you and Peter, so much," She says, also missing Bobbi, but Bobbi's not home with Tony and Peter either.

"We miss you too, and Daze," Tony responds. "How much longer can you talk?" he asks, assuming that it will not be long

"I can't, I just wanted to tell you what was going on," Melinda admits.

"Okay, I love you," Tony responds.
"Love you too," Melinda responds, before hanging up.

A little over an hour later everyone who is on the bus is down in the lab as Daisy has found something.

"Something's wrong. It's the same feed that was watching us in the van," Daisy reveals, honestly wishing she could get JARVIS to check it out as something is extremely odd. "Put it on the big monitor," She requests.

"Maybe the lens broke when the van rammed us," Simmons suggests.

"I hope she broke more than that," Daisy mutters.

"It's a mirror," Phil realises. "Are we recording this?"

"Uh, we are now," Daisy says, pressing something on a tablet, knowing that JARVIS would have been recording automatically which is just one of many reasons why she misses him.

"Whoa," Fitz says, sounding amazed.

"How are we seeing this? Where's the camera?" Phil asks, as everyone watches as a screw driver comes straight at Amador's eye.

"It's her eye, she's the camera," Melinda realises as the image changes.

"It switches to backscatter when she closes her eyes," Fitz says.

"You're a robot, can you do that?" Daisy asks, looking at Ward with a teasing smile, and in response he just gives her an annoyed look, and both Daisy and Melinda, even though neither of them completely understand the technology they know it's a big deal thanks to Tony and Peter.

"Who has tech like this?" Ward asks, knowing the answer perfectly well, but not wanting that to be public.

"We don't, not like this," Fitz reveals. "Not this small and internal. That's at least a decade ahead of anything I've seen," Fitz reveals, "Though, now that I've seen it, I could maybe approximate it, the backscatter x-ray, a micro-transceiver that somehow doesn't fry her brain, an internal power source…" Fitz starts to say.

"All miniaturized," Simmons finishes, "Honestly, it'…,

"That's genius," Fitz and Simmons say.

"We have to bring her in," Phil says.

"We have to take her out," Melinda corrects. "She's a weapon. I'll call H.Q, see if we can bring a task force in to help us," Melinda informs Phil.

"Our team can handle this," Phil says, and once he does Melinda walks over to him, and stands right in front of him, Daisy pulling a face at that, as she recognizes what is going to happen perfectly well, Phil and Melinda are going to fight, as this won't be the first time she sees it.

"I get it. you feel responsible, maybe you pushed her too hard, but she tried to kill three members of our team," Melinda says, it being more than clear to Phil that she is angry about what happened to Daisy.
"If she wanted us dead, we'd be dead," Phil informs her.

"We got lucky," Melinda corrects, "You want to risk our lives again?" she asks.

"You told me that you were ready for combat, that you had my back," Phil reminds Melinda, and as he does Daisy is pretty sure this won't end well.

"Don't ever doubt it," Melinda says, sounding angry. "But you are defending this girl at the expense of the team," She points out.

"Because we protect our own," Phil responds.

"With all due respect, sir, she's not one of our own," Ward says, honestly feeling bored with Melinda and Phil's fighting, though he takes notices of everything being said, just in case he wants to use it in the future.

"Guys," Daisy says, putting an end to the glaring match going between Melinda and Phil, and everyone turns to the screen to see Amador asking for permission to sleep.

"Why does she have to ask for permission?" Simmons asks.

"She's not being watched, she's being controlled," Phil realises. "We have to find her. We'll take shifts watching the feed. Sooner or later she'll look at something that will clue us into her location," Phil realises.

"I'll take first watch," Melinda says, knowing it's the best way she has to protect her team, her daughter especially, and Phil nods and leaves.

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A little while later Daisy, who has been watching the feed with her mother, has headed up to Phil's office where she knocks on the doorframe, causing him to look up,

"I just wanted to give you a quick update," Daisy says, walking into Phil's office. "She's still at the hotel, so… that's the update," Daisy says. "Pretty weird day, huh? I actually pulled the trigger on the gun and it was like we were trapped in a van-shaped piñata,"

"That should never happened," Phil says, meaning both of those things.

"It's okay, it wasn't nearly as terrible as watching you and Mom fight downstairs," Daisy admits.

"That shouldn't have happened either," Phil admits. "I'm sorry you had to see that," Phil says, knowing that would have been hard for Daisy.

"It's not the first time," Daisy says, shrugging slightly. "You and Mom try to hide it but I can always tell when you're fighting," She admits.

'You can?" Phil asks, sounding surprised.

"Yep, Peter, Bobbi, Antoine and Sharon can too," Daisy confirms, talking about the 'kids' of the family. "You both give each other these looks when you think the others not looking, Dad and Uncle Clint calls them your 'Philinda is super pissed off look,'" Daisy reveals, with a grin, as she is pretty sure that her father and Uncle make jokes of it so that it doesn't seem like a big deal and thus no one one worries.

"Really?" Phil asks, once more sounding surprised.
"Yep," Daisy confirms, and Phil thinks he and Melinda, when they're not angry with each other, should talk to each other and then decide if they should talk to Clint and Tony. "I take comfort in the fact that you always make up," Daisy reveals, causing Phil to laugh a little. "Look Uncle Phil, I trust your judgment, and I know you're an excellent judge of Character, so if you think this woman deserves a second chance then we should give it to her." Daisy admits.

"Really, you think so?" Phil asks.

"Yep, because I trust you," Daisy admits. "Thought I she did try to kill me so I want to kick her ass for that," Daisy says, and Phil gives her a look. "What? I'm my mothers daughter," Daisy says, with a proud look before leaving the office, leaving Phil with a lot to think about.
A while after Daisy left Phil's office she is asleep in her bunk, and has been for a little while, when she feels herself being shaken awake. For the seconds that follow Daisy being woken up she is confused, but then she realises who woke her up,

"Uncle Phil? What is it?" Daisy asks, sounding confused.

"It's your Mom," Phil explains, and once he does Daisy bolts upright,

"Is she okay? What's happened?" Daisy asks worried.

"She's gone after Akela, I'm going to the hotel," Phil explains.

"I'm coming," Daisy requests, standing up. "Should we call Dad?"

"No," Phil answers, not needing to think about it, as he knows Tony will react badly to that and with this being a SHIELD mission he doesn't need to know, at least not now.

"Can you pass me my hoddie?" Daisy asks, and as she does Phil sees it on the shelf and so he reaches over and grabs it, being amused at what is on it as he hands it over.

"Iron Man?" Phil asks, suspecting that Tony would love it.

"Yep, it's awesome," Daisy says, with a grin, as she puts on her shoes. "Let's go," Daisy says, standing up and putting the hoddie on, not caring that she is still in her pyjamas.

"Okay, but you're going to stay back and do what I tell you," Phil requests, as they head out of Daisy's bunk.

"Of course," Daisy responds, with a tone of voice that tells Phil that she is probably not going to listen.

"I'm serious, Daisy," Phil tells her.

"I know Uncle Phil," Daisy responds, as they both head out of the plane, hoping that Melinda is okay.

While Daisy and Phil are hurrying to her Melinda has arrived at Amador's hotel room and Amador woke up the second Melinda turned on the light

"Whoever's monitoring you, do they have audio?" Melinda asks.

"No, but they'll use facial recognition to determine you're a S.H.I.E.L.D agent," Amador explains, recognizing Melinda.
"So, I don't have to introduce myself," Melinda comments, as she stands up.

"Did Coulson send you?" Amador asks curious.

"No. he feels sorry for you, I don't," Melinda says. "I bring you into S.H.I.E.L.D you'll get a fair trial, and no one else gets hurt," Melinda explains, as she will not, can not, let her daughter get hurt again.

"You have no idea, do you?" Amador asks, sounding surprised.

"We know that you receive orders," Melinda admits.

"Then you know that once they see you, only one of us gets to walk out alive," Amador says, standing up. "They built in a fail-safe, either I kill you, or they kill me," Amador explains.

"You should have stayed in bed," Melinda says, completely meaning that, and the two of them start to fight.

For the next couple of minutes Melinda and Amador fight, Melinda getting the upper hand, until the door opens and Phil shots Amador with a pistol version of the gun used on Mike, a gun that knocks a person out but doesn't cause harm.

"Mom," Daisy says, running into the room.

"I'm fine, Daisy," Melinda assures her daughter, as she returns the hug.

"Good," Daisy says, when they break apart, "What the hell were you thinking, Mom?" Daisy asks shocked, and angry.

"Daisy…" Melinda starts to say.

"No Mom, don't Daisy me, you went off on your own, which you, and Dad, got really angry at me doing by the way…," Daisy starts to say.

"Daisy, not now," Phil says, cutting her off, causing Daisy to look at him. "We've got to get Akela back to the Bus before the dendrotoxin wears off, you can talk to your Mom there, alright?"

"Fine," Daisy says, sounding annoyed.

"Good. Let's move," Phil says, as he picks up Amador, and once he does he, Melinda and Daisy head out of hotel room.

Not long after they left the hotel Daisy, Melinda and Phil get back to the bus and while Ward and Phil take Amador up to the cage Melinda and Daisy stay in the cargo bay.

"Daisy…," Melinda starts to say, once Ward and Phil disappear upstairs.

"What were you thinking Mom?" Daisy asks, sounding hurt. "Amador could have killed you," She points out.

"That's exactly why I went Daisy, so no one else would get hurt," Melinda tells her daughter.

"What about you, Mom?" Daisy asks, tears welling in her eyes. "Bobbi, Peter, and I have lost so much, almost lost Dad, did lose Uncle Phil, at least for a little while, do you want us to lose you too?" She asks, her voice breaking.
"Oh, Daisy," Melinda says, walking forward and embracing her daughter, and as she hugs her daughter she kisses her head, before they break apart and Melinda puts both her hands-on Daisy's shoulders. "Daisy, protecting this team is my job, it's what I do," Melinda explains. "But I promise you I will always do everything in my power to come back to you, and your brother, and your sister, and your Dad, just like I always have, okay?" Melinda asks.

"Okay," Daisy says, "I love you so much,"

"I love you too," Melinda responds. "Daisy, on this bus I will put myself in danger if I have to, it's what I do," Melinda admits. "Do you think you'll be able to handle that? Or do you want to go home?" she asks, there being a not so small part of her that want's her daughter to choose to go home as even though she will miss her so much she knows that she will be safe, which is what matters.

"I can handle that," Daisy says, with a nod, sounding determined.

"Okay," Melinda confirms.

"Daisy, we need you," A voice says from above and Daisy looks up to see Phil.

"Go," Melinda tells her daughter, who hurries upstairs, leaving Melinda in the cargo bay, and as she does Melinda takes out her phone and sends a message. 'Hey Pete, have a great day at school tomorrow, good luck with your history test, love Mom.' And within seconds she gets a response back.

'Thanks Mom, love you too,'

A little while after her conversation with her mother Daisy has gotten dressed into actual clothes and is sitting in the back of the SUV on her computer while Ward, who is wearing glasses, stops the car and cuts off the engine.

"Where are we?" Daisy asks, curious.


"Looks like a pretty crappy place, like a prison," Daisy admits.

"We wireless yet?" Ward asks curious, and Daisy continues to type.

"Yep, ready to detach," Daisy says, leaning forward and going to disconnect cords from the glasses Ward is wearing and as she does he flinches. "Don't look at me! They need to think you're her," Daisy says. "And oh, my god, super spy is ticklish," Daisy says, looking amused, and she detaches ward and goes back to typing on her computer for another minute or so, and also connects a battery pack "It would really suck to live like this, wondering if someone's watching," Daisy says, as while she knows technically JARVIS is always watching that is very different, at least in her option.

"Testing backscatter," Ward says, and once he does Daisy sees Backscatter on her computer.

"Good to go," Daisy says, leaning forward to hand Ward the battery pack she was working on.

"Remember, I can't look at you, much less give you help," Ward tells Daisy.

"Got it, don't count on you for help," Daisy says, and Ward gets up and leaves. "I'll be watching," Daisy mutters to herself as Ward heads towards the building.
A little while after Ward left Daisy Ward has made it through the building and to a area of the building where there is a man where the messages that Daisy is intercepting called a target.

"Target? Does that mean what I think it means?" Daisy asks.

"Probably, it's never good, especially for the target," Ward explains. "Let's hope it's a knockout and not a kill," Ward hopes.

"You should get out of there," Daisy says.

"I've come this far, I'll finish, whatever it takes," Ward says, knowing that that is what Garrett needs, as a message saying 'seduce him' comes up. "Help.", something which Daisy can't help but laugh at.

"I'm sorry, did you just say help? Because a minute ago you said you didn't' want or need my help," Daisy says, clearly being more than a little amused that Ward needs her help.

"That was before they asked me to go all Mata Hari on this guy," Ward explains, with a sigh, "I'm just gonna knock him out," He says.

"Ward wait!" Daisy quickly says. "If we want to get through the next door we might need him, it would be why the order was seduce, not kill," She says, knowing that would logically make sense.

"I don't think I'm his type," Ward responds.

"Give me a sec," Daisy requests, and she uses her computer to get a better look. "Okay, cheap haircut, five o'clock shadow, I could be wrong, but odds are you guys play for the same team," Daisy admits, and she wracks her brain to think of everything various members of her family, especially Natasha, Bobbi, Sharon, and even Hope especially have taught her, "You're gonna have to bromance him,"

"What?" Ward asks confused.

"Talk sports, vodka, the Victorianov secret catalogue, be friendly, Agent Ward, can you be friendly?" Daisy asks curious. "Please don't die," Daisy mutters.

Over the next minute Ward tries to talk his way past the man at the desk, but it doesn't work and so he knocks him out and heads into a room where are two men and strange writing on the wall.

"What now? Are you supposed to grab one of these guys?" Daisy asks, as Ward walks closer to the strange writing and once he does he, and Daisy, both hear a click, and Ward heads back out of the room and as he does he realises something,

"Figured out what I needed the guard for, his password," He explains.

"Maybe I can talk you though a hack," Daisy offers. "Just give me a minute," Daisy requests, and as she does a lot of alarms start to go off, wondering if she can get away with giving JARVIS access to her computer, which JARVIS could then use to get access to other systems.

"No more minutes," Ward reveals. "Meet me on the south side of the building, ASAP," Ward says, as he takes the guys gun.

"Gotcha," Daisy says to herself as she gets out of the SUV. "Which sides south?" Daisy asks herself as she hurries to the front seat of the car.
A while later Daisy and Ward have both returned to the Bus. Phil and Melinda have discovered that Akela's handler is just as trapped as she is, and the women herself has been handed over to S.H.I.E.L.D, though she no longer has the cybernetic eye.

While everyone is spread out throughout the plan Daisy is once more sitting in the cargo bay, waiting for Clint, or Peter, to log on so that they can play their shooting game together.

"Daisy," A voice says, and Daisy looks up to see Fitz.

"Yeah, Fitz?" Daisy asks curious. "Did you need something?"

"Not exactly," Fitz says, and Daisy gives him a confused look. "You said Physics is your least favourite class, ever since I have been thinking about that so I designed some experiments to show you that physics is great," Fitz explains.

"Really?" Daisy asks, looking amazed. "You did that for me?" she asks feeling touched as she is reminded of her father and Peter, who have tried very similar things with her.

"For science, everyone should love science," Fitz corrects. "And I, well Simmons and I really, thought if we could look at your syllabus I could design some experiments directly relating to what you have to learn, if you want," He explains.

"That would be great," Daisy says, closing her computer, being further reminded of her father and Peter. "Can we start now? I have my syllabus on my computer," Daisy explains.

"Sure, everything's already set up," Fitz says, and once he does Daisy gets up and they both head into the lab, neither realising that Ward is standing on the platform frowning because he is supposed to be getting closer to Daisy, not Fitz and Simmons.

After spending hours doing experiences with Fitz and Simmons Daisy realised that her feelings about physics haven't really changed, and probably never will, to her father and Brother's dismay, she did find herself truly enjoying their company, and feeling tired Daisy is headed back to her bunk.

As Daisy lays on her bunk she is flickering through the photos on her phone, smiling as she sees photos of everyone who she considers family, and as she looks at a picture of her and Natasha, Daisy pauses and after a moment of debate, she exits out of her photos, goes to her contacts and calls Aunt Nat, as she is pretty sure that she is the best person to help her with the questions she has.

"Joe's smoke shack how may I help you?" Natasha's voice answers after a few rings, and as it is an old code Daisy can't help but smile to herself.

"I'd like a number five," Daisy confirms, with a grin, as it's one of her inside jokes with her aunt.

"How you doing Daze?" Natasha asks curious.

"Good, um, okay, can you talk?" Daisy asks, knowing that there is always a chance that she can't.

"I can talk, so why don't you tell me what's going on," Natasha responds, being able to tell that something is up.

"It's Mom, she's not hurt or anything," Daisy quickly says, not wanting Natasha to worry. "I just want some help understanding something and I think you're the only one who can help me with
that," Daisy explains, as she is pretty sure that while her father would know, he may not be able to explain it in the best way, same with Bobbi, but she is pretty certain that Natasha can.

"If I can I will," Natasha assures Daisy, not being able to help but wonder what the hell is going on.

"So Mom and I were on mission, and she purposely put herself in danger, which is something she and Dad got really mad at me for a couple of weeks ago, but whatever that's not what I want to talk about. What I want to talk about is when I asked her about what she did she said that protecting the team is what she does, that she will put herself in danger if she has to, and I was wondering has she always done that? Do you know why?" Daisy asks, speaking faster than usual as she thinks she as heard her parents talking about that at some point but she cannot remember the exact details.

"Daisy, slow down," Natasha requests. "Now, what the hell are you talking about?" Natasha asks, clearly confused, which Daisy doesn't think she's ever heard. "What do you mean you and your Mom were on mission?" Natasha asks confused. "And what team?" she asks, as even if Melinda was on a mission, there is no reason she can think of why Daisy would be on it.

"You don't know…," Daisy says, eyes widening as she realises that she may have just made a huge mistake. "I thought…. Um, I got to go, great talking to you Aunt Nat," Daisy says, before quickly hanging up as she is pretty sure she just revealed something that is going to get her in a lot of trouble, and if she stays on the phone with Natasha she is likely to reveal more things than she shouldn't. "Oh shit," Daisy says to herself once she hangs up, and realising what she has to do Daisy hurries out of her bunk and to the cockpit.

"MOM," Daisy calls as she runs into the cockpit.

"Daisy, what's wrong?" Melinda asks, clearly worried.

"So, you're probably going to get a call from Aunt Nat because I called her and said something that I now realise I probably shouldn't have, and she's confused, so sorry," Daisy says continuing to talk quickly.

"Daisy, what are you…," Melinda starts to say, before she is cut off by a phone ringing.

"Okay, bye," Daisy says, before hurrying out of the cockpit.

"Daisy!" Melinda calls after her daughter, but because she figures she will get more of an explanation from Natasha, even if she will have to give an explanation of her own, she answers the call, "Hello,"

"What the hell is going on, Mel?" Natasha asks, without even saying hello.

"Hello to you too, Nat," Melinda responds as she walks over and closes, and locks, the cockpit door so that she can talk to Natasha in private.

"Not the time, Mel. What's going on?" Natasha asks.

"I'm going to need more of a question than that," Melinda responds, as she sits down.

"Please, you never do, but I'll play along," Natasha responds. "Daisy said you've been on mission, that you have a team, that she's with you, what the hell is going on?" Natasha once more asks, and as she does Melinda knows she has to be careful about how she answers as Natasha knows her well enough to be able to figure out everything if given a little, and while Natasha has been informed that Phil is alive, they don't know how that happened or what could happen.
"I'm apart of a team, on a mobile command unit, Daisy stowed away and Tony and I agreed that she could stay for six weeks to help out and learn, as long as she kept up with her school work," Melinda explains.

"This team has something to do with Phil? How he's okay, doesn't it?" Natasha asks.

"What makes you say that?" Melinda asks, wondering what Natasha has realised as it would be bad if she realised too much.

"Please, as soon as you and Tony told us that Phil was alive I knew something was going on," Natasha admits. "You wouldn't go back in the field unless there was a very, very good reason, and if it meant Daisy joining you you'd resign rather than put her in danger, unless there was a very, very good reason… what's really going on?" Natasha asks concerned.

"I can't answer that," Melinda says, as she cannot tell Natasha more about what is going on, even though she may want to.

"I'll talk to Fury then," Natasha says, being pretty sure that if Melinda can't give her answers then she'll make him. "And you should talk to Daisy, she confused, and concerned, she needs to understand why you do what you do,"

"I will," Melinda confirms. "How are you Nat, really?" Melinda asks, realising that it has been a while since they talked.

"Pretty okay actually," Natasha admits, and once she does the two old friends begin to talk and catch up, as the last time they saw each other was when Melinda and Tony told Natasha and Clint that Phil was alive, which was a while ago.

A little while later Melinda has finished her conversation with Natasha and has headed to her daughter's bunk to talk to her. When she gets to Daisy's bunk knocks on the slightly openly door.

"Yeah," Daisy's voice says, and Melinda pushes it open the rest of the way,

"Can I come in?" Melinda asks, looking at Daisy who is sitting on her bed.

"Sure," Daisy responds, and so Melinda walks over and sits next to her, and puts an arm around her daughter. "Am I in trouble? I thought Aunt Nat knew,"

"You're not in trouble," Melinda assures her daughter as it was natural for her to assume that. "Aunt Nat knows that Uncle Phil is alive, but didn't know about me being back in the field, and she Definity didn't know that you were with us,"

"Why not?" Daisy asks, looking curious.

"Two reasons, the first is that Fury wants to restrict who knows what, and the second is that I wanted to tell Aunt Natasha, and Uncle Clint, in person, not over the phone," Melinda explains.

"That makes sense," Daisy realises.

"Yeah, it does" Melinda confirms. "Daisy, I want to explain something to you, tell you a story,"

"Okay," Daisy says, feeling confused though she snuggles closer into her mothers' arm.

"You know that when I was growing up I used to do Ice Skating before I switched to martial arts," Melinda tells her daughter.
"Because there were padded floors and you could hit people," Daisy says, with a grin.

"Yeah," Melinda confirms, smiling slightly. "When I was a kid I worried about my mom when she was on mission… of course I don't have to explain to you what it's like," Melinda tells Daisy.

"You really don't," Daisy confirms. "I worry about you, and Dad, a lot.'

"I know," Melinda says, as she kisses her daughter's head. "I was set to join the CIA, I had already been accepted, had told your Uncle Richard…;"

"Peter's biological father," Daisy realises, and Melinda nods.

"We were going to join together, but then one day, I went to go see Aunt Peggy, I wanted some advice, and as we started to talk we talked more about SHIELD," Melinda explains. "We talked about a lot, but what stuck with me, what always stuck with me is when she told me that SHIELD's agents protect, Daze, in whatever form that is needed, and so that's what I'm always going to do, protect, even if that puts me in danger because that's who I am," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"I guess I get that," Daisy admits, sounding uncertain. "I just really don't want to lose you Mom,"

"I know," Melinda says, placing a kiss on her daughter's head, and the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side in Daisy's bunk.

For a little while Daisy and Melinda just sit side by side in silence, and as they do Daisy realises something, knows what she wants,

"Mom, can we call Dad, Pete, and Bobbi?" Daisy asks curious.

"Sure," Melinda says, and Daisy grabs her computer and makes a group video chat with the apartment and Bobbi, after a few seconds her sister, brother, and father, all answer.

"MOM! I Did great on my test!" Peter reveals, looking excited.

"Pete, that's great, congrats," Melinda says, with a grin.

"Really is, well done, Pete," Daisy tells her brother.

"Thanks Daze," Peter says, with a grin.

"Little Bird, you okay?" Tony asks concerned.

"Yeah, just been working a lot," Bobbi answers.

"You should rest," Melinda tells her daughter.

"I will," Bobbi answers.

"Good," Tony tells his daughter, "How'd your mission go?" he asks, looking at Daisy and Melinda.

"Good," Melinda and Daisy both respond, and the family of four proceed to talk, and catch up, all four of them feeling very, very glad to be able to talk to one another again, even if they aren't together.
Chapter 56

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: Thank you so much for the support.

Sorry about there being no update in the past few days. Like so many others I have been getting used to what life is like now and haven't been writing.

Law School has been moved online and I am facing the reality of not finishing when I was expecting too.

I don't know what the coming days/weeks will look at in regards to updating but I will try to update at least one story a day.

Hope you all stay healthy.

October 24th 2013

Ever since Daisy, Fitz and Simmons undertook Physic experiments together the three of them have become even closer, to Ward's dismay, and because he knows he has to try to get closer to Daisy if he is going to achieve his mission Ward has resulted to playing board games with Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons in the upper level of the plane.

"I can't believe you actually agreed to play games with us," Daisy comments, looking at Ward in shock.

"I like board games," Ward says, with a shrug, trying to make it seem like it's not a big deal, as he doesn't want Daisy, or anyone else, to become suspicious of him.

"Right," Daisy says, not really sure she believes that, "Whatever the reason it's nice that you're joining in for once."

"Really is," Simmons confirms, as the group of four continue to play their game.

While Daisy, Fitz, Simmons and Ward are playing board games together Phil is standing at the doorway that leads downstairs and Melinda walks up to him, drinking some water.

"She's happy," Phil notes, once Melinda gets to his side.

"Yeah, she is," Melinda confirms, "She can be more open with them than she usually is," Melinda admits, knowing that Daisy has struggled more than either of her siblings when it comes to opening up before people, because of all the secrets their family has to keep, but with Fitz, Simmons, and Ward, she can be more open than she is around anyone other than her family.

"It's good to see," Phil comments, smiling slightly as he is glad to see Daisy so happy, especially around people who aren't family.

"It is," Melinda confirms, as she takes a drink of her water, "You were up early this morning. Heard you puttering around even before I started Tai-Chi," Melinda explains, not mentoring that she had
just finished a phone call with Tony when she did hear him, "Having trouble sleeping?" Melinda asks, sounding concerned.

"No, I feel great," Phil admits, "Just have a little extra energy to burn," Phil admits, knowing better than trying to lie to Melinda.

"If you want, I could lay out the mats downstairs, we could go a few rounds, like the old days?" Melinda asks, sounding amused, and Phil turns to look at her, but before he can say anything an alarm goes off, "Saved by the bell," Melinda comments, and once she does she and Phil heads towards the command centre.

A couple of minutes later Melinda and Phil have been briefed about what is going on and have been joined in the command centre by Daisy, Ward, Fitz and Simmons.

"Chan Ho Yin, just a struggling street performer until a few years ago, when Mr. Chan began to exhibit moderate pyrokinetic abilities," Phil explains.

"So, what gave him powers?" Fitz asks, being curious about that.

"It's still under investigation," Phil admits, which Daisy is pretty sure is code for 'no one has a clue;' "But Chan did live near the decommissioned Wan Tai nuclear plant when it caught fire," Phil explains, "To our knowledge, no other nearby residents have exhibited similar traits," Phil explains.

"So how did we find out about him?" Simmons asks curious.

"Informant saw him lighting torches in a street show… with his pinkie," Melinda explains.

"Brought it to S.H.I.E.L.D's attention, we told him to keep his abilities under wraps, he's been on the index ever since," Phil explains.

"The index is a list S.H.I.E.L.D keeps of people and objects without powers," Simmons tells Daisy.

"I know," Daisy says, knowing that because her sister is on the index, and she is pretty sure that technically her father is too.

"You do?" Ward asks, sounding surprised, and suspicious and as he does Daisy can feel the look her mother is giving her which tells her this is something she probably isn't supposed to know so has to pretend she doesn't.

"Um, yeah," Daisy says, not sure what to say, "But what I don't know is how people on the list is monitored," Daisy says, looking at her uncle in an attempt to try to get him to change the subject.

"The methods vary," Phil explains, realising what Daisy needs, "Mr Chan was low-risk, he was assigned a case agent who checked in with him every few days, that's how we discovered him missing," Phil explains, and once he does he looks at Melinda who connects the call, and greats the agent on the other end in Cantonese, and once her mother does so Daisy also greats him in Cantonese.

"You speak other languages?" Ward asks, sounding a little surprised, though he realises he should have seen that coming.

"Of course," Daisy responds, in a tone which clearly says 'why are you surprised'.

"Everyone, this is agent Kwan, Chan Ho Yin's case agent," Melinda explains, before ward can say
anything else. "What can you tell us?" Melinda asks.

"Not much, I'm afraid, Chan is a magician, so at first, I thought he'd made himself disappeared," Agent Kwan explains.

"The file says you've caught him violating his index agreement before," Melinda says.

"On two separate occasions, claimed we were, 'hampering his artistic expression.'" Kwan explains. "But late last night, he was taken by professionals. The only thing they left behind was this scrap of aluminized material," He explains.

"Fireproof clothing," Simmons realises, recognizing it.

"So, whoever took him knew about his power," Ward realises.

"Yes, and we think we know why. Over the last few days, tech division discovered a crack into our data stream. It's the same cyber punks who hacked us before. Somehow, they got in again. It's the Rising Tide," Kwan explains.

"Thank you, Agent Kwan, we'll look into Rising Tide and inform you of what we find," Phil explains.

"Of course," Kwan says, before the call ends.

"Daisy, you have contacts in the Rising Tide, don't you?" Phil asks.

"Kind off," Daisy admits.

"Do you think you can contact these contacts of yours in the Rising Tide, find out who hacked S.H.I.E.L.D?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"No…," Daisy says as that would risk exposing who she is, "but I can find out who hacked S.H.I.E.L.D another way," Daisy explains, knowing she has several ways of finding out.

"Do it," Phil instructs, and Daisy takes the tablet off her mother and starts to do exactly that, Daisy feeling like this would be a lot quicker, and easier if she could ask JARVIS to help.

A little while later Phil walks back into the command centre where Daisy, Ward, Fitz, Simmons and Melinda are.

"How close are we?" Phil asks, looking between everyone.

"Almost there," Ward admits, as while he can't tell a lot he can tell that.

"Daisy's identified the remote-access trojan and infected endpoint…" Fitz starts to explain.

"And is searching for a TCP to correlate the hypertext with signature information and the…" Simmons adds.

"Bob is your uncle," Fitz finishes, the two of them amusing Daisy with their whole 'finishing each other's sentence thing'.

"You get any of that?" Phil asks Ward curious, as he knows he didn't.

"Only the uncle part," Ward admits, as Melinda is amused as Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons remind her
a lot of the way Bruce and Tony act when they work together.

"Got it!" Daisy says, "Origin is Austin Texas," Daisy explains.

"You got name?" Phil asks curious.

"Just the café our hacker worked out of, but I’m in the system. I’m gonna check to see if any credit-card charges from the day match up with any known hackers," Daisy explains, "Got a hit, Miles Lydon,"

"Is he one of the hackers you’ve talked to?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Yeah, a little," Daisy says, knowing that that is an understatement, but she’s not going to tell her mother that, "But even if I hadn't I'd know him, every hacker in the world does," Daisy explains, knowing that even her father would know of him, but he certainly doesn't know how much Daisy has talked to him.

"Not just the hacker word, he infiltrated the Kremlin," Simmons explains.

"Yeah, the picture of, um, Putin shirtless on horseback, that was his hack," Fitz reveals.

"It was also his hack that got Chan kidnapped," Ward points out.

"May, set a course for Austin," Phil requests, and once he does Melinda takes the tablet from Daisy and does that very thing.

"Just did," Melinda comments.

"What's going to happen when we get to Austin?" Daisy asks curious.

"That depends," Phil admits, "Do you think you can find where Mr Lydon is?" he asks curious, and Daisy just gives him a look that he has seen on Melinda's face many times, "She looks just like you when she does that," He says, looking at Melinda.

"I know," Melinda says, sounding proud, as Tony has pointed out that fact before, and while it does worry her she is also glad about it.

"Of course, you do," Phil says, not even trying to hide his amusement, "How long do you need?" he asks, looking at Daisy, who is looking very proud of the fact that she has been compared to her mother.

"I'll have his exact location by the time we land," Daisy explains.

"Good, get to work," Phil says, before leaving the command centre, Melinda not fair behind him.

A little while later the team is just touching down in Austin, Phil is walking into the command centre were Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, and Ward, who felt like it would be a good way to attempt to get close to Daisy, are.

"Daisy, what have you got?" Phil asks, as he walks in.

"Found Miles's apartment, it's under an alias, but I managed to track it down," Daisy explains, being able to do that as she knows several of Miles's alias's, "I also found out he isn't currently there but is at a café nearby," Daisy explains, as she found that out by hacking his phone, which she had the number to.
"Okay, Daisy, send me the location. You, Fitz, and Simmons will stay on the bus while your Mom, Ward and I bring in Mr Lydon and any equipment he might have," Phil explains.

"Got it," Daisy says, "Location is sent to your phone,"

"Good, let's go," Phil says to Ward and the two of them leave and are joined by Melinda before they actually leave the plane.

Not long after Ward, Melinda, and Phil left the bus they have returned with Miles Lydon, and a bunch of his possessions in toe. While Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons have been going through his possessions Ward and Phil have been talking to Miles as Melinda is fly's the plane to Hong Kong.

"Guy's hiding behind platitudes, he's dirty, I can feel it," Ward comments as he, and Phil, walk into the command centre.

"Scrubbed clean, actually, nothing much on him," Simmons admits, "He's got no family records. Like Daisy said his apartment's under an alias, and he plays a lot of 'Minecraft' where he runs a rather nasty mob," Simmons explains.

"As a zombie?" Fitz asks.

"Zombie pigmen," Simmons corrects, giving Fitz a look.

"Keep looking," Ward instructs, and Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy all start to go back to what they were doing.

"Not you Daisy," Phil tells her.

"Why not?" Daisy asks, sounding confused.

"I want you to go talk to Miles," Phil reveals.

"Um, okay, but are you sure?" Daisy asks, sounding confused, and honestly not sure how to do that without revealing how well she and Miles actually know each other.

"Positive, you and Miles speak the same language, you might get more from him than me and Ward," Phil explains.

"Okay, I'll go talk to him now," Daisy says, and she goes to head out of the command centre, but she pauses.

"You can talk to your Mom, ask her to join you if you'd like," Phil assures her, knowing exactly why Daisy would have paused, and even though Daisy would prefer to keep hidden from her mother how well she and Miles know each other she also knows that it would be better if her mother was in the room.

"Thanks Uncle Phil," Daisy says, looking relieved, and she walks out of the command centre and to the cockpit.

Once in the cockpit Daisy sits down in the co-pilots seat, a seat which she has been spending a lot of time in.

"Is everything okay?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Uncle Phil wants me to talk to Miles," Daisy explains, "And I'm not exactly sure how to do that,"
She admits, "I mean I'm not Bobbi who has a knack for that kind of thing," She admits.

"You don't have to be your sister, Daisy, you just have to be yourself," Melinda says, switching the plane to autopilot and turning to look at her, "Uncle Phil wants you to talk to Miles because you're both hackers. Bobbi's one of the best there is at interrogation, same with Sharon, but neither of them would be able create that connection that you already have with him," Melinda explains, "You can do this, Daisy, if you want,"

"I want to try," Daisy admits, "Will you be in the room with me when I do?" she asks curious, knowing that it might be lame to want her mother in the room while she interrogates someone, but that's what she needs right now.

"Of course," Melinda answers, "We can talk to him now if you'd like,"

"Yeah," Daisy confirms, and she and her mother both stand up, as they do Daisy realises something, "Um, so Miles might recognize me, and call me Skye," Daisy says, before leaving the cockpit, quiet quickly, and even though she has a hundred questions

once she does she and Melinda get up and head out of the cockpit. Once they are out of the cockpit Melinda and Daisy walk across the upper level of the plane, and to the cage, where Miles is.

As they walk into the cage Daisy walks over and sits across form Miles while Melinda stands by the door, Daisy knowing perfectly well that the second she needs her mother her she'll intervene.

"Skye? Is that you?" Miles asks, looking shocked, and Daisy decides it would be better if she doesn't reveal the truth about her name, "You're a SHIELD agent? I thought you were a kid,"

"I'm seventeen," Daisy corrects, "And I'm not actually an Agent," Daisy admits.

"Still, I can't actually believe you're working with SHIELD," Miles comments.

"SHIELD'S not as bad as you think it is," Daisy reveals, knowing that better than almost anyone.

"Isn't it? You'd forgive me if I don't believe you considering they locked me up," Miles admits.

"Because your actions have put a man in the hands of people who are as we speak are most likely torturing or experimenting on him," Daisy explains, and Miles gives a disbelieving snort, "I'm serious, Miles," She admits, "There are people in this world who do whatever they can to learn more about people with powers, and that involves experimentation, and pain and suffering, and you just handed a man over to people like that,"

"No, the women I talked to is harmless," Miles argues, refusing to believe that he did what Daisy is saying he did.

"How can you be sure?" Daisy asks.

"Because she was just some small woman in a flower dress," Miles reveals, "And I traced the account the money came from to make sure it wasn't some evil corporation. It was just an eco-research lab, some study with centipedes," He explains.

"Did you just say Centipedes?" Daisy asks, looking at Miles in shock.

"Yeah, that's the study the women was working on, what's more harmless than that?" Miles asks, and once he does Daisy just gets up and hurries out of the room, Melinda right behind her.
"Daisy?" Ward calls, from the command centre as Daisy hurries up to Phil's office.

"Daisy, what's wrong?" Phil asks concerned, from his desk, as Daisy hurries into his office.

"It's centipede, centipede is back in play," Daisy admits.

"Are you sure?" Phil asks.

"I'm as sure as I can be," Daisy admits.

"Come on, let's tell the team," Phil says, and he and Daisy head downstairs, meeting Melinda at the bottom of the stairs, and the three of them head into the command centre.

"Did you get anything from Miles?" Jemma asks Daisy curious.

"Yeah," Daisy confirms.

"It appears Centipede is responsible for Mr Chan's kidnapping," Phil explains.

"First L.A, now Hong Kong. What kind of organization are we dealing with?" Ward asks, trying to make it seem like he doesn't know the exact answer.

"International, well-financed, interested in creating a supersoilder," Phil says, looking worried and exchanging the briefest look with Melinda, who knows that he is wondering if they need to bring Bobbi, or even Tony due to his history with extremis, into things soon, "Let's hope finding Mr Chan will provide some answers," Phil explains.

"But that doesn't help us to find him," Simmons points out, "Does it?" she asks.

"No, but now that I know who paid Miles, I can use that to figure out some things," Daisy says, taking a tablet, and getting to work.

"Any ideas what Centipede wants with Chen?" Melinda asks, looking between the two scientists, figuring one of them will know, and knowing that if neither of them do then she will call Tony who will definitely know.

"Hard to say," Fitz admits, "But Simmons thinks that, considering he's pyrokinetic…,"

"There's a good chance his genetics could stabilize the extremis element of the Centipede serum, keep their test subjects from going…,"

"Boom," Fitz finishes.

"If Mr. Chan is Centipede's lab rat, we need to get there before the experiment's over," Phil instructs, and once he does the group continues to work hard, doing everything possible to figure out what is going on and where Centipede is holding Mr Chen.

While other members of the plane are working on other things Melinda has headed to the cockpit and after checking to make sure she has things on her tablet, Melinda makes a phone call to Tony, as while she is pretty sure they are she wants to check to make sure Fitz and Simmons are correct.

"Hey Mel," Tony says, answering his phone after a few rings.

"Hey, I'm sending you through some info, formulas," Melinda explains, as she presses send on the information pack she prepared.
"Okay…" Tony says, sounding slightly confused, "Got it…. Hang on, this is extremis, altered though….. and super solider serum," Tony says, sounding surprised, "Mel, what is this?"

"What we're currently dealing with," Melinda reveals, "Someone who's pyrokinetic has been kidnapped by the people who developed that," Melinda explains, "The scientists on my team suspect that he was taken so that his platelets could be used to stabilise the serum," Melinda explains, "What do you think?"

"Yeah… I think that could work," Tony admits, sounding thoughtful, "Mel, how can I help?"

"Right now, I'm not sure you can," Melinda admits, "I'll call if there is,"

"Okay. I'll keep looking through all this, see what I can find," Tony admits.

"Thanks Tony," Melinda admits, "I love you,"

"Love you too," Tony responds, before hanging up.

A while after the team found out the fact that Centipede are behind Chan's kidnapping, a little while after Melinda called Tony, Phil is walking into the cockpit where Melinda is, having purposely shut and locked the door behind him.

"We're still an hour away from Hong Kong," Melinda explains.

"Okay," Phil says, "From the information Daisy got HQ has determined where it seems Chan is being held," Phil explains, "Can you put the plane on autopilot?" he asks, and Melinda does that and turns and looks at him.

"What's going on, Phil?" Melinda asks, knowing there must be something for Phil to be in the cockpit at the moment.

"I want Daisy to come with us to the location," Phil reveals, knowing better than trying to beat around the bush.

"Why?" Melinda asks, with a simple voice, and even from the simple tone Phil knows that she is less than happy with the suggestion.

"Because this is Centipede, and this might be our first chance to get some intel," Phil explains, "I don't like it either, May, but I think while you, me and the team are rescuing Chan Daisy and Ward can go straight to the server room so that Daisy can get any intel she can," He explains.

"It would be a smart play," Melinda admits, but she really doesn't like it, and she knows Tony won't, "But that doesn't mean I like it," she admits.

"I know," Phil admits.

"And it has to be Daisy's choice, she has to be okay with doing this," Melinda explains, as while she could stop Daisy, or allow her to do that, ultimately it is her choice.

"I'll talk to her," Phil assures Melinda, who nods, "I'll see you when we land," He says, before heading out of the cockpit.

After heading out of the cockpit Phil heads to the command centre where Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, and Ward are
"Daisy, a word," Phil requests.

"Sure, Uncle Phil," Daisy says, before heading out of the command centre, and the two of them head to the other end of the plane, away from the others. "What's up?" Daisy asks, sounding confused.

"If you're willing I want you to come to the location where it seems like Chan is being held," Phil explains, "While your mom, a team and I are saving Chen I want you and Ward to get everything off their servers that you can, if you're willing," Phil explains.

"I'm willing," Daisy reveals, "Scared, but willing." She admits.

"A little fear can be a good thing," Phil admits, "But if this is too much for you, if it's something you don't feel like you can do, just tell me,"

"I will, but I want to do this," Daisy reveals.

"Okay," Phil says, with a nod.

"I'm going to head back to the command centre, see what else I can find," Daisy admits.

"Okay, tell Ward I want to see him," Phil requests, and Daisy nods, before walking towards the command centre.

About a minute after Daisy left his die Ward walks up to Phil.

"You wanted to see me, Sir?" Ward asks.

"Yes," Phil confirms, "While May and I are rescuing Chan I want you with Daisy going to their server room, getting all the intel you can," He explains.

"Are you sure that's the best plan?" Ward asks, feeling like that is far from the best move, especially considering what he knows it could lead to.

"Yes, we need to get ahead," Phil explains, "This is the best way to do that,"

"Yes Sir," Ward answers, before walking away, and not long after Ward walks away Phil heads back up to his office.

A little over an hour later Melinda, Ward, Phil, and Daisy along with Agent Kwan and a strike team are outside the building where it seems like Chan is being held. Melinda, Ward, and the strike team are in full tactical gear while everyone else are in regular clothes.

"Building has give floors. The first four are research, fifth is listed as maintenance but uses half the building's energy," Phil explains, "Either they're guarding the world's largest vacuum…"

"Or that's where Chan's being held," Melinda finishes before walking several steps away.

"Send your b and c teams in through the tunnels to secure the lowers floors, warn them that the Centipede serum's highly explosive," Phil explains.

"Understood," Kwan says, "Where do we go in?" He asks, and as he does Melinda ascends to the roof.

"The roof," Phil answers.
"Cool," Daisy says, with a grin.

"Daisy, hold on tight, okay, don't let go," Phil instructs.

"You got it Uncle Phil," Daisy responds.

Over the next couple of minutes Phil, Ward, Daisy, and Kwan make their way up onto the roof too, and once they are on the roof Phil, Melinda, and Agent Kwan go one way why Daisy and Ward go another.

As Melinda, Phil and Agent Kwan make their way through the building Melinda is holding a device which is detecting things.

"There, heat signature confirmed," Melinda says, pointing to a door, and as she stops walking she takes a device from one of the other people who is with them.

"I love these things," Phil says as he puts a device on the door, the same device he used to break into sector seventeen, and the second the door is open the group head in, Melinda taking down several of the guards as they do.

"Agent Kwan, it's you," Chan says, sounding shocked.

"We're here to get you out," Phil says, and as he does Alarms start to blare, "Da…" he starts to say, but as he turns to see Kwan with a giant hole in him, "Chan, what have you done?" Phil asks, looking surprised.

"I've set myself free," Chan explains.

"Daisy, we need a security override, once you do that stay where you are, with Ward," Melinda says, as she and Phil dive for cover.

In another area of the building Daisy is sitting in front of a computer while Ward is standing behind her.

"Please be careful Mom, please," Daisy says, as she hurriedly types, it being clear enough to Ward that she isn't working as effectively as she could be.

"Daisy, take a breath," Ward says, putting a hand on Daisy's shoulder, "Your Mom and Uncle Phil need the security override, but you can't do that if you're worked up, take a second, calm down, and then focus," He tells her, as he knows he has to play the part of kind team mate, even though he doesn't think it would be horrible if something happened to Phil or Melinda.

"Okay," Daisy says, and she takes a few seconds to close her eyes, pictures her entire family together and happy, and breaths, before opening them and hurrying to type, this time it is clear that she is effectively doing what she has to do.

"How long until you get the doors open?" Ward asks curious.

"Already done," Daisy reveals, and she goes to hurry out of the room, getting just outside the corridor, before Ward grabs her arm.

"Daisy, what the hell do you think you're doing?" Ward asks, stopping her from going too far out of the room, neither noticing a women by the name of Raina hiding in a doorway a little down the corridor, but close enough to hear and see everything going on.
"Going after my Mom, I've got to make sure she is okay," Daisy says, clearly worried, though she is worried about both her mother and Uncle.

"She's fine," Ward responds, being pretty sure it would be bad if Daisy went after Melinda, and if something happened to her then that would be bad for him because of the way Phil and Melinda would react.

"You don't know that, no one knows that," Daisy says, as she pulls her arm out of Ward's grasp, "You may have heard the legend of Melinda May, but that doesn't mean she's always going to be okay, no matter what, it doesn't mean she can't be hurt," Daisy says, having needed to stop herself from saying 'Stark-May', "I'm going to go make sure she's okay," Daisy says, side stepping Ward.

"No, you're not," Ward says, blocking her path.

"You can try to stop me, Agent Ward, and you'll probably succeed, for a while," Daisy says, "But I'm my mother's daughter and nothings gonna stop me from making sure my Mom's okay," Daisy explains, determined and brave, which is actually exactly what she is feeling right now, and knowing it's what her father would say.

"You're the most annoying seventeen-year kid I've ever met," Ward reveals, meaning that, "Stay behind me and do what you're told," He reveals, and he and Daisy start to walk down the corridor, in the opposite end to where Raina is.

For a few minutes Daisy and Ward walk through the corridors, Ward having to take down more than a few men, before they finally see Melinda and Phil, who unknown to Daisy and Ward have been trying and failing, to talk down Chen.

"Mom," Daisy says, looking relieved, as she hurries over to her mother and hugs her.

"I'm alright Daisy," Melinda assures her daughter, "Are you?" she asks, looking at her daughter up and down.

"I'm fine," Daisy assures her mother.

"Daisy we need you to go back to the server room, change the path of the ventilation shafts so that an explosion is vented onto the roof," Phil explains.

"I don't need to go anywhere, I can do that from my phone," Daisy explains, pulling out her phone.

"Good, then go with Ward, get out of here and I'll tell you through the coms what I need," Phil explains.

"What, no," Daisy argues.

"Daisy, you've got to. That's your mission," Melinda tells her daughter, wanting her to understand, and from everything she has seen members of her family do she is pretty sure that she will understand how important a 'mission' is.

"Fine," Daisy says, rolling her eyes.

"We'll catch up," Phil says, looking at Ward.

"Yes Sir," Ward responds, and once he does he gives Daisy a look.

"See you soon," Daisy says, looking at Phil, and her mother, and once she does she and Ward go
off in their own direction, while Melinda and Phil go in another.

A while later Melinda, Phil, Daisy and Ward are back on the bus having dealt with Chan and having handed Miles over to the proper authorities. While the others on the bus are downstairs Daisy is up in Phil's office with her mother and Phil.

"How do you feel about what you had to do tonight, Daisy?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"It was scary, and I freaked out at one point, but I'm glad I went, glad I could help," Daisy explains, telling the complete truth.

"That's good," Phil comments.

"Yeah, I really feel like I belong here," Daisy admits, and Melinda isn't quite sure how she feels about that, "I'm gonna head downstairs so you guys can talk," Daisy says, before she leaves the office without so much as another word.

"I need a drink," Melinda says, once Daisy has left the room, and in response, Phil laughs opens his desk draw and pulls out an expensive bottle of scotch, one that he got as a gift from Tony.

"Will this do?" Phil asks curious.

"Do you have to ask?" Melinda says, walking over and sitting across from Phil, and once she is sitting down Phil opens the bottles and pours them both a drink.

While Phil and Melinda are drinking up in the office Daisy has walked downstairs where Fitz, Simmons, and Ward are.

"Board games again?" Fitz asks curious.

"Definitely," Daisy confirms, and as she does her phone goes off, and she pulls it out to check the message and sees, 'let me in by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin.' From her Uncle Clint, "No way," Daisy says, looking shocked, and she turns and starts to hurry downstairs.

"Daisy?" Ward calls after her.

"I'll be back," Daisy calls back, as she hurries into the platform above the cargo bay and as she does she sees two people she knows very well standing in the cargo bay, leaning against Lola, and so she hurries down to them, "You really should know better," Daisy informs the two people.

"Yeah, but just doing what you should do is no fun," Clint comments.

"I've miss you, so much," Daisy says, as she hugs Clint.

"Missed you too, Kiddo," Clint says, as her returns the hug, kissing the top of Daisy's head as he does.

"Good to see you, Aunt Nat," Daisy says, before hugging her as well, after she and Clint break apart.

"It's good to see you, too," Natasha assures her, whispering something in Daisy's ear before they break apart the two of them having hugged a little longer than Daisy and Clint.

"Where's your Mom and Uncle Phil?" Clint asks.
"Upstairs," Daisy answers, "I'll show you where they are," Daisy explains, and the three of them head upstairs.

When Daisy, Natasha and Clint get upstairs less than a minute later they find Ward, Fitz, and Simmons standing together,

"Oh my god," Simmons says, looking shocked, clearly recognizing who just walked onto the Bus.

"Agent Barton, Agent Romanoff, this is a surprise," Ward comments, trying not to display the fact that it is far from a good one.

"You are?" Natasha asks, having no idea who this guy is.

"Agent Ward," Ward answers, knowing he has to be careful as the last thing he needs is for Natasha to become suspicious of him.

"Garrett's boy. I've heard about you," Clint comments.

"Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, this is Jemma Simmons and Leo Fitz," Daisy introduces.

"Nice to meet you both," Natasha responds.

"It's a pleasure," Simmons says, looking amazed.

"Really is," Fitz confirms.

"Mom and Uncle Phil are upstairs, we should probably go to them before they think something is up," Daisy says, looking between Natasha and Clint, both of whom nod and the two of them follow Daisy up to Phil's office, Ward making himself scarce as they do.

As Daisy, Natasha, and Clint make their way up to Phil's office Natasha and Clint allow Daisy to go first so that she can explain. Walking into Phil's office Daisy finds Melinda and Phil sitting side by side on the little couch Phil has in his office drinking, the two of them having moved from Phil's desk.

"Mom? Uncle Phil?" Daisy asks.

"Daisy, is something wrong?" Melinda asks, concerned.

"Nope, we just got a couple of visitors," Daisy reveals, as she takes a step further into the room, and the second she says the word visitors Phil and Melinda look concerned, but before they can say or do anything Natasha and Clint walk in.

"Nat, Clint," Melinda says, sounding surprised, as Phil stands up.

"Hey Mels," Clint says, being the only person on the planet who can get away with calling Melinda, 'Mels' while Tony is the only one who calls her Mel, never Mels, "Phil," He says, looking relieved and he walks, rather quickly, over to his friend and hugs him, tightly, "I'm glad you're okay,"

"I am too," Phil response, as the two of them break apart, "Nat," he greats.

"You were an idiot for going after Loki alone," Natasha informs him, as she walks over to Phil, and hugs him too, "I'm glad you're okay,"

"Thanks Nat," Phil responds, "I'm really glad to see you both, but what are you doing here?"
"We found out about the team, and found out you were in Hong Kong, so we thought we'd say hello," Natasha explains, giving Melinda a look without anyone else noticing, a look which tells Melinda that they're going to talk later.

"I'm glad you're here," Phil admits, "Scotch?" he asks curious.

"You really shouldn't have to ask that," Clint says as he sits down on the table.

"He's right about that," Natasha confirms, pulling over a chair, and as she does Daisy, the only one in the room who doesn't get scotch, sits down between her mother and Phil and the group of five, who are family to each other, start to catch up with one another, and a little way into the catching up they video call in Avengers Tower.

Away from the plane Raina, the person who got Miles to hack S.H.I.E.L.D, who heard everything Daisy and Ward heard each other say, is standing in the middle of the apartment she is currently staying in.

From the way she is standing it is clear that Raina is waiting for seconds later and after a few minutes there is a flash of blue light and a man in his thirties, with no eyes appears, as he does Raina's appearance changes and suddenly she covered in quills and thorns.

"Gordon, good to see you," Raina says, telling the truth though most people would assume she is lying.

"You too, Raina," Gordon confirms, "But I thought…," He starts to say.

"We agreed on near zero contact, we did," Raina confirms, "But I discovered something, something that Cal and Jiaying need to know," She reveals.

"From a vision?" Gordon asks.

"No, another way," Raina confirms, "It's about Melinda May," She explains.

"What about her? Melinda May was a single mission almost twenty years ago, what could they possibly need to know about her?" Gordon asks, looking confused.

"She has a daughter," Raina reveals.

"Well yes, Raina, but we already knew that," Gordon responds.

"A seventeen-year-old daughter," Raina says, not raising to Gordon's bait.

"Seventeen….. are you sure?" Gordon asks, sounding shocked.

"Positive, I saw her myself. She's May's daughter," Raina assures him.

"I'll tell Cal and Jiaying as soon as possible," Gordon assures Raina, "Is there any other update you'd like me too pass on?" Gordon asks curious.

"Things are progressing how I expected them to," Raina admits, "I should know more soon,"

"I'll pass it on," Gordon assures her, "If you need anything….,"

"You, Jiaying, and Cal will be there, I know," Raina responds and once she does Gordon nods and disappears in his blue light, and seconds after he does Rania changes again so that she is no longer
After a lot of time catching up with their family Natasha and Clint end up needing to leave the bus, and Melinda has made an excuse to leave with them.

"How much do you know?" Melinda asks, once the three of them are away from the plane, away from everyone else.

"As much as you," Natasha answers, "I confronted Fury, made him tell," Natasha explains, "And if you decided to quit I would have quit too,"

"Same," Clint adds, "I assume Tony knows everything, anyone else?"

"Not that I've told," Melinda answers, "Did Fury tell you what he asked me to do?"

"More like made you do," Clint corrects, with a frown, "If things get bad, or if you need us, just call, and we'll be here, no matter what,"

"We Promise," Natasha adds, saying something she doesn't say much and to Natasha and Clint's surprise, Melinda hugs her two friends.

"Thank you," Melinda says.

"And that offer is still there even if you just want to talk," Natasha assures her friend, even though she knows Melinda won't just take her up on the offer.

"I'll remember that," Melinda says, as the three of them break apart, "I'm glad you came for a visit,"

"So are we," Clint confirms, "We'll see you, Mels," Clint says, and once he does Melinda and Natasha exchange looks and nods, before Natasha and Clint leave together, and after watching her friends leave Melinda heads back into the Bus, checking on her daughter before heading to bed herself, feeling a sense of relief as just knowing Natasha and Clint know makes her feel a little better.
Chapter 57

October 31st 2013

It has been about a week since Natasha and Clint made their surprise visit to the Bus and it was more than clear to Daisy that seeing two of their closest friends was really good for her mother and Uncle, her mother especially.

It early morning and while Phil is running on a treadmill being assessed by Simmons for a physical Daisy and Fitz are in the lab with Ward, Daisy sitting on one of the tables doing her schoolwork while Fitz and Ward are talking about Fitz's latest weapon.

"Sorry, Fitz. It's close, but it's not right," Ward comments, as Daisy looks up from what she is doing

"Really? Cause Agent Coulson had no problems," Fitz comments, and Ward gives him a less than impressed look.

"It's an ounce too heavy," Ward comments.

"An ounce? Seriously?" Daisy asks, looking shocked.

"You said you've had weapon training, you should know it's the difference between success and failure," Ward comments, looking at Daisy, "When you're on a rooftop with a fifteen mile an hour wind your target is five hundred yards away…" Ward starts to say.

"Yeah, but we do have rifle," Fitz comments.

"Loose the ounce," Ward instructs, before leaving.

"Yeah, on it," Fitz says, "Lose the ounce," Fitz says, pretending to be Ward, "I'm Agent Grant Ward, and I can shoot the legs off a flea from five hundred yards, as long as it's not windy," Fitz says, doing a pretty good Fitz impersonation, causing Daisy to laugh.

"Not bad, Fitz, not bad," Daisy admit, looking amused.

"Thank you," Fitz responds, "How's your assignment going?" he asks curious.

"Slowly," Daisy admits, "I don't know if I'm going to get it done in time," Daisy explains.

"I'm sure you will," Fitz comments, "You're smart Daisy, you've just got to apply yourself,"

"I'm not sure whether to say thank you or I'm insulted," Daisy admits, giving Fitz a look, and honestly not wanting to get into the whole reason why she finds it so hard to concentrate, though she is trying the strategies her father helped her find.

"I'll…," Fitz starts to say, but before he can figure out what to say another one of the lab doors
opens and Simmons walks in, "Look, Jemma's here," he comments.

"So, Ward was here?" Jemma says, as she walks in, not realising that she has just interrupted something, "Let me guess, the night-night pistol again?" Simmons asks.

"Yeah, he said it was off by an ounce," Fitz says.

"Of course he did," Simmons says, sounding disbelieving. "I'm Agent Grant Ward, and I could rupture your spleen with my left pinky, blindfolded," Simmons says, impersonating Ward, and once she speaks Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy all laugh.

"That is dead on," Daisy says.

"Hey, Hustle up and grab your gear," Ward says, walking into the lab, "We're on a mission, and Daisy your Mom wants to see you," Ward explains, and she nods, as he does he looks between Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons, "Something funny?" he asks, looking between them.

"Poor, silly Fitz," Simmons quickly says, picking up the night-night gun, "He mistakenly left a dummy round in the pistol, should be proper now," She explains, and once she does Ward takes the night-night pistol and gives it a test.

"Great, thanks," Ward says, before walking out and once he leaves Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons all try their best not to laugh.

"I should go check in with Mom," Daisy says before leaving the lab, leading Fitz and Simmons.

After leaving the lab Daisy heads straight to the cockpit where her mother is,

"Ward said you want to see me," Daisy says, as she walks in.

"I do," Melinda confirms, putting the plane on autopilot and turning to look at her daughter, "Daisy, I want you to shadow Ward during this mission," She reveals.

"Sure, I can do this," Daisy confirms, "But why?"

"You've seen how I do things, how Uncle Phil does things, how your sister, and Aunt Natasha, Uncle Clint, Sharon, and Antoine, do things, but we're…," Melinda starts to say.

"Weirdos," Daisy finishes.

"Unconventional," Melinda corrects, giving her daughter a look, "I want you to really see how a not unconventional agent handles things,"

"Sounds boring, but okay," Daisy confirms, with a nod.

"Daisy this is a learning experience, treat it like one," Melinda tells her daughter.

"Yes Mom," Daisy confirms.

"We're about to land, you should get your stuff," Melinda instructs.

"Okay," Daisy confirms, and she heads out of the cockpit so that she can get her stuff, and as Daisy leaves Melinda's phone goes off with a message saying,

"Are we on for a video call before Peter goes Trick or Treating?" from Tony.
"Hopefully. We're about to go on mission," Melinda sends back.

A little while later Daisy, Melinda, Phil, Ward, Fitz, and Simmons have made their way to where their latest case takes place, a camp ground. Even though she is with her mother and uncle Daisy is staying close to Ward as she is supposed to be shadowing him.

"Troop leader's name was Adam Cross," Phil reveals, "Apparently, he said he heard something in the woods, went to check it out that's when the electrostatic anomaly occurred," He explains.

"What I don't understand is, usually, they're caused by a massive electrical storm," Fitz says.

"But there wasn't a storm within a thousand miles of here last night," Simmons admits.

"This anomaly's different, it has a side effect we've never seen before," Phil explains, looking between Fitz and Simmons.

"The battery blew straight up through the hood," Melinda comments, looking at the truck.

"Landed over here," Ward comments, "Hell of a force to create that kind of trajectory," He says, and as he does Daisy squats down next to Ward and pokes the battery with a stick, not sure it is the best strategy, but it is the one she is going to try.

"What are you doing?" Ward asks curious.

"Shadowing you, just like I was told," Daisy explains.

"Shadowing, not smothering," Ward corrects, standing up, "There's scorch marks all over that tree, lucky the whole forest didn't burn down," He comments, as he starts to walk.

"I don't get it," Daisy says, as she follows behind Ward, making sure to keep her distance, "Seems to me like this electroshock thingy was some freak lightning strike. I mean, why call us?" Daisy asks, following Ward through to a clearing, "What's the big?" she asks, as she sees a man floating in mid-air, "Oh never mind," Daisy says, looking amused, and thinking that things are very cool.

"So sad a man died this way, and yet, so amazing," Simmons admits, as she looks at the dead body of the person who was killed in the electrostatic abnormality.

"Fitz-Simmons any idea what could cause an effect like this?" Phil asks, and once he does Fitz and Simmons both start talking, at both the same time, so that it is hard to understand what they are saying, "Time," Phil requests, "Let's try that again, any idea what could cause an effect like this?" he asks.

"The hell if I know," Simmons admits.

"Uh, no, no clue," Fitz says.

"Seems to me like we're either dealing with some freak natural event or a new high-tech weapon," Ward comments, and as she does Melinda and Phil exchange a look, both thinking the same thing.

"Or," Daisy says, stepping forward, "Could it be someone from the index?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and Phil as she figures one of them would know.

"There's no one on the index with this type of power," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"That we know of," Phil corrects, "I'll contact Agent Blake at S.H.I.E.L.D HQ, have him check it
out,” Phil explains, "Whoever or whatever's responsible, we can't let this happen again," Phil says.

"Fitz, see his forehead? Look at that endothelial discoloration," Simmons points out.

"Yeah, same dispersal pattern as the strike on the truck. Could be an entry wound cauterized immediately," Fitzy says and as Simmons goes to check something she is shocked, "Freaky," Fitz comments.

"Freaky," Simmons confirms.

A little while later the team arrive back at the Bus and while Melinda is getting ready to perform an interrogation Fitz and Simmons are taking the body into the lab and Daisy is with Phil and Ward.

"Daisy," Phil says.

"Yeah, Uncle Phil?" Daisy asks, turning to look at him.

"I need you to find anything you can on Cross," Phil explains, "Do your thing, see what you can find," He says, it being clear exactly what he is giving full authorisation for.

"You got it," Daisy says, before hurrying upstairs so that she can get started on her work.

A little while later Daisy is in the Command Centre searching for anything she can on Cross when Phil and Ward walk in.

"Daisy, you've found something on Cross?" Phil asks.

"Yep, many things," Daisy confirms, "Adam Cross, single, no kids," Daisy explains, "Originally from Wrigley, Pennsylvania, not far from here,"

"Been there, they have a nice little strawberry festival in the spring," Phil explains.

"When was that?" Daisy asks curious, as she doesn't remember her Uncle going to Wrigley, but that doesn't mean he has never gone.

"A while ago," Phil explains, "Occupation?" he asks curious.

"Phys-ed teacher at the local high school, and Varsity baseball coach, and troop leader, and volunteer firefighter," Daisy reveals, "I thought it was possible I'd say he's almost as much as a boy scout as Captain America, but that's not possible," Daisy says, knowing that thanks to her father.

"Of course, you'd say that," Phil says, looking amused, and mildly insulted.

"What about a criminal record, restraining order, something that might give us a suspect?" Ward asks.

"Nada, not even a parking ticket," Daisy explains, "I skimmed all his posts, anyone linked to his pages, hoping for a crazy ex or a superpowered stalker, and he's clean," Daisy comments.

"According to you," Ward comments, "You haven't been at this long enough to know that everybody looks clean on their first go-round," He explains.

"Wow," Daisy says, giving him an annoyed look, "Can you not do anything without being a jerk?" she asks curious.
"Daisy," Phil says, giving her a warning look, and she can't help but roll her eyes.

"What do you want me to do now, Agent Coulson, Sir?" Daisy asks, and as she does it is clear that she is clearly annoyed, and Phil is pretty sure that it is the first time, ever, that Daisy hasn't called him Uncle.

"Dig deeper," Phil instructs.

"Yes Sir," Daisy says, before leaving, it being more than clear that Phil is far from her favourite person right now.

"Was that really necessary?" Phil asks, giving Ward a look, as he is struck by Daisy annoyed is a lot like Tony annoyed.

"May asked me to show Daisy what being a S.H.I.E.L.D agent is like, that's exactly what I'm doing," Ward says, honestly considering there is nothing wrong with the way he just treated Daisy considering how Garrett trained him.

"There are kinder ways to do that," Phil reveals, "Daisy does good work, but she responds to what she gets in return. If you give her attitude, she'll give you attitude, if you treat her with respect, then she'll do the same. Remember that," Phil says, before leaving the command centre, giving Ward a lot to think about.

As he knows he has to take his own advice Phil heads straight to Daisy's bunk rather than anywhere else so that he can talk her. Getting to Daisy's bunk Phil reaches out and knocks on the door.

"Come in if you must," Daisy responds, and as he is pretty sure that that's the best answer he's going to get Phil opens the door and walks in.

"Daisy, can we talk?" Phil asks, looking at Daisy who is sitting cross legged on her bunk.

"Do I have a choice?" Daisy asks, not looking up from her tablet, and so Phil walks over and sits down on the edge of Daisy's bunk, and she doesn't attempt to look at him, so Phil reaches over and takes the tablet, "I'm just trying to do the work you want me to do," Daisy comments, looking at Phil, though she is also ranting to Bobbi.

"I know, and you're doing great work, Daisy," Phil assures her, "You may not like it but on this bus, Ward is a superior, that means you should show him some respect,"

"Why? I've always been taught that respect is earned, not given," Daisy explains, telling Phil something he should already know as he's one of the people who taught her that.

"Which is exactly why I've talked to Ward," Phil reveals, "Daisy, if you're both hostile you're going to get nowhere," He explains.

"It always seems to work for Dad," Daisy comments.

"Not always," Phil comments, knowing every well that that has backfired on Tony more than once.

"Whatever, so you're saying I have to be the bigger person? Why exactly?" Daisy asks curious.

"Because it's what your parents raised you to do," Phil reveals, and Daisy rolls her eyes.
"I'd debate that one," Daisy admits, "But fine, I'll try to rise above, but if he keeps being a jerk, my patience is going to run out..... fast," Daisy reveals.

"Fair enough," Phil says, handing Daisy's tablet back, "You are doing great work, Daisy,"

"Thanks Uncle Phil," Daisy says, with a slight smile, and Phil gets up and heads out, so that Daisy can do her work.

After leaving Daisy's bunk Phil heads straight down to the lab where Simmons is while Fitz is standing out in the cargo bay, behind closed doors.

"Excellent timing, sir. I've been analysing sagittal and coronal images of the victim's brain," Simmons reveals.

"What's Fitz doing out there?" Phil asks curious, looking between Fitz and Simmons.

"He detected a strange energy coming off the body," Simmons explains.

"He's afraid of it, isn't he?" Phil assumes.

"It's the smell!" Fitz calls from outside.

"There's no shame in it, Fitz. It's perfectly natural to be afraid," Simmons comments, trying to be reassuring.

"No, the only thing I'm afraid of is putrid, decaying flesh corrupting my pristine workspace," Fitz reveals, and as he does Jemma groans, "Do you remember the last time you brought a dead thing into the lab?" Fitz asks.

"Oh, not the stupid cat again," Simmons says, sounding annoyed.

"The cat ..." Fitz starts to say.

"And it's our lab, Fitz," Simmons corrects.

"Tell him about the cat!" Fitz says.

"Not your lab," Simmons says.

"You left his liver next to my lunch!" Fitz exclaims.

"Guys! Can we please...," Phil says, gesturing to the body.

"Yes, sir," Simmons says, "Um, as I was saying, this is the victim's brain," Simmons says, putting an image up on the screen.

"Looks like burnt baked potato," Phil comments.

"That's what happens when it's hit with close to 2,000 megajoules of electrostatic energy. That's almost double the power of a lightning bolt," Simmons explains, as Melinda walks in.

"Kid's clean. You figure out why the body was floating?" Melinda asks curious, looking at Simmons.

"Not yet," Simmons admits, "The molecular density of the victim was temporarily altered by an
unknown energy source. I'm hoping to shed some light on its effects once I extract a brain-tissue sample," She explains.

"It's happening again!" Fitz calls.

"It's science, Fitz, I have to dissect something," Simmons explains.

"No, the satellite's picking up another electrostatic event, not twenty kilometres from here," Fitz explains, and as he does Phil and Melinda go running out of the lab.

A little while later Phil, Melinda and Ward, are speeding towards the farm house where the electrostatic event was detected while Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons are in the lab.

"Fitz, what's the latest reading?" Phil asks.

"We're at 324 megajoules and growing stronger…. dangerous territory, sir," Fitz reveals.

"At the centre of the signal there's a farmhouse, about a mile north, that's got to be it," Daisy explains.

"Daisy, dig up everything you can on whoever lives at that farm," Phil requests, "We need to know who we're dealing with" Phil requests, as he does Fitz's tablet beeps.

"Hold on, now. What just happened?" Fitz asks, feeling confused, "Um, it's gone," Fitz explains.

"What's gone?" Phil asks.

"The electrostatic signal, it seemed to pulse, then disappear," Fitz explains.

"We need a shortcut," Phi says, looking at Melinda, who makes one.

Over the next few minutes Ward, Coulson, and May make their way to the farmhouse and once they are there Melinda breaks in the door, and the group find another floating dead body.

"Scan the perimeter," Phil says to Ward, as Melinda climbs up into the hey loft, "Whoever did this couldn't have gotten far," He realises, "Barricaded himself inside. Went for his shotgun," Phil realises.

"He was scared, trying to protect himself," Melinda realises.

"From who? How did they get to him?" Phil asks, as he notices something, "Another burn mark on the forehead. No sign of anyone, no tracks, no vehicles down the road," Phil realises.

"Daisy, we need real-time SAT surveillance on this area right now," Phil says to her.

"Hang on," Daisy admits, as she internally debates whether Stark or SHIELD SAT surveillance will be better, "I think I found something you might want to see first, sending it over now," Daisy says, and once she does Phil and Melinda get an image which they both look at, "The guy who owns the farm's name is Frank Whalen," Daisy explains, "He's a volunteer firefighter at the same station house as our first victim, Adam Cross,"

"Our two victims knew each other," Melinda realises.

"They were both responders when the aliens crashed New York. Two victims from the same firehouse found in the same weird way. We're looking for a killer," Daisy realises, to everyone's
horror as that means that it is a very bad situation.

A while after Phil, Melinda and Ward found the second body the three of them have travelled the farmhouse where the victims volunteered while Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons have been investigating the farmhouse and returned to the bus.

"What are you looking for?" Daisy asks Simmons curious, as she has spent enough time around Simmons in recent weeks to know when she is looking for something.

"A scented candle," Fitz, who is looking through the cabinets says.

"Not you," Daisy says, rolling her eyes.

"This wound, something doesn't quite make sense," Simmons admits, "Initially, I thought these were entry wounds, as if from a gunshot, but they're not, they're exit wounds," Simmons explains.

"What do you mean?" Daisy asks.

"It's not clear," Simmons admits.

"What if this weapon overloaded the brain past the threshold of its electrical capacity, causing it to discharge, like an E.M.P?" Simmons asks, and as she does Daisy starts to run through, in her head, everything she's heard her father and brother say about EMP's, to try and understand what Simmons is suspecting.

"You're assuming we're dealing with an external source, I'm saying it was something from inside him," Simmons says, as Daisy picks up a tablet, that has beeped.

"Something's happening, the satellite's picking up another reading. It's coming from the firehouse," Daisy says, looking concerned, as she knows that that is where her mother and uncle are.
Chapter 58

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1: IMPORTANT: So, I am finding myself struggling to write, I think I am not doing too well with this forced isolation, so as a treat I'm going to upload all the chapters of this and To make a better world that I have written. I will continue to attempt to write chapters and I hope I can get some out soon. All the chapters I have written will be uploaded over the next few hours.

While Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons are on the plane Melinda, Phil, and Ward have arrived at the firehouse that seems to connect all the victims. As there was a man who started to act suspicious Phil followed him to another room so that he could find out what he knows as he clearly knows something.

"That humming noise, you hear that?" The man, Mr Diaz asks.

"No, I don't," Phil answers, "Were you in New York with Mr. Cross and Mr. Whalen after the Chitauri invasion?" Phil asks.

"Come on, you don't hear that? It's driving me nuts," Mr Diaz admits.

"Mr Diaz are you with me?" Phil asks, and as he does electricity cracks and objects around the room start to rise, "Whatever you're doing, make it stop," Phil instructs, as he pulls his gun.

"I'm not doing anything!" Diaz exclaims.

"Where's the weapon?" Diaz exclaims.

"The what?" Diaz asks sounding confused.

"Coulson, I found it. it's a Chitauri helmet," Melinda says, through the coms, sounding shocked, "Fitz-Simmons are you seeing this?" Melinda asks.

"It's not a weapon, yet it caused a cranial discharge," Simmons says, through the coms, looking shocked.

"What are you doing with the helmet?" Phil asks Diaz.

"What, the alien thing? It's a souvenir," Diaz explains, "Aah, not again!" Diaz exclaims as he notices the objects floating around him.

"Answer the question, Mr Diaz, what are you doing with the helmet?" Phil asks.

"What the alien thing? The first time anyone's touched it since New York was a couple nights ago," Diaz explains.

"Why?" Phil asks.

"It had rust all over it. we were cleaning it," Diaz explains.

"That wasn't rust," Simmons realises, "May, don't touch it!" Simmons exclaims and she quickly
closes the case, "Sir, he's not using a weapon, he's infected. I think the helmet was the source of an alien virus," Simmons reveals, and as she does Melinda knows she has to contact Tony has he has run some tests on Chitari metal, but right now she knows they have other things to be concerned about.

"All we did was clean it," Diaz reveals, "Me, Frankie, and Adam, we were bored on the third shift, so we decided to clean it," Diaz explains, "Adam, and Frankie,"

"Mr Diaz, I'm putting the gun away now, okay?" Phil asks.

"Sir, he's a six hundred megajoules and climbing," Simmons explains, "Sir?"

"Clear everybody out, clear everybody out, now," Phil tells Melinda and Ward, both of whom are standing at the doorway, and looking quite reluctant, like she would rather, be with Phil, which she would, pushes Ward and follows behind him.

"I'm gonna wind up like them, aren't I?" Diaz asks, sounding afraid.

"Why don't you have a seat," Phil suggests, and they both sit down.

"You have any family, wife, kids?" Phil asks, "Is there anyone you want to talk to? Anything I can do?" he asks curious.

"Sir, you have to get out of there right now! He's going to…” Fitz starts to say, but before he can say more Phil takes out his coms device but because of the way he puts it everyone who is listening in on coms can hear what he is saying.

"Listen to me, I've been where you are right now," Phil says, "So please believe me when I tell you, you don't have to be afraid," Phil says.

"What are you… what are you talking about?" Diaz asks.

"Your job, gets pretty dangerous, doesn't it? Mine too," Phil answers, "I got hurt once, pretty bad," He says, and Melinda has to react hard not to react to that, "And I died. Some say it was only eight seconds, but I knew it was more than that," Phil reveals, and as he does Melinda tenses, as she knows that could be bad, "I know I wasn't here anymore, I was there" He says.

"What's it like?" Diaz asks.

"It's beautiful," Phil says, and the electricity pulses more.

"You better get going, buddy, go," Diaz says, and Phil leaves, doing so even though he doesn't want to and Diaz dies.

A little while after Diaz tragically died Melinda, Phil, and Ward have all been cleared, and the three of them, Jemma, Fitz, and Daisy are back on the bus on the way to a facility called the Sandbox, with the helmet on board.

"What's our ETA?" Phil asks, as he walks into the cockpit where Melinda is.

"Three thirty-seven West Africa Time," Melinda answers.

"Gonna be a long four hours and twenty-six minutes," Phil comments, checking his watch.

"You okay?" Melinda asks.
"Fine, I just want this alien thing off our plane as soon as humanly possible," Phil comments.

"You want to talk about your physical?" Melinda asks, asking not because she is supposed to be keeping an eye on Phil, but rather because of the fact that she is truly concerned about him.

"Nothing to tell," Phil answers, completely lying which Melinda can tell, "My physical therapist requested it. he's been updating his files or something," Phil explains.

"You'd tell me if something was wrong," Melinda says, and Phil scoffs.

"Of course," Phil responds and once he does they hear a beep.

"Sir, I think I've discovered something," Simmons says, through the planes coms system, "Could you come down to the lab?" she asks.

"I'll be right there," Phil says and he goes to leave.

"Phil, the fireman, you did everything you could for him," Melinda says, and once she does Phil nods and leaves.

After Phil leaves Melinda pulls out her phone and makes a phone call,

"Hey," Tony answers, sounding glad to hear from her.

"Hey. I can't explain why in detail over the phone, but if you have anything Chitari you need to put it in quarantine and not touch it when doing so," Melinda tells her husband.

"Okay, but what's going on?" Tony asks, as while he doesn't need an explanation to do what Melinda asks, he is still curious.

"I can't explain right now, but make sure you don't touch it, no matter what," Melinda requests.

"I will… are you okay?" Tony asks worried.

"At the moment," Melinda answers, "I love you, I'll call you later;"

"I love you too," Tony responds, sounding worried for his wife, but he proceeds to do what his wife told him to do.

A little while later Simmons has explained how the virus is spreading and it has been clear that she has been infected. While Simmons is quarantined inside the lab Fitz is sitting right outside the doors, and Melinda, Phil, Daisy, and Ward are standing a little way away talking.

"Simmons believes she contracted the virus approximately thirty-six hours ago when she received an electrostatic shock from the first victim," Phil explains.

"How much time does she have?" Daisy asks, sounding upset.

"Based on when the fireman was infected, how quickly their symptoms manifested, two hours at the most," Phil answers, looking at Daisy.

"That's enough time, right?" Daisy asks, "I mean, S.H.I.E.L.D has dozens of labs and scientists working on this thing, don't they?" Daisy asks, her voice breaking slightly as she looks between her mother, Phil, and Ward, and as she does Melinda puts an arm around her daughter, as Daisy thinks they should call her father so that he and Bruce can start to work on this as well.
"They do," Phil confirms, "How soon can you get us on the ground?" Phil asks, looking at Melinda.

"Three hours, our path to the Sandbox has us right in the middle of the Atlantic," Melinda explains, squeezing Daisy's shoulders slightly, as she can tell that her daughter is getting upset, not to mention the fact that things are getting pretty dangerous, truthfully this would be a great time for an Iron Man intervention but even though he has plans for new suits Tony hasn't made one yet so they are on their own.

"Sir, correct me if I'm wrong, but if we can't land in time…" Ward starts to say.

"Simmons will release a pulse that will blow this plane right out of the sky," Phil finishes.

"We can't just sit here and watch her die!" Daisy explains, tears coming to her eyes, "We have to do something!"

"There's only one person on this plane capable of finding a solution for this, and I'm willing to bet my life that she will," Phil says.

"She's just a kid," Melinda says, sounding upset, as ever since she met Fitz and Simmons she has been trying not to think about the fact that they are younger than Bobbi, Sharon, and Antoine, and not much older than Daisy, and Peter, but right now, all she can think about is the fact that Jemma is just a kid.

Not long after Melinda and Daisy left the cargo bay the two of them walk into Daisy's bunk.

"We've got to call Dad, he can do something," Daisy tells her mother.

"I'm not so sure he can," Melinda admits, as she is pretty sure that if Tony was on the plane then he could do more, but she isn't sure how much he can do from New York.

"He and Bruce can figure something out!" Daisy explains.

"Simmons is a genius too. It's likely anything they could do she's already trying," Melinda tells her daughter.

"I hate this! It's not fair!" Daisy explains.

"I know," Melinda says, before hugging her daughter and the two of them just stand in Daisy's bunk, hugging.

A little while later Daisy has calmed down a little and is walking into the command centre where Ward is watch a life feed from downstairs.

"Shouldn't you be down there?" Daisy asks curious.

"No, they don't need an audience," Ward explains, and Daisy goes to leave.

"You can stay, if you want," Ward says, and Daisy walks over to him.

"I really, really hate this," Daisy admits, "I feel so…"

"Helpless," Ward finishes.
"Yeah," Daisy confirms.

"I want it to be a person, some superpowered psychopath, someone I could hurt, someone I could… punish," Ward explains, "That I could do, what I can't do is protect you guys from stuff I can't even see, or understand," Ward says, as he inhales sharply.

"So, what do we do?" Daisy asks curious.

"We wait, and get ready," Ward explains.

"Ready for what?" Daisy asks.

"For whatever it is we're called upon to do," Ward says, "That's what S.H.I.E.L.D means," He says, figuring this is a good chance to get on Daisy's good side, and hearing that Daisy nods and the two of them both continue to watch the feed from the lab.

While Daisy and Ward are in the command centre Phil is up in his office on a video call with Felix Blake.

"Coulson, nice to see you're not dead," Blake comments.

"Did you get our analysis of the virus?" Phil asks.

"We did, and S.H.I.E.L.D has no record of anything like it, no one does," Blake admits, "So it's imperative it reach the Sandbox without incident," Blake says, "In case of a pandemic, we're going to need it," he admits.

"I'm aware of that, but I don't need more orders or ultimatums, I need answers," Phil explains.

"I wish I had some for you," Blake says, telling the truth, "I'm sorry, Coulson, I've been ordered to inform you that if you have infected cargo, you need to dump it," Blake says, and as he does Phil turns away, "Do you copy me, Coulson?" Blake asks, "These orders are coming from up top," He explains.

"I'm sorry," Phil says, as he presses buttons on the tablet, "Bad connection, didn't get the last part," Phil says, before cutting the connection, and once he does he looks towards the door where Melinda is, "Don't even think it," he says, to Melinda.

"I don't have to. That's your job," Melinda comments, as she tries to think of everything that she can do to help Simmons, and unfortunately that list is very short.

Not long after Phil's conversation with Blake Phil has headed downstairs, and as he sees Daisy sitting alone on one of the couches he walks over to her.

"Daisy, are you okay?" Phil asks concerned.

"No, how can I be? How can anyone be?" Daisy asks, looking at him.

"I believe Jemma will figure this out, that she will be okay," Phil tells Daisy.

"You don't know that Uncle Phil? People aren't always okay, we both know that," Daisy says, looking upset.

"Yeah, we do, but I have to believe that this will work out," Phil explains, looking at Daisy, and as
he does Daisy realises something.

"Fitz?" Daisy calls, and Phil turns to see Fitz running downstairs, carrying the containment case which has the helmet inside.

"Fitz," Phil calls and he goes running downstairs, Daisy, Ward, and Melinda all of whom realised what was going on, follow behind.

Over the next few minutes Phil, Melinda, Ward, and Daisy watch as Fitz and Simmons attempt to make an anti-serum to save Simmons, but unfortunately it doesn't seem to work, and so Simmons walks over to the glass, where Phil is on the other side.

"Sir, I know the protocol in these circumstances, but could you please tell my dad first?" Simmons requests, her voice breaking, "I just think my Mum would take it better if it comes from him,"

"We're not there yet. They're still time," Phil says.

"Sir, please," Simmons says, it being clear that she knows Phil isn't telling the truth, "Would you mind if I had a brief moment alone with Fitz?" Simmons asks, and as she does Daisy starts to cry.

"Come on, let's go," Melinda says, putting her arm around her daughter's shoulders and leading her upstairs.

About a minute later Melinda, Daisy, Phil, and Ward get upstairs, and while Phil and Ward walk towards the command centre Melinda and Daisy stand together.

"This can't be happening, she can't die," Daisy says, looking devastated, "Mom, do something! We've got to save her!" Daisy says, and having no idea what else to say or do Melinda walks the step closer to her daughter and hugs her.

"This is something I can't fix, Daisy," Melinda says, wishing she could not just for her daughter, but for Simmons too.

"But you can fix everything," Daisy tells her mother.

"Not this," Melinda admits, and as she does an alarm starts to blare.

"What the hell is that?" Daisy asks, as she and Melinda break apart, and Melinda hurries to the command centre, Daisy right behind her.

"Someone's lowering the cargo-hold ramp," Phil realises, and once he does Ward goes running out of the command centre and heads downstairs.

A while later Ward has jumped out of the plane, with a parachute, and saved Simmons with a injection of the anti-serum that ended up working. After Ward and Simmons landed in the ocean they were saved, brought back to the plane, and Phil has just finished talking to them.

"So, what did you think of your first time skydiving?" Ward asks Simmons curious.

"Honestly, I'd rather not think about it anymore," Simmons admits.

"I thought what you did was incredibly brave," Ward comments, and Simmons is touched by that.

"Oh, well, I suppose now's as good a time as any to tell you that, um, I may have misled you earlier," Simmons admits, and Ward gives her a look, "You see, when I gave you back the night-
night pistol, I lied, it's still an ounce off," she reveals.

"I know," Ward says.

"You do?" Simmons asks, sounding surprised.

"Of course, after all," Ward says, putting his hands on his hips and putting on a deep voice, "I'm Agent Grant Ward, I just jumped out of a plane without a parachute on and saved your life!" Ward says, doing a very bad impersonation on himself.

"Actually, that's not quiet it. it's a bit more nasally than that," Simmons says, causing both her and Ward to laugh a little and as they do Simmons sees someone, "Oh, hello Daisy," Simmons greats, and once she does Daisy hurries over and hugs her tightly.

While Ward, Daisy, Fitz and Simmons are downstairs, all feeling glad that Simmons is okay, Melinda has headed up to Phil's office to talk to him.

"How's Simmons?" Melinda asks.

"Amazingly resilient, you'd never know she almost died," Phil admits.

"Experience like that, it takes a while to sink in," Melinda comments, and as she does she notices something, "That her medical report?"

"Mine, actually," Phil admits. "Blood work finally came back, I'm perfectly normal, little heavy on the iron, but don't worry, you don't have to start calling me, 'Iron Man'," Phil comments.

"I don't call my husband that, what makes you think I'm going to call you that?" Melinda asks.

"Good point," Phil says, being well aware that Melinda has never once called Tony Iron Man, "My doctors never requested any tests, I ordered them for myself, but you knew that," Phil says, and Melinda nods, "This piece of paper is telling me that everything's fine, but I don't feel fine. I feel different," Phil admits.

"Take of your shirt," Melinda requests, walking towards Phil, who gives her a surprised look, as he is very confused about what is going on.

"Excuse me?" Phil asks confused, and feeling like he can't have just heard what he thought he just heard.

"Your shirt, unbutton it," Melinda requests, and knowing Melinda well enough to know that she would have a purpose Phil moves his tie and starts to unbutton his shirt a little, revealing his scar, which Melinda puts her hand on, "Whether it was eight seconds or forty, you died, there's no way you can go through a trauma like that and not come out of it changed. You know how long it's taken me to…"

"I know," Phil says.

"The point of these things is to remind us that, there is no going back, there's only moving forward, you feel different because you are different," Melinda tells her friend.

Downstairs Daisy has shut herself in her bunk, and wrapped an old blanket of hers around herself, and after a few moments of hesitation Daisy pulls out her phone, and facetimes her father, sitting in
"Daze? What's wrong?" Tony asks, looking at his daughter in worry.

"I don't want to be here anymore," Daisy admits, "Can I come home? I want to come home," Daisy says, tears coming to her eyes.

"Of course you can come home, but Daisy what happened?" Tony asks his daughter, feeling worried about what has happened, "Talk to me, Tiny Toni," Tony requests.

"Things were bad today," Daisy reveals, "We almost died today, a member of this team was so close to dying," Daisy admits, looking afraid.

"Is everyone okay now?" Tony asks, as his heart breaks way to fast and he worries about his family.

"Barely," Daisy admits.

"That's good, focus on that," Tony tells his daughter, "It helps, even just a little, trust me,"

"I'm not sure I can, and I don't know if I want to," Daisy admits. "I want to come home Dad,"

"Okay, by looks of things it's night," Tony says. "So what's going to happen is you're going to get some sleep, and I'm going to talk to Mom, and we're going to get you home,"

"Really?" Daisy asks.

"Really," Tony promises. "And to help you sleep I'm going to get JARVIS to send you a file, of all your favourite episodes of TV shows,"

"Thanks Dad," Daisy says, looking relieved. "I love you,"

"I love you too. I'll see you soon," Tony assures his daughter, and Daisy ends the call.

While Daisy is in her bunk Melinda, who has left Phil's office is in the cockpit when her phone starts to ring and seeing the caller id she answers it straight away.

"Tony?" Melinda asks.

"Mel? What the hell happened on this mission? I just got a call from Daisy begging to come home," Tony explains, and Melinda becomes concerned.

"A lot of it I can't talk about over the phone, but I'll tell you when I see you," Melinda promises. "Things went bad on this mission. A member of this team who Daisy has become close to almost died, Daisy's struggling, I'm not surprised she wants to come home," Melinda admits, as this is everything she wanted to protect Daisy from.

"And you? How are you doing?" Tony asks concerned.

"I don't even know," Melinda admits. "The agent who almost died is so young, younger than Bobbi, Sharon and Antoine and I just keep thinking that if she had died it would be my fault,"

"No Mel, it's not," Tony says.

"It feels like it is," Melinda admits, "I'll bring Daisy home tomorrow," Melinda reveals, "But for
now I should go check on her," She admits.

"Of course, give her a hug for me," Tony requests.

"Of course. Give Peter one for me," Melinda requests, and Tony knows their son is going to be thrilled to see his mother and sister again, and if he has his way it will be sisters as he plans to make a call to Bobbi, and the two of them end the call.

After ending the call with Tony Melinda heads upstairs, where Phil is still doing paperwork.

"May?" Phil asks confused, "What's wrong?"

"I'm taking Daisy home tomorrow, it's what she needs," Melinda reveals before once more leaving the office and heading straight to Daisy's bunk.

When Melinda gets to Daisy's bunk she knocks on the door.

"Come in," Daisy says, in a quiet voice, and Melinda walks in, "Dad called you," Daisy assumes when she sees her mother.

"He did. I'll take you home first thing tomorrow," Melinda reveals as she walks over to her daughter.

"Thank you," Daisy says. "This place is great, I'm just not sure I can handle staying,"

"That's okay. It's your choice," Melinda tells her daughter as she sits down next to her, giving her a supportive look, "What are you watching?"

"Dad had JARVIS send me all my favourite episodes of shows. First on the list was the Buffy musical episode," Daisy reveals, "Do you want to stay and watch it with me?" Daisy asks, and as she does Melinda can tell that that is what her daughter wants.

"Sure," Melinda says, moving so that she is comfortable next to her daughter, and once she is comfortable Melinda puts an arm around her little girl and Daisy snuggles into her mothers side, where she feels safe, and together mother and daughter watch tv together.
Chapter 59

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1:

November 4th 2013

After saying goodbye to her Uncle, Fitz, Simmons, and Ward, all of whom seem to understand why she has to go even if they are going to miss her, Daisy and her mother have headed back to New York.

"Welcome home," Melinda tells her daughter as the elevator doors open and they both walk out where they find Tony, Bruce, Peter, and surprisingly, as neither Melinda or Daisy realised she was home, Bobbi waiting.

"Dad," Daisy says, dropping her bag and running towards her father who she hugs tightly once she is close enough, "I've missed you soo much," Daisy says as her mother hugs her siblings.

"I've missed you too Tiny Tony," Tony promises his daughter as he kisses his head.

"Hey Pete, Bobbi," Daisy says, breaking apart from her father to walk over to her siblings.

"Hey Daze," Bobbi says, as Peter just hugs his big sister, and as they are hugging Bobbi just hugs her younger siblings.

"I'm really glad you're home," Tony says, before kissing Melinda.

"I can't stay long," Melinda admits, once she and Tony break apart.

"How long?" Tony asks curious.

"Just the rest of the day," Melinda admits. "Bruce, nice to see you,"

"You too Melinda," Bruce responds.

"Hey Bruce," Daisy greats.

"Hey Bruce," Daisy greets.

"Daisy, welcome home," Bruce says, with a kind smile.

"Thanks Bruce," Daisy says. "You better not have messed with my room," Daisy says, looking at her brother, as she picks up her bag.

"Please, I know better," Peter says, rolling his eyes at his big sister. "Race you," He says, and the two of them both go running upstairs, with Bobbi, who is looking amused right behind her.

"So, what happened?" Tony asks curious, as Melinda said she would explain in person, "I was expecting a fight to get Daisy to come home and instead she comes home willingly,"

"A member of our team, the young biochemist was infected by a Chitari virus," Melinda explains.
"How?" Tony asks the same time Bruce asks,

"What did the virus do?"

"The virus was spread by electrostatic shock, that's how Simmons got infected," Melinda explains. "People who were on the ground in New York after the battle found a Chitari helmet, they took it as a souvenir," Melinda explains. "Last week they thought it had rust over it, so they cleaned it, getting infected," Melinda reveals. "We went to investigate because a body was floating in mid and that's when Simmons got infected," Melinda explains. "Jemma almost died, she jumped out of the plane to save all of us all from the electric pulse that she would release," Melinda explains, "Thankfully the anti-serum she created worked, though it was delayed, and Ward was able to give it to her," Melinda explains. "After everything that happened Daisy wanted to come home, and I'm not surprised,"

"Me either, that's a lot for a few days," Tony admits.

"Really is," Bruce confirms. "Do you have information about the virus?" Bruce asks curious. "It could be helpful to know more just in case," He says as he knows it would be naive to think no one would have took Chitari artefacts from New York.

"This is everything my team discovered," Melinda says, handing Bruce of a USB, having gotten the okay from Phil to pass this information over to Bruce and Tony.

"Thanks, I'm going to take a look at this," Bruce says, before heading downstairs, and as Bruce walks away Melinda walks to Tony and hugs him once more.

While their parents are downstairs Daisy, Bobbi, and Peter are up in Daisy's room, all three of them sitting on Daisy's bed together.

"So, did you get along with the team? What are they like?" Peter asks his sister curious.

"Pretty great," Daisy admits. "Fitz and Simmons are scientists, and awesome, and we became close," Daisy explains. "Ward's okay I guess, he's got some personality issues, but I think that's a defence mechanism, we were becoming closer," Daisy reveals.

"That's good," Bobbi says, being glad that her sister is getting along better with the members of her team.

"If things are good with the members of the team why did you leave?" Peter asks curious.

"I just couldn't stay…. Didn't want to," Daisy mutters to herself, looking down so that she isn't looking at either of her siblings, and as she can tell that her sister is upset Bobbi reaches out and takes her hand, giving it a gentle squeeze.

For the rest of the day the Stark-May family, along with Bruce, enjoy spending time together before Melinda had to leave to go back to the Bus.

It's rather late at night and Daisy is sitting in her room, on her computer, when she hears a knock on her door.

"Come in," Daisy says, and the door opens, and her father walks in. "J? Did you tattle on me? Come on man, I thought we were friends, I'm not hacking anything I shouldn't be,"
"I did not alert Mr Stark-May, Miss Daisy," JARVIS reveals.

"Don't worry Tiny Tony. You're not in any trouble," Tony assures his daughter, as he walks over and sits down across from her. "I thought we could talk,"

"Sure," Daisy says, closing her laptop of her lap and putting it on her bed next to her. "What do you want to talk about?"

"You, how you're doing," Tony tells his daughter.

"Okay. Glad to be home," Daisy admits. "I've got to go back to school, don't I?"

"Yep, I've got to talk to Mortia tough," Tony reveals.

"He's going to let me go back, isn't he?" Daisy asks, looking concerned, as if she has to go back to High School she would prefer going back to Midtown.

"Of course," Tony says, knowing that for sure as when he and Mortia talked about Daisy doing her work online for a while that was agreed to. "I'm just not sure when you'll be able to start,"

"Okay," Daisy says, with a grin, "Hey Dad, can we go see Aunt Peggy tomorrow?" Daisy asks curious, as she really wants to talk to Peggy right now.

"Yeah, I think we can do that," Tony assures Daisy.

"Great," Daisy says, looking glad.

"Do you want to talk about what's happened?" Tony asks his daughter curious.

"No, not really," Daisy admits.

"Daze…," Tony starts to say.

"Did I say not really I mean not at all," Daisy says, sounding short, and her father gives her a look.
"Sorry, I just… really don't want to talk about it," she admits, as the truth is she feels ashamed for not being able to stick it out with the team.

"Okay," Tony says, knowing better than to push his daughter. "But if you do want to talk I'll be down in the lab for a while,"

"Okay," Daisy says, with a nod.

"I love you Tiny Toni, and I'm glad you're home," Tony says, standing up and kissing Daisy on the head and heading to the door of his daughter's room.

"Dad," Daisy says, before she can stop herself, causing him to turn around. "Are you disappointed in me?"

"Of course not," Tony says, turning to look at his daughter and walking back over to her. "Why would you think that?"

"I couldn't stick it out on the team," Daisy explains. "You, Mom, Bobbi, practically everyone in our family are heroes and I couldn't handle even being on a team," Daisy explains.

"Daisy I don't think any less of you, and neither does your Mom, or your sister, or anyone else," Tony assures herself. "If fact I'm proud. It takes a lot of courage to admit that you can't handle

"Night Dad,"

"Night. Daze,” Tony says, before leaving, actually leaving this time, and once her father leaves Daisy picks up her computer and goes back to what she was doing.

The next morning after breakfast Tony, Daisy, Bobbi, and Peter who has a day off school, have made their way to Washington DC so that they can visit with Peggy. When the four of them arrive at Peggy's room they find Sharon leaving.

"Shay," Tony greats.

"Hey Uncle Tony," Sharon says, as she gives her uncle a hug, "It's a good day," Sharon whispers to her Uncle as she hugs him.

"Good," Tony responds, looking relieved, as the two of them break apart.

"Hey Daze, Pete," Sharon says to her two younger cousins.

"You need to come to New York. You haven't been home in agers," Peter informs Sharon.

"I know. I'm going to try to do better," Sharon responds, knowing that is rather hard with the mission she is currently doing.

"Good. I've missed you," Daisy responds.

"I've missed you guys too," Sharon says, smiling at Daisy before walking over to Bobbi. 

"How's your mission going?" Bobbi asks Sharon, knowing exactly what Sharon is doing.

"Complicated," Sharon admits, glancing over to Peggy, not wanting to explain more.

"Let's go get some coffee," Bobbi tells one of her best friends. "I'll be back, we're going for Coffee," She says, and she and Sharon leave.

"Hey Aunt Peg," Tony says, sitting down next to his godmother while Peter sits down on the to her side and Daisy sits down on the edge of the bed.

"Tony. How you doing?" Peggy asks her godson.

"I'm good," Tony says, smiling at his godmother.

"Peter, how's school?" Peggy asks curious, as she looks at him.

"Good. I'm top of my year," Peter says with a grin.

"Peter that's great! I'm so proud of you," Peggy says with a smile, "Daisy, how are you?"

"I'm fine Aunt Peg," Daisy says as she avoids looking at her aunt.

"No, you're not," Peggy says, being able to tell that, "What's wrong?"

"I've been on a shield team for the past few weeks," Daisy explains, "I left a couple of days ago, because I didn't want to stay, couldn't handle it," Daisy explains, once more avoiding looking at her
aunt, "Are you disappointed in me?" she asks worried.

"Of course not, Daisy," Peggy says, reaching out and taking her hand, "I think you've shown real strength," Peggy reveals.

"Really?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised.

"Really," Peggy assures her, "Daisy sometimes admitting you can't do something takes more strength than anything else," Peggy reveals.

"You really think so?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised,

"I do. But there is a difference between you knowing, deep inside of yourself that you can't do it and someone else telling you," Peggy reveals, "So what you have to ask yourself is whether this is something you can't do, or do you just believe you can't because that's what someone, or fear, is telling you," Peggy reveals, giving Daisy a hell of a lot to think about.

While Daisy, Peter, and Tony are in with Peggy Bobbi and Sharon have gotten coffee and are walking the grounds of the nursing home.

"So, does Aunt Peg know about your mission?" Bobbi asks curious.

"No. I didn't want her to have to lie, not to him," Sharon explains. "It wouldn't have been fair to her,"

"I get that," Bobbi admits, "How are you handling everything?"

"I don't know…. I'm becoming an expert in compartmentalising," Sharon says, looking amused, "And making sure he never catches me here,"

"Peter's right, you need to come home for a little while," Bobbi tells her friend.

"I will when I can," Sharon admits, as the truth is that she misses her family and being with them, "What's with Daisy? I thought she was on a team with Aunt Melinda and Uncle Phil," Sharon comments.

"She was," Bobbi confirms, "But then a member of the team almost died and she wanted to come home,"

"Damn," Sharon says, "She's struggling," She assumes

"Yep," Bobbi confirms.

"People in our family know, better than most agents, what we're getting into when we start with SHIELD, but it can still be difficult," Sharon comments, "Do you think she's going to be okay?"

"I don't know," Bobbi admits, "I do know that the team was good for her, she finally found somewhere, besides with our family, that she felt like she belonged. So…," Bobbi starts to explain.

"You hope she decides to go back," Sharon realises.

"I don't want her to be in danger," Bobbi quickly says, "But I can't deny that Daisy with the team has been good for her, I can see the changes,"

"Are you going to talk to her? Try to get her to go back?" Sharon asks curious.
"No," Bobbi says, without even needing to think about it. "I'll support her, be there for her, but if she decides to go back it needs to be something she decides on her own."

"Makes sense," Sharon admits, perfectly understanding why Bobbi would choose to do that, "Have you heard for Antoine?"

"Yeah, I saw him a couple of weeks ago. He seems okay," Bobbi reveals.

"Yeah…. I'm not sure he likes working with Garrett though," Sharon admits, as she briefly caught up with him, "That's not surprising though,"

"Really isn't," Bobbi admits, and the two friends drift into silence as they continue to walk together.

"How's Hunter?" Sharon asks, a few moments later.

"Wouldn't know; haven't seen him for a while. Daisy has though, ask her," Bobbi says, deciding not to mention that she has plans to meet up with him in like a week.

"Right," Sharon says, deciding not to question her friend again, and once more the two of them drift into silence as they walk together.

November 8th 2013

Ever since Daisy, Peter, Bobbi, and Tony went to visit with Peggy Daisy has been thinking about what her aunt said and while she hasn't come to a decision she has been given a lot to think about.

It's mid-morning on a Saturday and Tony, Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi are in the main living rooms of their floor at Avengers Tower watching movies together.

"Is that possible?" Peter asks curious.

"Nope," Bobbi answers, and as she does her phone starts to ring, "I'll be back," Bobbi reveals.

"J, pause the movie," Tony reveals, "You've got five minutes before I press play," Tony informs his daughter.

"Yes Dad," Bobbi says, before heading to her mother's office so that she can respond to the phone call.

For the next few minutes Daisy, Peter, and Tony wait together, waiting for Bobbi to come back and as soon as Bobbi walks back in Daisy, Peter, and Tony all recognise the look on her face.

"You've got a mission," Tony says, as he knows that look all too well.

"Yep. I've got to get to the Hub so Uncle Clint is flying here and going to land on the new landing pad," Bobbi reveals, as Clint is currently off a mission and so he is able to bring a plane.

"Make sure you say hello to your Mom before your briefing at the Hub," Tony tells his daughter, as Melinda and her team are at the Hub.

"Will do," Bobbi assures her father.

"Mom and the team are at the Hub?" Daisy asks, looking interested.

"Yeah," Tony confirms.
"I want to go…. And stay with the team," Daisy reveals.

"Daisy," Peter says, looking shocked.

"I want to do this. I think I need to," Daisy admits, then she turns to her father. "I know you won't like this Dad, Mom, either, but I'm asking you to let me go," Daisy admits. "I felt like I belonged with the team, but I got scared," Daisy admits, "I always knew that being a SHIELD agent is dangerous, but it was like I was a stepped removed, this time I wasn't and this scared me," Daisy admits, "I don't want to be scared anymore, Dad, I want to go back to the team, my team, and be an agent, be a hero like everyone in our family, please let me try to be like you," Daisy requests looking at her father, it being clear that this is something she really wants.

"That was a pretty great speech, it makes it pretty hard to say no," Tony admits.

"Then don't. Let me do this, Dad, let me become an agent," Daisy requests.

"I'll need to talk to your Mom," Tony reveals, "I'll be back," Tony says, before leaving so that he can call his wife.

"You want to leave again?" Peter asks, looking at his sister and looking upset.

"I need to do this Pete, I feel like it's what I'm supposed to do," Daisy admits, "But I'll call all the time, and we'll still be you and me against the world," Daisy reveals.

"Okay," Peter says, before hugging his sister, "I love you, Daze,"

"Love you too, Pete," Daisy responds.

"What about me? Am I included in us against the world?" Bobbi asks curious, and once she does Peter and Daisy look at each other,

"Nah," Daisy and Peter say together, clearly teasing their sister.

"Mean, both of you," Bobbi tells her siblings, pretending to be insulted.

While his kids are teasing each other in the living room Tony has headed into his lab so that he can call Melinda.

"Tony? Is something wrong?" Melinda asks concerned, as she answers the phone.

"No, not really," Tony answers, "It's Daisy, she wants to come back to the team, and become an agent," Tony explains, "Gave a whole speech about how important it is to her,"

"Oh," Melinda says, "I thought this could happen,"

"Yeah, Mel, even if we can stop her I don't think we should," Tony admits.

"Really?" Melinda asks, sounding surprised.

"Yeah, I don't want her in danger. I want to protect her as much as possible, but she's seventeen, if we try and stop her I feel like…," Tony starts to say.

"We'll lose her when she's eighteen," Melinda realises, "Fury would be all in favour of having another Stark-May join,"
"Exactly," Tony says, "Where if we let her join the team she'd be learning from you and Phil, which would be a little safer," Tony says, knowing that it probably won't be much safer but it should be a little, which would be good.

"Yeah…. Okay," Melinda says.

"Okay,"

A few minutes after Tony left to talk to Melinda Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi are still waiting together, Daisy feeling herself becoming more and more concerned as she waits, until Tony finally walks out form the lab and over to his children.

"Dad?" Daisy asks concerned.

"Pack your bags, you're going to be an agent," Tony tells his daughter.

"Really?" Daisy asks, looking excited.

"Really," Tony confirms.

"AH," Daisy yells, before running over to her father, "Thank you Dad," She says, hugging him, "I love you,"

"Love you too," Tony responds, and the two of them break apart,

"Pete? Help me pack?" Daisy asks curious.

"Sure," Peter responds, as even though he doesn't want Daisy to go he can tell that this is something she has to do, and the two of them head upstairs. While Daisy and Peter head upstairs Bobbi walks over to her father.

"You and Mom are really letting Daze become an agent?" Bobbi asks, sounding surprised.

"It's the best option," Tony reveals, "If we don't let her then once she is eighteen…,"

"She'll do it herself, without permission," Bobbi realises.

"Exactly," Tony confirms, "At least if we do it this way she can be a little bit more protected," Tony realises, and Bobbi nods.

"I guess I should go get ready," Bobbi says, before heading upstairs too, leaving Tony to wait alone, hoping he didn't just make a huge mistake.

About half an hour later Tony, Peter, Daisy with a couple of bags, and Bobbi in her tactical gear with one, are waiting on the Quinjet landing area of Avengers Tower, when the SHIELD Quinjet that Clint is flying lands.

"Hey Stark-May's," Clint says, walking out of the Quinjet a couple of minutes after it lands.

"Hey Uncle Clint," Daisy, Peter, and Bobbi say together.

"Nice work on the landing pad, it's perfect," Clint tells Tony.

"Good to know," Tony says, feeling glad about that as he hasn't had a chance to test things out.
"We should get going," Bobbi says, "Love you Dad," She says, before hugging him.

"Love you too Little Bird," Tony says as Daisy and Peter hug.

"Keep Dad on his toes," Daisy whispers to her brother.

"I'll do my best. Stay safe… don't die, please," Peter whispers to his sister.

"I'll do my best," Daisy promise, "Love you, Pete,"

"Love you too," Peter responds, and the two of them break apart.

Once Peter and Daisy break apart Daisy walks over to her father while Bobbi walks over to her brother.

"Thank you for letting me do this, Dad," Daisy says, looking grateful.

"You're welcome," Tony says, "There's going to be conditions. Your mom will explain them, and you need to listen," He explains.

"I will," Daisy promises, "Love you, Dad," She says, before hugging him.

"Love you too, Tiny Toni, so much." Tony says, as he hugs his daughter and kisses her head.

"Let's go, Daze," Bobbi says, once her father and sister break apart.

"Yep," Daisy says, picking up her bags, and heading into the plane.

A few minutes after Bobbi and Daisy walked onto the plane it takes off and Clint, Peter, and Tony watch as Daisy and Bobbi fly away, heading towards the Hub.
AN1:

After a pretty long flight Daisy and Bobbi arrive at the Hub, and as they two of them walk down the ramp neither are surprised to see Melinda standing and waiting for them.

"Hey Mom, I'd love to stay and talk, but I'm already late for a briefing," Bobbi says, before hurrying past her mother, without so much as another word.

"Hey Mom," Daisy says, as she walks towards her.

"Daisy," Melinda greets, walking towards her. "You're going to have to wear this," She says, handing Daisy an ID badge.

"Okay," Daisy confirms, as she pins the badge to her shirt. "Thanks for letting me come back, and stay,"

"You're welcome. There's going to be rules," Melinda reveals.

"I know. Dad said," Daisy admits, "Where's everyone else?" she asks, as the two of them start to walk.

"Uncle Phil is with Agent Victoria Hand, Simmons is on the Bus, and Ward and Fitz are on a mission," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Together? Just the two of them?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised.

"Yes," Melinda confirms, as they arrive at the bus.

"Why? What's going on?" Daisy asks, and her mother just gives her a look, "Not supposed to know, right," Daisy realises, and as she sees Simmons she hurries over to her, "Jemma,"

"Daisy!" Jemma says, looking glad to see her, and she hugs her friend, "I'm glad you're back,"

"I'm actually glad to be back," Daisy admits, as they break apart. "I've got to take my stuff upstairs, but let's talk," Daisy requests, and Simmons nods, "Mom said Ward and Fitz are on a mission alone?" Daisy asks, sounding concerned.

"Yes, they've gone in Dark, into hostile territory," Jemma explains, and as she does it is clear to Daisy that Jemma is worried, "How'd you get back here?"

"My sisters a S.H.I.E.L.D agent too, she flew us back here before running of for a mission briefing," Daisy explains, "Do we know anything about the mission Fitz and Ward are on? Mom wouldn't share details,"

"Nothing, just that it's a level eight mission, but your Mom and Ward were briefed on everything too," Jemma admits, causing Daisy to frown.
"You don't like this, do you?" Daisy asks Jemma.

"No, not at all," Jemma confirms, as the two of them get to the upper level of the plane.

A while later Daisy has put her stuff in her bunk, has collected her laptop and is back in the lab with Jemma, her mother, and a team who are running tests, and re-stocking, the plane.

"Oh, no, no, no, no," Jemma says to a man who almost knocked over the prototype night-night gun, "Please be careful," She requests, as she takes the Night-Night gun and puts it her bag, "Can you imagine what Fitz would do if the nigh-night gun was broken when he came back?" Jemma asks Daisy.

"He'd be pissed," Daisy admits, as Jemma sighs.

"Surely, he'll be okay out there, right?" Jemma asks, looking worried.

"Well, Mom's agent seven, maybe she can give us an update on their mission?" Daisy asks her mother, knowing she is majorly pushing the limits but she has to try, and in response Melinda just gives her daughter a look, "Okay, I have spent my entire life around you, but I still don't know what everyone of your non-expressions mean," Daisy admits, "Does this mean you know something and you can't tell us or that you don't know her anything?" Daisy asks curious, though she is leaning more towards door one than two.

"When we have more information, we'll react," Melinda tells her daughter. "All right, clear out," Melinda says to everyone, "That means you too, off," Melinda tells her daughter, who closes her laptop, and walks over to Simmons, as Melinda leave the lab.

"I really not good with being left in the dark," Daisy says, as its one thing that she has always hated the most while growing up, "I need answers, and I know just the person who has them," Daisy realises.

"Who?" Simmons asks, looking confused.

"Uncle Phil, I'm obviously talking about Uncle Phil," Daisy explains, "Let's go," She tells Jemma, and the two of them head out of the lab.

While Daisy and Jemma are being kicked out of the lab on the bus by Melinda Phil is in the operations centre with Agent Victoria Hand discussing the mission.

"I'm going to need three more chalks queued up at the border...," Hand starts to say.

"And a fourth standing by in Armenia," Phil finishes.

"Great minds," Hand says, with a slight laugh, "It must be nice to be off that plane. I understand you're almost through your recovery," Hand comments.

"The plane has nothing to do with my recovery," Phil comments.

"I only know what I've read. Seems Fury has a soft spot for his favourites. Not everyone gets sent to Tahiti," Hand comments.

"It's a magical... place," Phil says, feeling awkward as he realises that he has been answering with that answer a lot.
"All I meant was it must feel good to be back in the big leagues," Hand comments.

"Two of my agents are the key to this operation. I never left the bigs," Phil says, knowing that when you have Melinda May on your team you can't be considered anything other than in the big leads.

"Let's hope they're as good as you think they are," Hand comments.

"They are," Phil says, knowing that for a fact, and while he is a little worried about how Fitz and Ward are going to go with the mission, but at the same time he has complete confidence that they are going to pull it off.

A while after she and Simmons decided to go to Phil Daisy has tracked him down, having very much enjoyed seeing the Hub.

"Hey, fancy seeing you here," Daisy greats, smiling at her Uncle.

"Daisy," Phil says, sounding glad to see her, "When did you get here?"

"Not that long ago," Daisy answers.

"Does that mean Bobbi's here?" Phil asks, hoping the answer is yes, as he would very much like to see her, as apart from Daisy he hasn't seen any of the Stark-May children since coming back from Tahiti.

"Not sure, she got called into a mission brief," Daisy admits.

"Oh," Phil says, looking slightly disappointed, "Did you need something?" he asks curious.

"Yeah, I wanted to know more about Ward and Fitz's mission," Daisy explains, "Simmons is seriously starting to unravel without Fitz,"

"Daisy, you know better than asking about something like this," Phil explains, "You know that you have to have clearance, which you don't,"

"Yeah, but I do have eyes, and I've always been taught to notice things, which is why I noticed six squads in full tactical gear, three creates of RPGs and a full crew of analysts heading to operations," Daisy explains, "Are you really going to tell me that has nothing to do with their mission?" Daisy asks as the other option is that it could have something to do with Bobbi's mission, and she really doesn't want to think about that, "If I'm right, give me a signal by not saying anything," Daisy requests.

"Trust the system," Phil says, to Daisy's annoyance, before walking away, Daisy rolling her eyes at him as he goes.

"How'd it go?" Simmons as she walks over to Daisy.

"Nothing," Daisy says, crossing her arms, "Uncle Phil's acting like a robot version of himself right, something I really haven't seen that often," Daisy admits, as she is pretty sure she can count the times she's seen Phil act like this one hand, "If we want the truth, we've got to get it ourselves," Daisy says, knowing that it is properly not the best idea, but it is how her mother, her father, Natasha and Clint would handle this situation and so that's what she is going to do.

"Okay, how would you suggest…," Simmons starts to say, but then she notices the look on Daisy's
"Yes," Daisy says, with a nod.

"No, I can't be a part of your bad-girl shenanigans," Simmons comments, "I like following the rules and doing what's expected of me, It makes me feel nice," She explains.

"Simmons, wake up!" Daisy exclaims, "Ward and Fitz went on a top-secret, two man operation, and look," Daisy says, gesturing to more tactical soldiers, "There are more men, and either it's a bigger deal and they're not telling us, or something went wrong out there," Daisy comments, "Maybe there's nothing we can do to help, but we got to know if there is," Daisy tells Simmons, "What if they're injured or being tortured somewhere right now?" Daisy asks.

"Fitz, Tortured," Simmons says, looking horrified, "What do you have in mind?" Simmons asks, and Daisy starts to explain her plan.

While Daisy and Simmons are planning their, potentially very bad plan, Phil has headed back to the Bus where Melinda is doing Tai-Chi, seeing her Phil walks over and sits down near Melinda.

"Sorry, am I disturbing you?" Phil asks, and Melinda doesn't respond, just continues to do her tai-chi, "You know, I like this plane, I like the way we do things here," Phil admits, "Everyone's on the same page, no red tape. So far, it's working for us," He says, and Melinda gives him a less than impressed look, "Most of us," He corrects, "And maybe I'm getting soft, but I don't like keeping things form our team. If you knew…," Phil starts to say, and Melinda gives him a another look, "No, you're right, level eight, but…," He starts to say once more and once more Melinda just gives him a look, "I know, trust the system," He says, "May, thanks," Phil says, before walking away, not seeing Melinda rolling her eyes as he goes.

While Phil is talking to Melinda Daisy and Simmons have made their way to a restricted corridor and Jemma has used her access to open the door.

"Okay, you have the flash drive I programmed with a decoy crawler. It'll use my browser history to simulate my usual online activity, so while S.H.I.E.L.D thinks I'm trolling reddit and Facebook with the you gave me…," Daisy starts to says, being thankful for JARVIS as he inspired her to use the decoy crawler.

"You'll be hacking the files for Ward and Fitz's mission," Simmons finishes, and she walks through the open door and towards a panel. While Simmons does that Daisy hides around a corner, and just talks to Daisy on coms.

"Yep, and remember once you plug it in, I'll only have about…" Daisy starts to say.


"Do you realize that you keep finishing my….," Daisy starts to say.

"Your sentences, I know," Simmons admits, "I'm sorry, bad habit, this is actually a bit thrilling," Simmons admits.

"Ah, good. I'm glad," Daisy says, with a grin, glad that Simmons likes what they are doing, "Now we've just got to figure out a way to get the panel open," Daisy realises.

"Don't worry, I made a special something, it's what we do," Simmons reveals, and once she does
she sprays a substance over the wall, allowing Simmons to press the panel and gaining access to it, "All done," Simmons reveals.

"Really?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised, "Wow, okay, um, just find a USB port," She requests.

"Okay," Simmons says as she starts to search her bag for the USB.

"Agent Simons?" A voice asks, and Simmons turns to see Agent Sitwell.

"It's fine, just play it cool," Daisy says, through the coms.

"Hello, Mr Agent Sitwell," Simmons says, "May I help you?"

"Call me Jasper," Sitwell requests.

"Um, what brings you to this restricted hallway so late at night?" Jemma asks.

"I could ask you the same thing," Sitwell responds.

"No, don't," Simmons says, laughing slightly.

"Simmons, focus, just make up an excuse," Daisy advises.

"I was just on my way to the loo," Simmons says, with a slight laugh, "I could swear it was two rights and a left, but is this here?" Simmons asks, pointing to the wall panel.

"That's a wall panel, why are you accessing it?" Sitwell asks suspiciously.

"Don't spiral, just say something… anything," Daisy instructs.

"You certainly have a gorgeous head," Simmons comments.

"What?" Daisy asks, sounding shocked.

"I like men that are about my height, but heavier than me," Simmons says.

"Stop talking," Daisy quickly says, being pretty sure that Simmons is only making things worse.

"Agent Simmons, do you have authorization to access that panel?" Sitwell ask.

"Say yes, say you do," Daisy instructs.

"Ye.. of course," Simmons says, "Of course, um, I certainly have it right here in my bag," She explains, as she starts to search her bag, "He's onto me," She says, to Daisy.

"Stop talking to me! He can hear you!" Daisy exclaims, through the coms.

"Are you on coms with someone?" Sitwell asks suspiciously, and he raises his walkie to his mouth, "This is Agent Sitwell, I need an escort…" He starts to say, but before he can finish his request Simmons shoots him with the night-night gun.

"Oh my god," Daisy says, sounding shocked, as Simmons plugs in the USB, and drags unconscious Sitwell out of sight.

"Was that all right?" Simmons asks, as she gets back to Daisy.

"That was terrible!" Daisy exclaims, "You are terrible at this," Daisy tells her, "That was total
"meltdown,"
"The night-night gun was right there, and I…" Simmons says, before gasping.

"We need help, you need to go get my Mom," Daisy instructs, as she knows she needs her mother, even though she is going to be in serious trouble.

"Your Mom? No!" Simmons objects, looking horrified.

"Listen, the flash drive will only give me a few minutes of access to the Hub's mainframe to find out what happened to our boys, so just go get my Mom, okay?" Daisy asks, "Just tell her it was an accident,"

"I'm going to be court-martialled," Simmons says, before hurrying off.

"I really hope this works," Daisy mutters to herself, before hurrying away.

After hurrying away from the restricted corridor Daisy hurries to somewhere where she can be alone, and starts to type on her computer, "Okay, come on Daisy," She mutters to herself, and she continues to type, quickly she manages to find exactly what she needs, "Oh, my god, no extraction?" Daisy asks herself, sounding horrified, but before she has more time to react her laptop closes.

"What did I tell you?" Phil asks.

"You told me to trust the system, and the system sent Ward and Fitz in there to die," Daisy says, looking at Phil with an angry look on her face.

"With me," Phil instructs, and Daisy goes to object, "Now, Daisy Lin Antonia" He warns, and so Daisy sighs and gets up, and the two of them begin to walk, Daisy carrying her laptop.

"What were you thinking?" Phil asks angry.

"I was thinking I needed to know what was going on with Ward and Fitz," Daisy explains.

"You hacked S.H.I.E.L.D!" Phil exclaims, though his voice is only loud enough for Daisy to hear, "To find out information on a classified operation," He says, being reminded of Tony right now.

"It's a suicide mission!" Daisy objects, "I saw it all, Uncle Phil," Daisy reveals, "The troop placements, the aerial assault. Once Ward and Fitz disable that device there's going to be a huge attack on the compound, with no extraction plan and you hid that from us!"

"I didn't hide anything from you, you don't have the clearance to know that, which you know," Phil explains.

"Seriously? You're going with that? Are people really expendable to S.H.I.E.L.D? Just a number?" Daisy asks angrily, as that goes against everything she thought she knew.

"Are you done, Daisy?" Phil asks.

"For now," Daisy responds.

"If S.H.I.E.L.D keeps a secret from you its for a good reason," Phil explains.

"Right…," Daisy starts to say.
"Don't interrupt me Daisy," Phil warns, "You just hacked a level eight secure sever, saw operational plans that you have no context for if details got out the whole operation could be compromised, lives could be lost, Ward and Fitz included," Phil explains.

"I know that, which is why I would never let the details get out,' Daisy explains, "Uncle Phil from the stories I've heard from you and Mom, Uncle Clint, Aunt Nat, Maria, Sharon and Antoine, I know that teams watch each other's backs, so that's what I was trying to do, and yes, I thought outside the box to do that, but I was trying to protect my team," Daisy explains.

"The reason our team, and your Mom, Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, Maria and I once upon a time could go off book is because there is a book, a Hub, an organization watching our back," Phil explains, and Daisy looks down at the ground, "Daisy one day I may have to trust you with a secret, and I need to know that you can keep it," Phil explains.

"Can I ask you a question?" Daisy asks curious.

"What?" Phil asks.

"Did you know there was no extraction plan for Ward and Fitz?" Daisy asks, as she can't see Phil being happy about that.

"That's classified," Phil says, before walking away, leaving Daisy standing alone in the corridor, and for a few moments Daisy looks annoyed, before she realises what she has to do and so she goes in search of her mother and Simmons.

After leaving Daisy Phil heads straight to the operations centre as there is a phone call he has to have with Victoria Hand.

"Agent Sitwell is in the infirmary, apparently a member of your team rendered him unconscious," Hand says to Phil as he walks in.

"A misunderstanding," Phil says, "I'll handle the matter internally,"

"Tranquilizing an agent does not qualify as a misunderstanding," Hand points out.

"You're right, but being told there's an extraction team in place when, in fact, there isn't, that does," Phil comments, "I'm level eight, I'm entitled to information regarding the welfare of my team. You should have told me!" Phil exclaims.

"I didn't have to, and what would that have changed, Agent Coulson? You yourself have designed dozens of operations like this, you know how this works," Hand says.

"Usually with an extraction plan," Phil says.

"Barton, Romanoff, May, they never have an extraction plan," Hand points out, saying what Phil knows.

"They know that going in!" Phil says.

"Agent Fitz is unproven in the field, and knowing would have caused him lose focus or courage," Hand argues.

"That should have been my call," Phil argues.

"I wasn't sure you'd comply," Hand admits, "Your team includes a seventeen-year-old girl who…,"
"Has more training, and knowledge, than most level two agents, which you know" Phil argues, "I know what the safety of a thousand men is worth, I know the importance of taking the overkill device out of play," Phil argues, "But I also know my men, and what they're worth!" Phil exclaims, "The decision to go should have been theirs to make,"

"Perhaps, but you need to trust the system, Agent Coulson," Hand says, before walking away.

After a little bit of searching Daisy manages to track down her mother and Simmons, who are clearly dealing with the aftermath of what Simmons did to Sitwell.

"Daisy…" Melinda says to her daughter, as Daisy walks towards her.

"I know, I know, I'm in serious trouble, but I did the right thing!" Daisy exclaims, and her mother gives her a look which Daisy knows to mean she better start explaining, fast, "There's no extraction plan," Daisy explains, "Whoever is running this mission sent Ward and Fitz in with no backup," Daisy explains, and because she knows her mother so well Daisy knows that she is pissed about that.

"Let's go," Melinda tells her daughter and Simmons, who exchange looks, and the two of them follow Melinda to the Bus.

Not long after she met her mother and Simmons the three of them are walking up the ramp of the Bus together.

"You got the information, now we react," Melinda says, looking at her daughter.

"We're gonna get our guys," Daisy comments.

"Somebody has to," Melinda confirms.

"What about the S.H.I.E.L.D assault?" Simmons asks.

"We won't interfere you don't need a battalion for an extraction, three can pull it off," Melinda explains.

"Four's better," A voice say and Melinda, Daisy, and Simmons look up to see Phil standing on the catwalk.

"You're in?" Daisy asks, "I thought we all had to be level eight to discuss this,"

"We're not discussing anything," Phil says, and as he does Melinda and Daisy exchange amused looks.

A little while later Fitz and Ward have been rescued, thanks to the fact that Melinda did some pretty fancy flying, and are back on the bus. As he finishes talking to Phil Daisy walks over to Ward and gently hits his shoulder in a affectionate way.

"You know, for a second there I though the team was going to be down a member," Daisy comments.

"Sorry to disappoint, truth is, I was in good hands," Ward admits, "So, you're back?" he asks.

"Yeah," Daisy confirms, "It was nice spending a few days with my family, but things on this plane
"Do you and your siblings get along well?" Ward asks curious, doing so as he has never heard about May having three children, it was something Garrett didn't tell her.

"Yeah, they're both my best friends," Daisy says, with a nod, "When you grow up with practically everyone in your family, and everyone you consider family, being spies, or soldiers, or just plain heroes, its hard to relate to people, to get close. The only people who understand what it's like to grow up like that are people who've experienced it," she explains, "We're different, and my sister is older and my brother is younger, but we're close," Daisy explains.

"I get that," Ward comments, and Daisy gives him a look.

"Do you have Siblings, Agent Ward?" Daisy asks curious.

"Brothers," Ward answers, looking awkward which Daisy didn't think was possible, "We're not as close as we once were," He says, before walking away, leaving Daisy to wonder what she is missing.

A little while later Daisy is just sitting cross legged on her bed, waiting, because she knows her mother is going to talk to her about what she did, and her new rules. After what feels like a really long wait Daisy finally hears a knock on her door.

"Come in," Daisy says, and once she does Melinda walks in, "How much trouble am I in?" Daisy asks curious.

"Why did you do it, Daisy? Why'd you hack the Sever?" Melinda asks her daughter, as she sits down on the edge of her daughter's bed.

"Because every single story I've ever been told by you, by Dad, Uncle Phil, by Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, and Maria, taught me that teams protect each other, and that's exactly what I was trying to do, protect our team," Daisy explains to her mother, "That's something I'm not going to apologise for," Daisy tells her mother, who is proud of Daisy's words, "Plus I'm pretty sure it's exactly the kind of thing you would do, and it's definitely what Dad would do,"

"Watch it," Melinda tells her daughter, trying not to look amused, "You should have talked to me first," Melinda explains.

"Maybe, but wouldn't you have just tried to stop me?" Daisy asks, "Because when I brought it up to Uncle Phil he told me to trust the system," Daisy points out.

"I would have listened to your concerns and had a conversation with Phil myself," Melinda explains.

"Oh," Daisy says, not sure how to respond, "So we're back to Major trouble?" Daisy asks.

"No," Melinda answers, to Daisy's surprise, "You did hack a level eight sever, which is a very serious matter, you could have been arrested," Melinda reveals, and Daisy looks down at that, "Tomorrow I'm going to bring you some books, and you're going to read them, and then we're going to talk about what you read," Melinda tells her daughter.

"More homework? That's my punishment?" Daisy asks, and Melinda, "Can I pick being arrested instead?"
"No," Melinda says, standing up and heading to the door of Daisy's bunk, "You did do a good thing today, Daisy, I'm proud," she explains, as she stands up.

"What are my new rules?" Daisy asks curious, as she wants to know.

"You have to keep on top of your online work and undertake training," Melinda explains, "Can you do that?"

"Yeah, I can," Daisy confirms, and once she does Melinda heads out of the room.

For a while after her mother leaves Daisy just sits on her bed, not sure to be glad that she didn't get in serious trouble, or to dread the reading her mother is giving her, and so she just sits and stares out into space, until she is distracted by a phone ringing, and so she answers it without even looking at the caller ID.

"Yello," Daisy answers.

"Hey," Bobbi's voice responds.

"Hey," Daisy responds, sounding glad to see her sisters voice, "How'd your mission go?"

"It was interesting," Bobbi admits, "What about you? You sticking to you decision?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Yep, I think I belong here," Daisy admits, and once she does the two Stark-May sisters proceed to talk and catch up even though they only recently saw each other.
It has been about a week since the mission at the Hub, and in that time Daisy has been reading S.H.I.E.L.D history books, and some other books about S.H.I.E.L.D partly because of what she did at the Hub and partly because she wants to train to be an agent.

As Thor recently played a visit to Earth, a visit that caused a lot of damage, the team are in England cleaning up after him.

"So, I know you've explained to me before, but I want to make sure what I think is right," Daisy comments, as she walks with Phil carrying a tray. "Asgardians are aliens from another planet that visited us thousands of years ago?" Daisy asks as she walks with Phil.

"Or more," Phil says, as he picks something up and puts it in the tray Daisy is carrying.

"And because we couldn't understand aliens we thought they were gods?" Daisy asks, still having a little bit of trouble comprehending that.

"That's where our Norse mythology comes from," Phil explains.

"That's too crazy, and amazing," Daisy says, looking amazed, "Uncle Phil, do you think other deities are aliens too?" Daisy asks curious, "Vishnu for sure, right?"

"You know, it'd be nice if, for once, Thor and his people sent down the god of cleaning up after yourself," Phil comments, causing Daisy to laugh, "They probably have a magic broom for this kind of thing."

"I just wish they'd left their alien ship behind," Daisy comments.

"So we can clean that up too?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"So we could go inside, take a peek under the hood, maybe take it for a spin," Daisy suggests, "Come on, Mom, are you seriously going to tell me that piloting an alien ship isn't on your bucket list?" Daisy asks curious, and her mother just gives her a look, which tells Daisy all she needs to know.

"I can't think of a single time when anything alien in human hands ended well," Phil comments.

"Wouldn't mind getting my human hands on Thor, he's so dreamy," Daisy comments.

"Sure, he's handsome..." Phil starts to say.

"No, he's dreamy," Melinda corrects, as she walks past Phil, to Phil's complete shock, and Daisy just looks smug and hurries to catch up with her mother.
"You know it might not be a good idea for Dad to hear you say that," Daisy comments, as she can imagine how her father would react to that.

"He already knows," Melinda reveals, as Tony is aware of what Melinda thinks of Thor.

"Huh," Daisy mutters to herself as she and Melinda continue the search for alien artefacts.

A little while later Daisy, Melinda, and Fitz are back on the Bus while Ward, Simmons and Phil are investigating something. While Fitz is down in the lab Daisy and Melinda are up in the Command Centre, Daisy is hurryingly typing and doing stuff on the various screens as Melinda watches on.

"You know I don't understand most of what you're doing," Melinda admits, looking at her daughter, "But I've watched your Dad hack enough to know that it's not strictly legal,"

"With S.H.I.E.L.D resources and authorisation it is," Daisy says, with a slight grin. "Mom, I'm apart of this team now, and I think the best thing I can do for this team is to use my computer knowledge to help in whatever way I can," Daisy explains.

"You help in many ways, Daisy," Melinda tells her daughter, putting her arm around her, "But this computer science stuff is something that no one else on this plane can do," She explains.

"Thanks Mom," Daisy says, and as she does she realises something, "We've got to talk to Uncle Phil," Daisy says, and as she does she activates the coms where a conversation is already going on between Phil, Simmons, Ward, and Fitz.

"Anything that might help us to find these people or where they might be hiding?" Phil asks.

"Uncle Phil, it doesn't look like they're hiding," Daisy says, as she starts to watch a video about what is going on, "Sending to your devices now," Daisy explains, as everyone watches a video where 'we are gods' has been spelled out on the streets of Oslo.

"Well, I guess we know who they think they are," Ward comments.

"May, I need to talk to you on a private channel," Phil requests.

"Channel 3," Melinda says, before switching the channels and as she does Phil walks away from Ward and Melinda takes several steps away from her daughter, "What is it Phil?" Melinda asks.

"I'm going to call Fury, see if he can get touch with Thor, but that may not be our best chance to get though to him," Phil admits.

"I'll call Tony," Melinda responds, realising that it is what Phil is asking her to do.

"Thanks May," Phil responds, and as he does Daisy turns off her coms.

"Uncle Phil thinks Dad can contact Thor?" Daisy asks, and Melinda nods, "Tell him I said Hi," Daisy requests.

"Will do," Melinda confirms, as she turns off her coms to and heads out of the command centre, making a call to Tony as she does.

"Hey," Tony says, sounding glad, "I thought you'd be busy with clean up," Tony comments, as he knows that's what his wife, daughter and their team were doing.
"We are. We found something Asgardian," Melinda reveals.

"Dangerous?" Tony asks concerned.

"Seems like it," Melinda admits, "But we're running blind. We need to talk to…,"

"Thor," Tony says, knowing what his wife is going to say, "I don't have his number, he said he'll show up if he's needed," Tony admits, knowing that Thor said that in a much fancier way, "But I'll see what I can do,"

"Thanks Tony," Melinda says, sounding grateful, "Daisy says hello,"

"Tell her I said hi back," Tony requests, "I love you Mel, both of you,"

"Love you too," Melinda responds, "And Peter,"

"I'll let you know what I find," Tony says, before hanging up, and once she hangs up with Tony Melinda heads back into the command centre to see her daughter.

Not long after Daisy found the news report, and Melinda called Tony, Ward, Simmons and Phil have returned to the bus and Daisy, Fitz, Simmons and Ward are down in the lab.

"Jakob Nystrom, thirty, Girlfriend, Petra Larsen, leaders of a Norse Paganist Hate Group," Ward explains.

"And their numbers are growing thanks to what happened in Greenwich, and thanks to the internet," Daisy explains, "Yay internet, she said sarcastically," Daisy comments.

"Norse paganists?" Simmons asks.

"Obsessed with anything derived from Norse Mythology, stories of Asgard," Daisy explains.

"And now a weapon," Ward comments.

"The scan only accounted for one side, too much damage to the tree for complete reproduction," Fitz explains.

"But see here, it's clearly broken on both ends," Simmons explains, pointing to each ends of the 3D print.

"So, there are more pieces?" Ward asks.

"Yeah, two at least," Simmons confirms.

"Which means Sid and Nancy may be looking for a complete set," Ward comments.

"And the markings?" Daisy asks curious as the door opens and Melinda and Phil walk into the lab.

"Their Asgardian symbolism, hard to translate with our limited knowledge," Phil explains.

"Has anyone been able to get in contact with Thor?" Daisy asks curious, "Coz he gets his power from his hammer, right? W hat if this is his nail to the hammer?" Daisy asks.

"No one's been able to get in contact with him," Phil reveals, "Director Fury told me he's off the grid, and if he has a cell phone we don't have the number," Phil explains, not mentioning that he is
aware that Tony is still trying, "S.H.I.E.L.D's investigations are on the trail of Nystrom and his followers. We're charged with identifying the object and finding any other pieces before they do,"

"They seem to have some advantage, they found this thing in 150 square kilometres of Norwegian forest," Fitz comments.

"Guys, what if it called to the with magic?" Daisy suggests, expecting Fitz and Simmons to react badly as she knows her father would.

"Called to them?" Simmons asks, with a frown, as Daisy notices that Ward and Fitz also look disbelieving, and she realises that she should have seen Ward being sceptical coming.

"We know it's Asgardian, so the rules are a little bendy here," Daisy comments, knowing that it might be a bit impossible to get a bunch of scientists and sceptics to believe in magic, but she is going to try.

"Just because we don't understand something yet doesn't mean we should regress back to the dark ages, talking of magic and fairy tales," Simmons comments.

"Actually, that's exactly what we're going to do," Phil reveals.

"Excuse me?" Fitz asks.

"Really?" Daisy asks, sounding surprised, as she wasn't expecting her Uncle Phil to say that, though she was hoping she might convince someone.

"When we first found the hammer in New Mexico I consulted one of the word's leading experts on Norse Mythology, Elliot Randolph," Phil explains, and Melinda nods, "A professor at a university in Seville. We'll leave immediately, maybe he can tell us more about these markings," He says, and everyone else nods in understanding.

A little while later Daisy is heading up to the command centre to continue her research when her phone rings, and as she sees who is on the caller ID she ducks into her bunk.

"Hey Pete," Daisy answers.

"Have you found anything cool left behind by Thor?" Peter asks curious, without even saying hello.

"Hey Daze, how are you?" Daisy says, smirking.

"Hey Daze, how are you?" Peter repeats.

"Better, I'm good, and we have found something Asgardian, that could be cool, it just wasn't left behind by Thor," Daisy explains.

"Really?" Peter asks.

"Yep," Daisy confirms, "We're going to Spain to try and find more about it," Daisy reveals.

"That's cool," Peter says, with a grin, that his sister can see.


"Good really good," Peter reveals, "Oh have I told you what Ned and I did?"
"NO," Daisy responds, "details please," Daisy requests.

"It was great. You know how Dad gets when he is trying to be stern, but he is clearly amused?" Peter asks his sister.

"Oh yeah," Daisy says, looking amused, and Peter starts to tell his sister all about what happened with him and his best friend.

A little while after Daisy talked to Peter Fitz, Simmons, and Phil have gone to talk to Professor Randolph leaving Melinda, Daisy, and Ward. In the command centre alone Daisy is working on a tablet and laptop at the same time, trying to find some kind of clue, when Ward walks in.

"What are you doing?" Ward asks curious.

"Checking everywhere I can think of on the web and dark web to try and find another lead," Daisy explains.

"Any luck?" Ward asks.

"Nope," Daisy says, looking annoyed.

"How'd you get into this stuff? Daughter of a S.H.I.E.L.D agent and Hacker don't exactly mix," Ward comments, using this to get more information on Daisy, and possibly May, that he may be able to use in the future.

"They mix more than you'd think," Daisy comments, looking up from what she is doing, and resisting the urge to say, 'especially considering who my dad is,' "I've spent a lot of time in my room worrying about my Mom, Dad and others I consider family, because ever since I was old enough I understood how dangerous this line of work is," Daisy explains, and Ward wonders if he could ask about who Daisy father is without making it obvious that he is digging for information, "When I was younger I heard my mom, dad, and Uncle Phil talking about where Mom and Uncle Phil were going on a mission," Daisy explains, "After hearing that I knew that I wanted to find out everything I could about the place they were going, that's when I started hacking," Daisy explains, "From the moment I started it felt natural, like something I had been doing my whole life," Daisy explains, hearing a notification and frowning, "But it's not helping now," She says, once she checks the notification, wondering if she could get her dad and Jarvis help.

"The others will be back soon, we could get another lead," Ward comments, remembering everything Daisy said because he could use it in the future.

"Hopefully," Daisy mutters, as Ward leaves, and as he does Daisy realise that as tempted as she is to call her father, to get him or Jarvis to help him, what she wants more is to prove that she can do this.

Not long after Ward and Daisy talked about why Daisy started to hack Phil, Fitz, and Simmons have returned to the bus, and Daisy is still in the command centre, this time with her mother, trying to use a lead the team got from Professor Randolph to track down more pieces of the staff, when Phil and Ward walk into the command centre.

"What about you?" Phil asks Daisy.

"Nystrom's deep-web message boards are just abuzz with psychos," Daisy explains, as she found that a while ago, "They believe they're gonna ascend to be the gods of destruction and death."
People suck, Uncle Phil," Daisy explains.

"That's your progress? "People suck"?" Ward asks.

"I've known that for a while, but these people suck more than normal," Daisy explains, being pretty sure that these are the kind of people who hate on her dad, "And there's also chatter about going underground," She reveals, forcing herself to slightly change the subject before she goes on a rant as she has gotten into several online fights, which lasted hours, with people since her dad declared he is Iron Man, all of which she was defending her father while doing her best not to reveal that she is his daughter.

"Could mean going incognito or…" Ward starts to say.

"Or searching for the next piece," Phil says, "Randolph said to check Viking routes, find any other?" he asks.

"There's some sites along the Volga river in Russia, some in Kiev, and weirdly here," Daisy explains, pressing a button the touch screen.

"In Seville Spain?" Phil asks, sounding shocked.

"It's a long shot, but Vikings sacked Seville twice," Daisy explains, wondering why she never learnt this in her history classes.

"We found one promising location with Viking relics," Melinda explains, "El Divino Nino, a church built on the ruins of an eight-century crypt built on Roman ruins from 206 BC, east of a river…" Melinda starts to say.

"And lots of bones. Let's see what we can dig up," Phil says, causing Melinda to roll her eyes in a fond way, "See what I did there?" Phil asks.

"So, lame," Daisy says, with an amused look on her face, as Phil walks out of the room, Daisy not wanting to admit that one of the things she has missed about Phil were his dorky jokes.

Not long after Daisy and Melinda identified a possible location for another piece of the Staff. While Ward is looking though a super-creepy hallway with a detection device Daisy is doing the same thing in a dungeon like place, wishing that she had some of her father's technology as it would make things a lot easier, while Phil and Fitz are sitting in a car listening in on the coms.

"How you doing, Agent Ward?" Phil asks, though the coms.

"Wishing I was shorter. Nothing yet," Ward admits, "All my readings are normal," He says.

"What about you, Daisy? Any luck?" Phil asks.

"Feeling lucky that Ward volunteered to take the super-creepy hallway instead of the slightly less-creepy dungeon room place," Daisy explains, but that doesn't change the fact that she wishes she had her father's tech so she didn't have to go into the building at all, "But I also got Nada," Daisy explains.

"Ward, your spectrograph is reading something near you," Fitz says, through the coms.

"I don't see anything," Ward comments, and he processed to chance after the comment, then suddenly they hear nothing from him.
"Daisy, can you get…," Phil starts to say.

"Already on it," Daisy says, as she runs, and when she gets close to Ward she can tell that something is wrong. "Ward, are you all right?" Daisy asks concerned, as she squats down in front of him, and because she knows well enough she doesn't reach out to touch him, but instead raises her voice and once more says, "Ward," And once she does he quickly reacts and gets a panicked 'fight' look on his face that Daisy has seen before, more times than she would like to remember, "Hey, hey, hey, it's okay," Daisy says, remembering back to after Bahrain when her mother would be very jumpy and remembering what her father would do, "Grant, it's Daisy, whatever you're seeing isn't happening," Daisy reveals, hoping that that helps.

"The staff, he has it," Ward says, though Daisy notices that he is still looking freaked out.

"Something's wrong with Ward," Daisy says, through the coms, "The staff's gone, someone took it," Daisy explains.

A little while later everyone is back on the plane and Ward is being looked over by Simmons. 

"This is ridiculous," Ward comments.

"It's anything but," Simmons argues.

"Ward you passed out," Daisy points out, "and you were acting….. not right," Daisy says, struggling to find the right word, and still thinking that she didn't find the right one.

"Coulson ordered me to give you a full work up, and that's exactly what I'm doing," Simmons explains, "Before you lost consciousness were you feeling claustrophobic?" she asks.

"Why?" Ward asks confused.

"She's ruling out a panic attack," Fitz explains.

"I don't panic, ever," Ward explains.

"Everyone panics," Daisy mutters to herself as she grew up around the biggest heroes in the world and she knows they panic sometimes, they just hide it well.

"There we go, ruled out," Simmons says, touching something on her tablet.

"Touching the staff caused it, right?" Daisy asks, looking between Fitz and Simmons, who tell her everything she needs to know with a look.

"Any residual effects?" Simmons asks curious, "Are you exhibiting any extra strength?"

"Why don't I find out on that guy?" Ward suggests, looking at the screen.

"Yeah, no, let's not do that," Daisy comments.

"What's the last thing you remember before you lost consciousness?" Simmons asks.

"This is a waste of time," Ward snaps, as he pulls his arm out of monitoring device, "We need to find the staff," He comments.

"What exactly do you remember?" Simmons asks.
"Something I haven't thought about in a long time," Ward says, and as he does it is clear that he doesn't want to explain more.

"Maybe we should drop it," Daisy suggests.

"Well I mean, he just pulled his arm out of this…," Simmons starts to explain.

"Quiet!" Ward snaps, "I want to hear this…" Ward says, and he turns up the volume on the screen which is playing Phil interviewing Randolph and for the next couple of minutes Ward watches the screen, until Simmons turns it off, "What are you doing?" he asks, angrily.

"Your heart rate's rising, Adrenaline's spiking. You need to calm down, not get worked up," Simmons explains.

"If you want to talk about whatever you saw…," Daisy starts to say.

"Drop it," Ward snaps.

"I'm just saying, I'm here," Daisy says, wanting to be helpful.

"Right, to talk, that's what you do, talk, and talk. Don't you ever get tired of hearing your own voice?" Ward asks, and it is clear he is angry.

"Ward, take a breath," Daisy advises, trying to sound braver than she feels.

"Well, that makes more sense!" Simmons realises, "Ward, what you're experiencing, this feeling, its chemistry," She explains.

"Hope so," Daisy mutters.

"Yeah, spikes in his adrenocorticotrophic hormone," Simmons says, showing Daisy the tablet, and Daisy sees things she seen on her father and Bruce's computers, "It's like those stories you hear where a mother is able to lift a car to save her baby," She reveals, "An adrenaline surge can create a massive…," Simmons starts to explain.

"Stop talking! Just fix it!" Ward snaps.

"I wish I could, we can relieve some of the symptoms," Simmons admits, "I'm going to give you 10cc of Benzodiazepine," She reveals.

"Chill pill, good idea," Daisy comments, recognizing the drug name.

"A sedative?" Ward asks, "Not gonna happen,"

"Yeah, well, be reasonable, look how you're behaving," Fitz says.

"And if I'm sedated and we cross paths with those juiced freaks, the ones who flip cars and smash people up, are you going to take them on? Keep us safe?" he asks, tap Fitz's chest, "Or am I gonna have to save Simmons's ass again?" he says, sounding angry, before leaving, hitting things as he goes, causing Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons to jump.

"That was just a biochemical reaction, he didn't mean all that," Simmons says.

"No, I know," Daisy says, not wanting to admit to Fitz and Simmons that she is a little freaked.

"No explanation necessary," Fitz says.
After staying with Fitz and Simmons for a little while Daisy heads to the cockpit so that she can talk to her mother.

"Hey," Daisy says, as she sits down next to her mother in the cockpit.

"Are you alright?" Melinda asks her daughter concerned, as she can tell that something is up with her daughter.


"Strange how?" Melinda asks, turning to look at her daughter.

"Angry, like really, really angry. Ever since the staff," Daisy explains, "Simmons said he's having a biochemical reaction, but whatever's happening it's not good, and he's not right," Daisy explains, causing Melinda to frown.

"You, Fitz, and Simmons should stay together. I'll see what's going on," Melinda says, before switching the plane to autopilot and going to go find Ward, knowing that if something isn't right with him then she will do whatever she has to do to keep Ward away from Daisy, Fitz, and Simmons, she won't let any of them get hurt.

A little while later Phil and Ward, through their interrogation, have discovered that Randolph is actually an Asgardian as Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, and Melinda are watching on in the command centre.

"I had no clue, did you?" Fitz asks, "Hidden in plain sight, an actual Asgardian, brilliant."

"How long do you suppose he's been on our planet?" Daisy asks curious.

"A thousand years, maybe more," Simmons comments, "If we could just cut him open a little bit, get some tissue samples, maybe some bodily fluids, we could find out," She admits.

"Or we could just ask him, weirdo," Daisy comments, looking amused, "This is way, way, better than the history channel, I mean, this guy has lived through all the scary stuff, the crusades, the black death, disco," Daisy comments, looking over at her mother, who is typing on a tablet, "Mom? What are you doing?"

"Sealing the interrogation room door, Uncle Phil's orders," Melinda explains.

"Seriously?" Daisy asks, walking over to her mother, "Is Uncle Phil going to be okay in there?" Daisy asks, looking concerned.

"He believes he will be," Melinda answers, and from that Daisy knows that her mother doesn't completely believe that, and with a frown Daisy walks back over to Fitz and Simmons and the three of them, and Melinda continue to watch what is going on, for the next few minutes.

"Shines a light, that's no explanation," Simmons comments.

"Really isn't," Daisy realises, and the four of them continue to watch what is going on, learning all about the staff and it's origin.

A little while later Randolph has explained where the final piece of the staff is and the team have travelled there. While everyone is loading the cars up Daisy is standing, checking things on her
phone, and responding to messages from her sibling and father, when Ward slams a car door, causing Daisy to jump.

"Uncle Phil are you sure it's okay for Ward to go into the field?" Daisy asks, looking at him.

"He's not exactly acting like him, but he knows it. he'll be fine," Phil says, before walking away and as he does Daisy looks at Melinda.

"I'm with Coulson," Melinda says, before walking away.

"Of course," Daisy mutters to herself, as she watches her mother walking away.

Over the next few hours the team investigate the lead Randolph provided during which time not only did Ward use the staff, but Melinda did too, while Phil had to save Randolph by putting his hand in Randolph's chest.

Due to everything that has happened the team have been given the night off, and are spending the night at a hotel in Dublin, and so Daisy is walking into the hotel bar, where Ward is sitting, honestly she wants to make sure he is okay as he certainly hasn't been acting like it.

"Hey," Daisy greets, as she walks over and stands next to Ward.

"What do you think you're doing in here?" Ward asks, giving Daisy a surprised look.

"The drinking age is only eighteen here, which means you can walk into bars at eighteen," Daisy explains, expecting Ward to know that.

"Yeah, but you're only seventeen," Ward points out, looking at Daisy.

"Not according to this," Daisy says, looking amused as she shows Ward a fake IDs, one of several, that Natasha gave her.

"Where did you get that?" Ward asks, as he snatches the idea and realises that it is as close to a 'real' fake id that he's seen, outside S.H.I.E.L.D issued.

"A friend," Daisy answers, knowing better than to mention who gave it to her, as not even her parents know she has it, and she is pretty sure she wants to keep it that way.

"You really shouldn't be here," Ward comments.

"I know, I just wanted to make sure you're okay," Daisy explains.

"That's nice Daisy, really, but your Mom's going to kill you, and me, let's go," Ward says, honestly more worried about himself than Daisy.

"But…" Daisy starts to explain.

"Let's go," Ward instructs, and both he and Daisy get up and head upstairs.

For most of the walk Daisy and Ward walk in silence.

"So, am I going to get my ID back?" Daisy asks curious.

"No," Ward responds, and Daisy really isn't surprised by that answer.
"You gonna tell my Mom? Or Uncle Phil?" Daisy asks, knowing that she has to cover all her basis, and thankfully Ward doesn't know anyone else in her family so can't tell them.

"No," Ward answers, "Not unless I realise you're using fake id's again,"

"Okay," Daisy responds, thinking to herself that next time she'll make sure Ward doesn't realise, "I'll see you in the morning," Daisy says, before heading into hers and her mother's room.

When Daisy walks into the hotel room she finds her mother sitting and drinking a bottle of scotch.

"Where were you?" Melinda asks her daughter.

"Exploring," Daisy answers, walking over to her bed, "If you want to talk about what happened today, I'm here," Daisy tells her mother.

"I know," Melinda assures her daughter, who nods, and isn't surprised that her mother doesn't want to talk about what is going on with her, but Daisy just hopes that she calls her Dad at some point.

A few hours later, Daisy, who was fast asleep, is woken up by her mother crying and talking in her sleep.

"Mom," Daisy says, getting up and hurrying to the other bed where her mother is tossing and turning muttering,

"No. please don't," Melinda mutters as she toses and turns.

Even though her parents have tried to protect her from it Daisy does know what to do when her mother has a nightmare, as it is far from the first, and so she turns son the light and makes sure she is not standing close enough to the bed for her mother to accidentally hurt her if she lashes out.

"MOM!" Daisy says, raising her voice, but that doesn't seem to do anything, "I'm really, really sorry," Daisy says, as she knows what she has to do next, and it's usually what her Dad does as a last option, and so she grabs her phone and starts to loudly play a rock song.

Seconds after Daisy starts to play the song Melinda wakes up, bolts upright, and looks terrified.

"Mom, it's okay," Daisy assures her, quickly turning the song off, "You're not there," She says, and Daisy moves closer to her mother, "It's Daisy, I'm with you," She explains.

"Daisy? Daisy?" Melinda asks, looking afraid, though she is starting to realise where she is.

"Yeah Mom, it's me, you're okay," Daisy says, sitting down next to her mother, "You're not there, your daughters with you, you're okay," Daisy assures her mother, and she recognizes the signs of her mother coming back to reality.

"Daisy," Melinda says, once more, and Daisy just wraps her arm around her mother's arm and lays her head on her mother's shoulder, wanting to do what she can to help, as the two of them drift into silence as they sit side by side.

For a while Daisy and Melinda sit side by side in silence, but when she finally feels comfortable leaving her mother alone Daisy gets up and heads into the bathroom, having made sure she has her phone on her.

Once Daisy is in the bathroom she pulls out her phone and calls her father.
"Daisy? Is everything okay?" Tony asks concerned, answering after only a couple of rings.

"No, everything so isn't okay," Daisy admits, "Next time you see him you really need to tell Thor to make sure nothing Asgardian is still on earth, and to keep track of the stuff that is,"

"Daisy, what happened?" Tony asks, feeling his concern grow.

"We were trying to track down an Asgardian Weapon, the Berserker Staff," Daisy explains, "When it's touched it gives people, or Asgardians, an adrenaline rush and super-strength powered by the person's pain and rage," Daisy explains, "Mom fought with it,"

"Damn it," Tony says, knowing exactly how bad that will be.

"Yeah, Uncle Phil has given us the night off. We're at a hotel, and I'm trying to help, but I think Mom needs you, and it would help her to see Peter, and I would say Bobbi to if I didn't know she's on a mission," Daisy explains.

"What hotel you in?" Tony asks curious and Daisy gives her father the hotel name, "What room?"

"315," Daisy answers.

"Okay. Peter and I will be there by morning," Tony promises his daughter.

"Thanks Dad. I love you," Daisy responds.

"Love you too," Tony responds, and once he does Daisy hangs up and heads back into the hotel room where she sits back down next to her mother, and once more the mother and daughter sit in silence next to each other.
Chapter 62

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1:

November 19th 2013

A little while after she slept back down next to her mother Daisy falls back asleep, but Melinda doesn't she just stays awake and sits next to her sleeping daughter.

It is about 7am and Daisy is woken up by a knock on the door.

"I'll get it," Melinda tells her daughter, and as she does Daisy realises who it would be.

"It's Dad!" Daisy says, looking excited and wide awake, as Melinda gets to the door and opens it revealing Tony and Peter.

"Tony, Peter," Melinda says, looking between her son and husband.

"Hey Mel," Tony greats, as he and Peter walk into the room, and Melinda closes the door behind them.

"Mom!" Peter says, excitedly, and Melinda hugs her son, as Daisy hurries over and hugs her father.

"It's good to see you," Peter tells his mother.

"It's really good to see you too, Pete," Melinda tells her son as Tony hugs his daughter and kisses her head.

After Melinda and Peter break apart, and Daisy and Tony break apart, Melinda and Tony hug and kiss while Daisy and Peter hug.

"Hey, you hungry?" Daisy asks her brother.

"Yeah, I mainly slept on the plane," Peter reveals.

"Well do you want to come to breakfast with me? Meet the team?" Daisy asks curious, knowing that her parents are probably going to want to talk in private, and the team were going to meet for breakfast anyway.

"Can I?" Peter asks, looking at his parents, who exchange looks.

"Sure. Just stay with Daisy and listen to your sister," Melinda tells her son.

"Will do," Peter says, as she pretty much always does that anyway.

"And both of you be careful," Tony says.

"Yes Dad," Daisy and Peter both say,
"Give me five minutes to get dressed," Daisy says, before hurrying into the bathroom with the bag she brought from the bus.

About five minutes later Daisy is dressed and she and Peter are heading down to the hotel restaurant for Breakfast.

"So, this team breakfast, will everyone be there?" Peter asks curious.

"Should be, Uncle Phil was planning on coming from the plane for breakfast," Daisy explains, "And on that note, no last names from us, okay. I'm going to just introduce you as my brother Peter," Daisy explains.

"Why…. They don't know," Peter realises.

"Nope," Daisy confirms, "And it feels like the kind of thing that if the team should know then it should be Mom or Dad to tell them…. Or Uncle Phil," Daisy explains.

"Sounds about right to me," Peter admits, "Okay, I'll be just Peter," He comments.

"Good," Daisy says.

"So, the rest of the team?" Peter asks.

"Well, there's Ward. He's a specialist like Mom, like Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint, Bobbi, Sharon, Antoine," Daisy explains, "Except he has a personality issue," She explains.

"So, don't take it personally if he's rude or something like that?" Peter asks curious.

"Exactly," Daisy says, though she will be pissed at hell at Ward if he is mean to her brother, "And then you've got Fitzsimmons," Daisy explains.

"That's two people right?" Peter asks, remembering what Daisy has told him before.

"Yep," Daisy confirms, "They're genius's a little older than me. Jemma Simmons is a biochemist, Leo Fitz is an Engineer," Daisy explains.

"Engineer, awesome," Peter says, with a grin.

"You would think that," Daisy says, as she throws her arm around her brothers' shoulders, and the two siblings continue to head down to breakfast.

While their two younger kids are on their way downstairs Melinda and Tony are standing in the hotel room Daisy and Melinda have been sharing.

"Daisy called you," Melinda says, it being a statement, not a question.

"She was worried about you," Tony reveals, taking a step towards his wife.

"She shouldn't have called, you shouldn't have come out here," Melinda says, "You've got work, Peter has school,"

"I can do my work anywhere, and Peter's so far ahead in school that missing a couple of days won't do him any harm," Tony says, "Don't push me away again Mel, talk to me," He pleads walking over so that he is right in front of Melinda.
"I see it every day," Melinda says, saying what Tony knows, "But this, this was so much worse," She admits.

"Why? What exactly happened?" Tony asks, as he sits down next to Melinda, and Melinda proceeds to tell him all about using the Berserker staff.

While Melinda and Tony are talking upstairs Daisy and Peter are arriving in the dining area, and as Daisy looks around for the team Peter spots them before Daisy can.

"UNCLE PHIL!" Peter yells and he hurries over to his Uncle, and Daisy jogs behind him to catch up.

"Peter," Phil says, sounding shocked, as he stands up to great the youngest of the Stark-May children, to the confusion of Ward, Fitz, and Simmons.

"It's so good to see you," Peter says, hugging his uncle.

"It's really good to see you too," Phil responds as he and Peter break apart, "What are you doing here?" he asks curious.

"Dad and I flew in," Peter explains.

"Your Dad's here?" Phil asks, looking at Daisy feeling glad as he hasn't seen Tony since he came back from Tahiti.

"Yep. He and Mom are up talking in our room," Daisy explains.

"Okay. I need to talk to them, so I'll head up there," Phil says, very much doubting that Tony and Melinda will come down for breakfast, "It's good seeing you, Peter, Daisy," Phil says before heading out of the dinning area.

"Hey everyone," Daisy says, looking at Fitz, Simmons and Ward, "As you probably guessed by now, this is my little brother Peter," Daisy reveals, "Pete, this is Ward, Fitz, and Simmons," Daisy says, pointing to each of the members of her team as she introduces them.

"It's nice to meet you, Daze has told me all about you all," Peter says as he and Daisy sit down.

"She's told us very little about you," Ward says, wondering if this is his chance to get more information on May and his family, as he already has a couple of questions, he just has to figure out how to ask them in a subtle way.

"I'm not even surprised, it's how things are in our family," Peter reveals, looking completely fine with what Ward said.

"It's lovely to meet you Peter," Simmons says, with a polite smile.

"Thanks," Peter says, "Um, Fitz, right? Daze said you're an engineer," Peter says, looking at the slightly shy looking young man.

"Um yeah, I am," Fitz responds, wondering where Daisy's brother is going with that.

"That's soo cool. I love science and I'm really interested in engineering," Peter reveals, and once he does Fitz grins, and to Daisy's amusement Peter, Fitz, and Simmons all start to talk about science.
After leaving the dining area Phil heads up to Melinda and Daisy's room. When he gets to the room he knocks on the door, and seconds later the door opens to reveal Melinda.

"Phil, come in," Melinda says, inviting Phil into the hotel room, and Phil walks in.

"Phil," Tony says, walking over to his friend, and controlling his reaction as he doesn't want to give away the fact that Phil was really dead, "It's good to see you,"

"It's good to see you too, Tony," Phil responds.

"I'm glad you're okay," Tony says, knowing that is the biggest understatement, but it is all he can say at the moment.

"Thanks Tony," Phil responds.

"How are you feeling? It must be strange to be back in the thick of it," Tony comments, trying to ask the question in the most causal way possible.

"This actually feels completely right," Phil admits. "What about you? I heard you got rid of your suits," Phil comments.

"Temporarily. I'm working on some improvements," Tony reveals, knowing he may still be a little way away from a new working version.

"Good to know," Phil comments, knowing he should have known better than to think Tony would ever seriously hang up the suit, so to speak. "So, um, how's Pepper? I haven't had a chance to talk to her since I got back from Tahiti," Phil reveals, and both Melinda and Tony have a hard time not reacting to Phil mentioning a place he has never been.

"She's good, you know, running Stark, ruling the world, being Pepper," Tony reveals, causing Phil to smile. "You know I'm sure she would love to hear from you," Tony comments, and Melinda has to fight a smirk as she knows exactly what Tony is doing.

"And I'd like to talk to her too, but not over the phone," Phil explains and as he does Melinda and Tony exchange knowing looks. "I spoke to Fury earlier," Phil reveals, purposely changing the subject as he noticed Melinda and Tony's looks.

"Have we already got a new case?" Melinda asks, as she glances at Tony, feeling bad as she was hoping for a chance to spend some time with her family.

"No, the opposite actually," Phil reveals. "I thought, considering we're so close to the UK it would be good to have a few days break, give Fitz and Simmons a chance to spend some time with their families, I think they both need it," Phil admits.

"Yeah, they do," Melinda confirms. "How much time were you able to get off?" Melinda asks curious.

"Until the twenty second," Phil reveals, and as he does Melinda realises what that means.

"Phil…" Melinda starts to say.

"Fitz and Simmons deserve a chance to spend some time with their parents, and you should get to spend your birthday with your family," Phil reveals.

"Thank you," Melinda says grateful. "We should ask Ward to go with Fitz and Simmons, just in
"Good idea," Phil says approvingly.

"I have a great idea," Tony reveals, and both Melinda and Phil turn to look at him, and as they do Tony recognizes the look on his wife's face. "Don't give me that look Mel," Tony says to his wife with a charming smile.

"What's your Idea Tony?" Phil asks, fearing the answer, though he wants to stop the bickering between Melinda and Tony from occurring, though it is nice to know that somethings don't change.

"The London house, full on birthday party for Mel," Tony says, looking proud of his idea. "The three of us, Daisy, Bobbi, Peter, Sharon, Antoine, Romanoff, Barton, Pepper, Rhodey, even Hill if we can arrange it," Tony explains and as he does he can tell that Melinda and Phil look hesitant. "Come on, I think this is exactly what we all need," Tony says, thinking that it could help both Phil and Melinda.

"Let's figure out a plan," Melinda suggests, not agreeing to anything yet, and that's exactly what the three of them do.

Down in the dinning area Daisy, Ward, Fitz, Simmons are Peter are all sitting at the able together and just like they have been doing since Phil left them Peter and Fitz are happily talking rather than eating their breakfast. As the two geniuses are so engrossed in their conversation Ward suspects a bomb could go off and neither would notice, something which he is tempted to test but knows better.

"I have never seen Fitz talk this way with someone," Simmons says, sounding amazed.

"What about with you?" Daisy asks curious.

"I'm different," Simmons explains. "Everyone else Fitz is nervous when talking to. It takes him time to feel comfortable, but he and Peter are talking like they have known each other for years," Simmons says, feeling pretty amazed.

"It's because they understand each other," Daisy explains, knowing that as she has seen her brother like this when talking to their father, Bruce, or Ned.

"It's nice to see," Simmons says.


"I'm feeling better every day," Simmons reveals, smiling at Daisy, and as she does Ward notices something.

"Sir? Is everything okay?" Ward ask as Phil walks towards them. To his disappointment Melinda and her husband aren't with him.

"Everything's fine," Phil reveals. "Daisy, Peter, if you two are finished your parents are upstairs, wanting to talk to you," Phil explains, as they decided that Melinda and Tony would fill them in on what is going on.

"I'm done, Pete?" Daisy asks curious and her brother quickly eats a few spoonful's of his breakfast.
"I'm done," Peter says, speaking while food in his mouth.

"You're so lucky Grandma isn't here," Daisy tells her little brother, looking amused, as Ward pays close attention, wanting to get more personal information.

"You talk with food in your mouth all the time," Peter points out.

"I know," Daisy says, as she stands up.

"It was really nice to talk to you Agent Fitz," Peter says.

"Please call me Fitz," Fitz requests, as Peter stands up. "it was good talking to you too. Get my email from your mother or sister, I would really like to keep talking to you," Fitz explains.

"I'll do that," Peter says, before walking away with Daisy. "You work with the coolest people," Fitz tells his sister as he goes, to Daisy's amusement.

"What's going on Sir?" Ward asks as Daisy and Peter walk away.

"I've arranged a few days off for us," Phil explains. "Fitz, Simmons, I thought you could go visit your parents," Phil explains.

"Really?" Fitz asks looking excited, and Phil nods.

"Thank you Sir," Simmons says, looking excited.

"We'll pick you up on the twenty second," Phil explains.

"What about me, Sir?" Ward asks curious.

"Agent May and I thought that you could either go off on your own or go with Fitzsimmons," Phil says, giving ward a look which shows that he knows what he would prefer.

"I'll go with Fitzsimmons," Ward says doing so because he clearly isn't going to be going with May or Coulson so maybe this way he can get some kind of information.

"Okay," Phil says, with a nod. "You can leave whenever you're ready," Phil explains.

"Yes Sir," Fitz, Simmons and Ward says, the former two looking a lot more excited than the ladder.

Having raced to the hotel room Daisy and Peter basically crash into the hotel room door, and before Daisy has a chance to get her key out the door is thrown open by Tony.

"What are you two doing?" Tony asks, as he looks at his two kids in amusement.

"We were racing," Peter explains.

"Which I totally won," Daisy says, with a smirk as she and Peter walk into the hotel room.

"You did not!" Peter argues.

"If you two want to argue about who won then fine, but keep your voices down your mom's on the phone," Tony explains.

"That's great, see you then," Melinda says, before hanging up, making Tony's point moot.
"Who was that?" Daisy asks curious.

"Bobbi," Melinda answers.

"And?" Tony asks, looking truly interesting.

"She can make it. Sharon and Antoine too," Melinda explains, as they just got back from a mission about an hour ago.

"Make what?" Peter asks, looking confused.

"We've been given a few days off. The four of us, and Uncle Phil are going to the London house," Melinda explains to her children, honestly it feels right that Phil will be joining them as she knows how much all of them missed him when he was dead.

"A few days… does that mean…?" Daisy asks, putting the pieces together.

"Yep," Tony says, putting his arm around Daisy's shoulder. "We're going to have a big family party at the London house," Tony reveals, and both Daisy and Peter look excited.

"Pepper, Bruce, and Uncle Rhodey are flying in, same with Aunt Nat, Uncle Clint and Maria," Melinda explains, as Peter climbs onto the bed next to her, realising that in the last year Bruce has become family too, and she is thankful for that.

"This is going to be great," Peter says, grinning from ear to ear, and because she loves to see her children as happy as Peter is Melinda puts her arm around him, and smiles too.

"Yeah, it is," Melinda confirms as she kisses her sons head.

November 20th 2013

Ever since her father and brother arrived the day before Daisy has been having an incredible time, and has been beyond thrilled, and with every member of her family who has arrived Daisy has become even happier. As much as she has enjoyed spending time with the team, and as much as she feels like she can be open with them, it is nice to be with her family where she can be completely open.

As they are still waiting for a couple of people to arrive Daisy is in the room that has been hers while they are in London, getting ready, when there is a knock on the door.

"Yeah," Daisy says and Bobbi walks in.

"Mom sent me. Nat and Uncle Clint will be here any minute," Bobbi reveals.

"Cool," Daisy says, as she turns to face her sister. "You know you never did tell me if you invited Hunter," Daisy comments.

"Daisy…" Bobbi says, with a sigh.

"Come on Bobbi, this is his hometown its rude not to invite him," Daisy tells her sister.

"Hunter's from Kent, not London," Bobbi tells her sister.

"Same difference," Daisy says, with a shrug.
"Never let Hunter hear you say that," Bobbi says, looking amused.

"Come on, Bobbi. Did you at least call him?" Daisy asks curious.

"I am not having this conversation with you," Bobbi says, as she turns and heads out of her sisters room.

"Come on Bobbi, talk to me!" Daisy requests as she chases after her sister. "You didn't see him in Malta, he still cares about you! And I know you do too!" Daisy explains as she catches up to her sister.

"You're right, I do," Bobbi says, turning to face her sister. "But we don't work, okay. Drop it," Bobbi requests.

"Fine," Daisy says, knowing she will even if it is just for now.

"Good," Bobbi tells her sister. "I've missed you Daisy-Lin, don't make it so I'm annoyed with you all the time we have together," Bobbi says, as she puts her hand around her sisters shoulder.

"Isn't that the little sisters job?" Daisy asks, and the two sisters exchange laughs as they head downstairs, getting there just as Natasha and Clint arrive.

"AUNT NAT, UNCLE CLINT!" Daisy and Peter both yells, and they run and hug their surrogate aunt and Uncle.

"Now that everyone is here I want to make a toast," Tony says, as he picks up a glass. "The last year, hell the last five years, have been hard. There's been a lot of bad, a lot of loss," Tony says, his eyes flickering over to Phil as he speaks. "but this, this family that we are is what's got us all through every single one of those bad times," Tony says, putting an arm around Melinda. "So, to family, to Love, to Mel on her birthday," Tony says, and once he toasts everyone else does, and they all proceed to have an amazing time together; the kind they haven't had in a while.
Chapter 63

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1:

November 25th 2013

With the exception of Ward, who was given a couple extra days vacation because he went with Fitz and Simmons, the team are back on the bus. While Daisy does enjoy being back on the bus with Fitz and Simmons, both of whom she has bonded with since they got back, she does miss her family.

As they have gotten a new mission Daisy is in Phil's office with her mother and Uncle as they explain their newest mission.

"Wait, a telekinetic? I thought they didn't exist?" Daisy asks as she finishes listening to what her mother and Uncle told her.

"A person with telekinetic abilities has never been verified," Melinda explains, honestly not sure how she feels about doing this particular mission.

"That's why we're going to Batesville, to conduct an index asset evaluation and intake," Phil explains.

"Is that seriously how you saw we talk to her and see if she has powers?" Daisy asks and Phil nods. "God, that needs a better name, maybe something like Welcome Wagon," Daisy suggests.

"Daisy, Uncle Phil and I want you to pay close attention to this. It's an opportunity for you to learn how to deal with someone with abilities who isn't family," Melinda explains, feeling concerned as after the way Daisy sought out Mike she is worried about Daisy thinking everyone will powers will be like Bobbi and because of that not even consider the possible dangers, though she does suspect that Daisy could become great at Index evaluations and intakes.

"Did you forget I found Mike Peterson first?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and Uncle.

"And that went how?" Melinda asks her daughter and Daisy looks sheepish.

"Daisy, this is a chance to see how it's done when it's done right," Phil says, as the trio get up and head out of the office, heading down to the cargo bay.

"So, how many people like this have you encounter?" Daisy asks as she reads the file, and because she is reading she doesn't notice Phil glance at Melinda in concern.

"A few," Melinda answers.

"There's not that many people on the index," Phil explains, as he realises Melinda's not going to.

"They must freak out when they see the SHIELD trucks roll up," Daisy comments, as she is pretty sure that for people who haven't been around SHIELD for their whole life it must be pretty
shocking.

"Every case is different," Phil reveals. "Some people are in complete denial that there's anything unusual about them. It's a delicate process and from all reports this sounds like a particular sensitive situation," Phil reveals, and as he does Melinda knows that means things are likely going to volatile.

"Particle accelerator explodes," Daisy reads, wondering if she should call her Dad to find out what that means. "Hannah Hutchins, one of the quality-control engineers. Was it her fault?" Daisy asks curious.

"The town blames her. Four technicians died in that blast," Phil explains.

'That's terrible… all those families," Daisy says, feeling sympathy for the families, but also for Hannah, as she, her mother and Phil head down the stairs into the cargo bay.

"Small church community. They're pretty rattled," Phil explains.

"She must be too," Daisy comments. "Friends, co-workers dead, and on top of all that she might have some crazy powers she can't understand," Daisy comments.

"Or control," Melinda says a Fitz and Simmons walk up to them.

"Sir, the department of energy's declared the particle acceleration lab too dangerous to enter," Simmons explains.

"But the good news is, we still think we can retrieve the disaster-event data from the instruments. We'll determine the cause and see if there's any correlation between telekinesis spontaneously forming and a particle accelerator exploding," Fitz explains.

"Well, it does use giant magnets to fire billions of subatomic particles into their anti-particles at the speed of light to create miniature big bags, so seems like a good place to start," Phil says as Daisy, Melinda, Fitz and Simmons all look at him in confusion, Daisy feeling shocked as while she is used to hearing science speak from her Dad she doesn't expect to hear it from Uncle Phil. "What, I read," Phil explains.

"Okay, I'll try not to mention to big bangs when we talk to Hutchins about the explosion," Daisy comments.

"You're talking to her, you're staying in the car," Melinda tells her daughter.

"What! I thought you wanted me to learn," Daisy objects.

"And you will, from the car," Melinda tells her daughter. "Uncle Phil, Ward and I will talk to her," Melinda explains.

"But…" Daisy starts to object.

"Wheels up in five," Melinda says as she heads upstairs. "Strap in,"

"Uncle Phil…" Daisy starts to object.

"You heard your Mom, Daze, you're staying in the car," Phil says, as he agrees with Melinda on this, and Daisy can't help but feel annoyed.

"You're late," Melinda says, from where she is on the stairs which isn't facing the ramp, as Ward
Due to the meeting with Hannah not going well, in fact it went so badly that Melinda had to sedate her, the team are back on the bus.

"Did you seriously just sedate her?" Daisy asks her mother as she hurries to catch up to where Melinda is, near the bunks.

"I did what I had to do," Melinda says, as she couldn't help but remember Bahrain. "And you were told to stay in the car," Melinda tells her daughter.

"I was trying to help," Daisy argues.

"Go to the lab with Fitz and Simmons, see what you can find," Melinda tells her daughter before heading into the command centre, and honestly Daisy is pretty shocked by the abrasiveness of her mothers tone as it is one she hasn't heard in a while.

"Yes Ma'am," Daisy mutters, too quiet to hear, before heading downstairs.

A little while later while Melinda and Phil are in the cage with Hannah Daisy is in the lab with Fitz and Simmons watching what is going on.

"So sad," Daisy comments as she listens to what Hannah is telling her mother and Uncle.

"And normal," Simmons reveals. "These readings are entirely within average ranges," Simmons explains. "Of course, it's hard to find something when you don't know what you're looking for. All I can tell from these brain waves is she's upset," Simmons comments.

"Do your really need a computer for that?" Daisy asks. "I love Mom, but she did shoot Hannah, her being upset being in the same room as her isn't exactly a surprise," Daisy comments, feeling like she is missing something.

"She sedated her," Simmons corrects.

"Things got out of hand; your Mom sorted it out. she's the Cavalry, it's what she does," Fitz comments; feeling like Daisy should know that.

"What is with that name? You've mentioned it more than once," Daisy comments, as before coming onto the plane she has never heard of it before.

"You don't know?" Simmons asks surprised. "Everyone at the academy tells the story," Simmons reveals.

"I wouldn't ask if I knew, what's the deal?" Daisy asks curious, finding herself becoming even more curious.

"There was a mission, Manama, Bahrain…" Fitz starts to explain, and as he does all the colour drains from Daisy's face.

"I don't want to know," Daisy quickly says.

"Daisy, are you alright?" Simmons asks concerned.

"Fine," Daisy says, before hurrying out of the lab, and as she goes Fitz and Simmons exchange
confused looks, wondering what is going on, and not long after Daisy leaves Fitz decides that a prank could be just the thing to cheer Daisy up.

After leaving the lab Daisy hurries up to her bunk and thankfully she doesn't run into anyone else. Once she gets to her bunk Daisy closes the door behind her and leans against it taking a deep breath.

As she fights to catch her breath Daisy reaches into her pocket and with a shaking hand she pulls out her phone, before she even realises what she is doing she is calling her sister.

"Hey Daze," Bobbi answers, sounding glad.

"Bobbi…" Daisy says and the second she speaks Bobbi knows her sister isn't okay.

"Daisy, what's wrong?" Bobbi asks concerned.

"Fitzsimmons, they called Mom the Cavalry, and said they do so because of Bahrain, that everyone knows the story…. And I just couldn't hear it, I ran up to my bunk," Daisy explain. "Mom wouldn't tell us what happened, still won't, but everyone knows. Is that true?" Daisy asks, hoping Bobbi has an answer because she just doesn't understand.

"No," Bobbi answers. "From what I know the only people who know the truth are Mom, Dad, Fury and Nat because she figured it out," Bobbi explains, and Daisy isn't at all surprised that Natasha figured it out. "Everyone talks, about what they think happen. No one knows the truth, and the story gets bigger every year," Bobbi explains.

"That's why Mom said not to call her the Cavalry," Daisy realises.

"Exactly," Bobbi says. "The best thing we can do is shut it down when people talk about it," Bobbi explains.

"Okay," Daisy says, nodding even though her sister can't see, feeling like she can do that. "Mom's seemed weird since we started this case. Bobbi, I'm worried," Daisy admits.

"What's the case?" Bobbi asks.

"An index one," Daisy answers and Bobbi feels dread rise up inside of her.

"Mom will be okay," Bobbi says, needing to believe that. "She just going to be a bit tense, and uptight during this case," Bobbi tells her.

"That sounds Fun," Daisy says sarcastically. "I just don't know what to do. I can tell that something is seriously up," Daisy admits.

"Just do your job, Daze, do what mom and Uncle Phil ask. It's all you can do," Bobbi explains.

"I guess I could do that," Daisy says, sounding slightly uncertain.

"Look, I'm getting called into a briefing, but if you need anything call," Bobbi explains.

"Okay," Daisy answers. "I love you."

"Love you too," Bobbi responds before hanging up, and once she has hung up on her sister Daisy walks over to her bed and sits down, thinking about everything her sister said.
A little while after she talked to her sister Daisy is in her Uncle's office with Melinda and Phil, talking about Hanner.

"Uncle Phil, just let me go in and talk to her, as a friend," Daisy pleads.

"No. it's too dangerous," Melinda tells her daughter as Hannah's powers are too uncertain.

"Mom, she's not dangerous!" Daisy objects, honestly a little surprised that Melinda thinks so.
"She's nice… like overly nice. She never misses a birthday post to her friends, runs the youth program at her church, rescues dogs," Daisy says, reading off her tablet to read all the things Hannah does. "Hanna's a safety inspector not just because she's detailed orientation but because she…" Daisy starts to explain.

"Genuinely cares," Phil finishes.

"Exactly," Daisy confirms. "And someone with that much empathy being responsibility for that much loss of life, she's devastated," Daisy says and as she speaks some pieces seem to fall into place for her.

"Daisy?" Phil asks, as she has gotten an odd look on her face.

"Look, my point is that being alone in the scary ass cage, trying to find a reason to rationalise and even justify what she is feeling today is the worst thing for her," Daisy explains. "She needs support a friend, and I can be that. I'm not afraid for her, she needs that; just like Bobbi did when you guys found her," Daisy says, feeling like she might be crossing a line by mentioning her sister, but she wants to make her point. "Please, let me talk to her," Daisy requests.

"No," Melinda answers.

"Until we figure out what's going on with her, she stays locked up and you stay away," Phil says and as he does one of his collectables fall of the desk. "Thought that wag glued down," Phil says as he bends over to pick it up. "Daisy, you're asking the right questions, but for now, that's all you get to do. I'm sorry," Phil tells his niece.

"Whatever," Daisy says before basically storming out of the office.

"She's not going to keep accepting no for an answer," Phil tells Melinda.

"I know," Melinda answers. Honestly she is feeling pretty torn as she does believe that Daisy could get through to Hannah, but she is worried about her daughter as Hannah doesn't have control over her abilities and so talking to her will be dangerous for Daisy.

Not long after she talked to her mother and Uncle, still feeling a little annoyed, Daisy is in the kitchen with Ward who is making something to eat.

"It's just not fair, I know I can get through to Hannah, and Mom knows I can, and she just won't let me," Daisy says, clearly annoyed.

"I'm sure she has her reasons," Ward says, wondering if he is going to be able to get more information about May and Daisy's personal lives; hopefully something he can use.

"She always does," Daisy comments.

"Daisy, if you want to be a SHIELD agent you need to learn to follow orders, even ones you don't
"Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know," Daisy says, sounding pretty annoyed and she walks over to the couches.

"Where'd I put that knife?" Ward wonders to himself as the knife he was just using has disappeared.

A little while later the plane has lost all power, which resulted in Melinda and Ward needing to perform an emergency landing, which was something Daisy has never experienced before. As they made it to the group without injury Melinda, Ward and Daisy are in the command centre waiting for the others.

"Are you alright?" Melinda asks her daughter concerned, checking in for about third time since they had to do the emergency landing.

"I'm fine," Daisy assures her mother, smiling slightly as she knows how many times her mother has asked, as Phil and Simmons walk in.

"Our ear comms are usually relayed though the plane, so here's some hardware," Phil says, as he hands out walkie talkies.

"Did the girl do this to us, sir?" Ward asks.

"We believe Miss Hutchins is the victim here," Phil reveals, and if it was a less stressful situation Daisy would have said told you so. "Our theories about her powers have been disproved," Phil explains.

"By who?" Melinda asks curious.

"I saw a ghost," Simmons says, and everyone gives her a shocked look. "I... I know how it sounds, but a man attacked me and then he disappeared," Simmons explains.

"Did you get a look at him?" Melinda asks.

"He dematerialised!" Simmons objects.

"May, run your system checks. Is the cage still shielded?" Phil asks curious.

"Most of the power's dedicated to it," Melinda explains.

"This man or whatever he is has been tormenting Miss Hutchins. The cage might be the one thing protecting her now," Phil explains and as he does Melinda glances worrying at Daisy. "We'll inform her," Phil explains.

"Uncle Phil, can I please be the one to talk to Hannah?" Daisy asks. "Her life has been turned upside down and we stuck her in a nightmare box," Daisy points out, feeling like that must have freaked her out. "She thinks she's being punished. Can I please be the one to deliver the good news," Daisy requests, looking between her mother and Uncle.

"That a non-corporal madman is hurting her?" Ward asks disbelieving.

"Again, I think it'd be better coming from anyone else, really," Daisy says, giving her uncle a pleading look and once she asks Phil glances at Melinda who says everything she needs to say to him in a look.
"All right," Phil says. "I'll head upstairs, activate the emergency transceiver and radio HQ. Ward, take a firearm. Escort Fitzsimmons downstairs, assess the damage, get us up and running," Phil instructs.

"Wait, guys, um where's Fitz?" Simmons asks worried.

A few minutes later Simmons and Ward have gone to find Fitz while Phil is working on making sure they can be found, while Melinda is checking what is going on with the plane. As everyone else is doing their jobs Daisy walks up to the cage door and knocks.

"Hannah?"

"Who's there?" Hannah asks.

"My names Daisy. We haven't met yet," Daisy explains as she slides down the door so that her back is against it.

"We crashed, didn't we?" Hannah asks. "Are you all hurt? I'm so sorry," Hannah says, and as she does Melinda can hear the pain in her voice.

"No. no, no. we're all okay," Daisy assures her. "Whatever's happening, it's not your fault," Daisy says, in the most comforting tone of voice she has. "We were wrong, but you need to stay in that room so you're safe," Daisy explains. "Something… bad is out here," Daisy explains, as she glances around.

"Demons,"

"I don't know what it is," Daisy admits.

"Do you believe in god?" Hannah asks curious.


"Well, I do. and I know that he's punishing me, and I deserve it," Hannah explains.

"No. no, you don't. no one does," Daisy explains, wishing she could open the door and give Hanna a hug. "Religion's never really been a big thing in my family, especially growing up, but my grandfather, he's religious," Daisy reveals as she has a few vague memories of William taking her and Bobbi to church when he was watching them. "He once told me something I kind of like, he said, 'god is love,'" Daisy reveals. "It's sappy, and simple, but I like it, 'god is love the thing that keeps us together,'" Daisy explains and as she does Melinda walks up. "And if he's right, and that's true, I don't think he would punish you for a making a mistake. I think he'd forgive a mistake," Daisy explains.

"I want to believe that," Hannah admits.

"Daisy, I'll stand guard now," Melinda says, walking towards her daughter.

"What, no," Daisy objects.

"Uncle Phil needs help with the transceiver," Melinda instructs.

"If it's all the same I'd rather stay here for a while," Daisy explains.

"It's not all the same. It needs to get done, not discussed," Melinda explains, in a stern voice, and as
she does Daisy stands up.

"Hannah I'll be nearby if you need me," Daisy say and then she takes a step towards her mother. "Look, I don't know what bad things this whole situation is causing you to remember, but if you want to share I'm here. I'm not a little kid anymore," Daisy says, before walking away, heading to her uncle's office.

A few minutes later Daisy is sitting cross legged on her Uncle's desk working on figuring out what is going on with the plane.

"Seems like a hardware issue, not firmware, which isn't my thing," Daisy explains. "I really should be with Hannah," Daisy comments, though she also suspects that she should be with her mother.

"Hannah's safe at the moment," Phil tells his niece.

"Hannah's not the only one I'm worried about," Daisy mutters.

"What?" Phil asks curious.

"Nothing," Daisy says, and then she decides to try and get some answers. "You were in Bahrain with mom, right?" Daisy asks curious, as she remembers Phil coming to the apartment to get her before the mission.

"Yes," Phil confirms, slightly hesitantly, wondering where Daisy is going with this.

"But Bobbi said only Dad, Aunt Nat and Fury know the exact details of what happened," Daisy comments.

"That's true," Phil confirms. "Daisy, do you have questions?" he asks, knowing he has to be delicate.

"I have a lot of them," Daisy admits. "Mom's been acting weird since we got this op; it's just like she was back then, right after the mission," Daisy reveals.

"You remember that?" Phil asks, as Daisy was twelve so it's not overly surprising, but what is a little surprising is that Daisy can tell the different between different version of Melinda.

"I'll never forget," Daisy admits, pain in her voice.

"That mission, Bahrain, we were the welcome Wagon, and it went south," Phil explains, and as he does Daisy turns to look at him. "Bobbi's right; I don't know exactly what happened. What I do know is that your mom went into a building, said she could fix the problem, and when she came out she was different," Phil admits, not wanting to say too much to Daisy but feeling like he should explain some basic.

"Dad said basically the same thing back then," Daisy admits. "I know so much goes on that Mom and Dad protect Peter and I from, and Bobbi too, but I want to be able to help her, her both of them if they need," Daisy explains as she has seen her dad struggling since the Battle of New York.

"Daisy you help your parents every single day, by just being the incredible daughter you are," Phil tells her, and Daisy smiles slightly.

"Do you ever miss the way things used to be between you guys?" Daisy asks, as she knows that while things been her mother and uncle have improved they are a little different.
"Everyday," Phil answers, without hesitation. "When Fury told me to form this team I knew straight away that I wanted your mom on it. I thought that maybe being in a team, being in the field again, would help us get what we had, what we were, what she was, back again," Phil explains.

"I hope you do," Daisy admits and as she does the door slams and so they hurry over to it.

"The locks jammed," Phil realises.

"How'd that happen?" Daisy asks.

"How'd the plane go down?" Phil asks.

"Good point," Daisy admits.

Outside the plane, thanks to a conversation with Fitzsimmons Melinda has realised what is going on and so she is running with Hannah.

"What are you going to do?" Hannah asks as Melinda leads her away from the plane.

"Fix the problem," Melinda answers.

Back on the plane Daisy and Phil are trying to use Phil's old SHIELD tech to get through to Fitz, Simmons and Ward.

"Anyone there?" Phil asks, as being pretty sure his voice is cutting in and out as there is static on the line. "Maybe it doesn't work after all," Phil comments, glancing at Daisy.

"Yes, yes, yes, we're here, sir," Ward answers. "Where'd you go?" Ward asks curious.

"Nowhere. We were attached, locked in, then the guy disappeared," Phil explains.

"Hey, that's our story," Ward realises.

"Is Mom with you?" Daisy asks worried.

"She isn't with you?" Simmons asks, and Daisy gets a horrified look on her face.

"She'll be okay," Phil says to Daisy.

"You and Dad said that last time," Daisy says worried, and Ward files that away for future use.

A long while later Melinda has managed to stop the being that was after Hannah, by using her own experience and getting Hannah to tell him to go, and everyone is back on the plane, which is almost ready to fly again.

As Hannah is asleep in her bunk Daisy tucks her in and heads out, walking almost straight into Ward.

"She all right?" Ward asks.

"Much better, let me know if she needs anything," Ward says, before walking away and after Ward walks away Daisy walks over to where Phil is staring at his vintage shield walkie-talkie watch.

"Can Fitz repair it?" Daisy asks curious.
"No, this one a lost cause," Phil explains.

"Maybe we could find you another one," Daisy suggests, as with their family connections she wouldn't be surprised if they would be able to find one.

"I don't think so, they only made twenty," Phil explains.

"So, you've said," Daisy says amused. "Uncle Phil, I think you made the right choice. I think this team is good for Mom," Daisy explains.

"Not just her, this team seems like it's good for you too," Phil admits.

"I feel like I belong," Daisy admits. "Outside of our family that's not something I've felt that much," Daisy says, as she has always struggled to make friends always felt like she didn't fit.

"I know," Phil admits. "Daisy I know that you feel like compared to your siblings you don't have talents, but you do, you see the good in people," Phil explains.

"I'm not sure that's a talent," Daisy admits.

"It is, trust me," Phil tells her. "Daze, your mom and I wanted you to pay close attention to the index asset evaluation and intake process because someday you'll be good at it, even the best," Phil explain.

"Wow, thanks Uncle Phil," Daisy says, not sure how to feel. "Hopefully that means I can rename it, because the current name is super stupid," Daisy reveals.

"I know," Phil responds and once he does Daisy heads out of the command centre heading to the cockpit.

"Mom?" Daisy asks, knocking on the door. "Can I join you?" Daisy asks curious.

"You never have to ask," Melinda responds and once she does Daisy walks over and sits next to her mother, as she does Daisy notices that there is a tablet on the controls. "Daisy, you should be really proud of yourself, how you handled this whole situation,"

"Thanks Mom," Daisy says, smiling slightly, as Melinda causes the plane to fly into the air "Are you… okay?" Daisy asks, not sure how else to frame it.

"Yeah," Melinda confirms, knowing that she is doing better because her daughter is around.

"Good," Daisy says relieved. "You know I meant what I said, about being here if you need to talk," Daisy explains.

"I know," Melinda says, smiling slightly at her daughter and as she does the tablet rings with a video call. "Answer it," Melinda tells her daughter and Daisy presses answer revealing Tony and Peter.

"Finally. We've been trying to call for the last couple of hours," Tony reveals, honestly he was starting to get worried.

"We had some plane trouble," Melinda explains.

"Are you okay?" Peter asks worried.

"Yeah, we're okay Pete," Daisy assures her little brother, who looks relieved. " 
"How was school today?" Melinda asks curious and once she does Peter happily start to explain and once he does four of the five members of the Stark-May family start to happily talk with each other.
Chapter 64

Disclaimer: I don't own anything. Everything belongs to their rightful owners.

AN1:

December 9th 2013

It's early morning and because the team do not currently have a case Melinda and Daisy are training in the cargo bay on the mats.

"ugh," Daisy says as she gets knocked off her feet.

"On your feet, Daze," Melinda tells her daughter, as she sticks out her hand to help her daughter up.

"I don't know how it can be considered training if I keep getting knocked on my ass," Daisy admits, as she gets back onto her feet.

"It's training you what not to do," Melinda explains. "Getting knocked down is a key part of how you learn, but what matters is what you do next," Melinda says.

"I know, I know," Daisy says, rolling her eyes, as she has heard it all before.

"This is serious Daisy," Melinda tells her daughter in a stern voice. "You're in the field now, acting as if you were an agent. You need to know how to defend yourself, and the members of your team," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Mom, I know," Daisy says. "I've been learning for years, and I've had the best example there is... you," Daisy informs her mother, who smiles.

"May, a word?" Phil asks, and once he does Melinda hurries up the stairs and once she is on the catwalk above Daisy, from below, watches as her Mother and Uncle have a hushed conversation, and just by looking at them Daisy knows it is tense.

"What's going on?" Daisy asks, not being able to hold in her curiously anymore.

"Pack up, we'll all meet in the command centre in five," Melinda tells her daughter, and once she does she and Phil head into the main area of the plane.

"Okay then," Daisy says to herself, wondering what is going on.

Five minutes later Daisy's question is answered as she is in the Command Centre with her mother, Uncle, and the rest of the team watching a video of guys dropping through the roof of a prison.

"At zero eight hundred hours, three men infiltrated the Havenworth federal penitentiary," Phil explains, as the team watch the video.

"Infiltrated? More like cannonballed," Daisy comments, feeling shocked, as while the men look like her Dad does when he breaks through something in his Iron Man suit these men are clearly wearing no type of armour.
"They were in and out in less than two minutes. Left no prints at the scene, but we do have one lead," Phil explains, and as he does he presses a button.

"Centipede," Simmons realises.

"Seems like they salvaged some of their research from Hong Kong," Phil explains.

"So, we were right. Chan's platelets solved their combustion problem. Now they can create supersoldiers with no fear of explosion," Simmons explains, sounding excited.

"Maybe don't get so excited about it," Fitz advises.

"Two of centipede's labs have been destroyed, but they keep popping back up. Now they have at least three of these guys, maybe more," Ward says, knowing the facts but he has to act clueless.

"Who'd they break out?" Melinda asks, as when Phil was filling her in on what was going on he didn't mention a name.

"Edison Po, former Marine, expert in tactics and rapid response. He fell of the grid in '08, reappeared eighteen months ago at a diner in Boston. Where he stabbed a friend's eye out. with a steak knife, then finished his meal," Phil explains.

"That's funny, Po doesn't look crazy," Daisy comments, causing everyone to look at her. "I'm kidding. The guy is a walking mug shot," Daisy comments.

"Which means he shouldn't be too hard to track down," Phil comments. "Finding Po and these Centipede soldiers is a top priority for SHIELD. We'll be running point, but we won't be working alone," Phil explains.

"What team did HQ send for backups?" Ward asks, as he needs to know how on his guard he needs to be.

"Not a team… a person," Phil reveals, and as he does Daisy feels a glimmer of hope that Phil is talking about her sister. "Someone who can help us fight fire with fire," Phil reveals, and while Daisy is still hoping he is talking about her sister she also knows that not a lot of people in SHIELD know about Bobbi's powers.

"Someone we've worked with before?" Ward asks, feeling suspicious.

"Not exactly," Phil answers, as he and Melinda exchange looks.

A little while after the conversation in the Command Centre, while the rest of the team are waiting on the plane Melinda and Phil have made their way to the Academy where they walk up to Mike Peterson who is pushing a tractor.

"Excuse me," Phil says.

"Agent May? Agent Coulson?" Mike asks surprised.

"If you're willing, we need you to suit up," Melinda says, clearly making it his choice, as she knows she wouldn't want anyone to force Bobbi into helping with something just because of her powers and so she doesn't want to do that to anyone else.

"Of course," Mike answers.
"Then put that bulldozer when you found it and come with us," Phil instructs.

"I just want to say something first," Mike says, looking between Melinda and Phil. "When I found you and Daisy I wasn't who I wanted to be, but now I get it," Mike admits. "Having all this… it's a privilege," Mike says, gesturing to everything that is around. "And training to be an Agent, working with SHIELD it's me trying to do better, trying to be better," Mike explains, as Melinda nods.

"You're getting a second chance because everyone deserves one but let me be clear… there will not be a third," Phil explains.

"Understood," Mike confirms.

"Let's go," Melinda says, and they leave.

Back on the plane, Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, and Ward are all in the command centre as they know Melinda and Phil have gone to get Mike.

"It's not good. At all. The guy was a ticking time bomb… literally," Ward explains.

"HQ wouldn't have sent him if he was still combustible," Fitz comments.

"They must have found a way to stabilize him somehow," Simmons realises.

"They stabilize his attitude? Cause he was pretty hostile last time we saw him," Ward comments.

"How would you know? You didn't even talk to him," Daisy argues. "He was angry, and scared, but he's a good guy," Daisy argues.

"Who's been in the Centipede program," Simmons says, clearly showing that she is on Daisy's side.

"Exactly. He can give us some superpower backup," Fitz argues.

"Yeah, just saying, this could easily go sideways. I mean, the last time we saw this guy he was a raging homicidal maniac…" Ward starts to speak, and as he does Phil and Mike walk up. "He's standing right behind me, isn't he?" Ward asks, and Daisy gives a nod.

"Mr Peterson, you didn't get a chance to meet the rest of the team last time. This is Agent Grant Ward. He's the one who shot you in Los Angeles. Fitz-Simmons designed the weapon he used, and I think you remember…" Phil starts to introduce.

"Daisy," Mike finishes.

"It's good to see you again," Daisy tells him, meaning that, which surprises Mike.

"You too," Mike admits. "Look, I know LA could have gone another way. Another team might not have let me walk away alive. I owe you, all of you," Mike says, knowing that he owes Daisy and Melinda in particular.

"That's bygones and water under a distant bridge far away," Daisy assures him. "How's your son?" Daisy asks curious

"Still with my sister," Mike explains. "He thinks I'm working construction, but he's good. Happy," Mike reveals, being glad of that fact.
"So, what do we have?" Phil asks curious.

"Not much on Po. I checked his previously known addresses and old military contacts… came up empty," Daisy explains.

"We've been looking at where Po might be on the outside. Let's look at his life on the inside, "Phil instructs. "At the prison. See if that gets us any leads," Phil instructs. "Anything on the Centipede soldiers?" Phil asks curious.

"We found a facial recog match on one of them," Ward explains. 'Name's Brian Hayward. Stationed in Afghanistan for three years then fell of the radar when he got back. Only living relative.. sister," Ward explains putting an image on the screen. "Laura, Sophomore at the University of Ohio. She's our best shot at finding Hayward," Ward explains.

"You and I will go talk to her," Phil realises. "Daisy, go ask your mom to set a course for Cleveland," Phil instructs.

"Yep," Daisy says, before heading out of the command centre.

Seconds after she left the command centre Daisy walks into the Cockpit where her mother is on a tablet, unknown to Daisy she is returning a text from Tony.

"Uncle Phil said we're going to Cleveland," Daisy says, as she sits down next to her mother.

"Did he say where in Cleveland?" Melinda asks, looking at her daughter.

"Somewhere near the University of Ohio," Daisy answers. "That's where the person we need to talk to is," Daisy explains, and Melinda nods, as she does she notices something.

"You okay, Daisy?" Melinda asks concerned.

"Yeah, it's just…." Daisy starts to say, but trails off, as she does her mother gives her a look. "I thought, just for a bit, that Uncle Phil was talking about Bobbi when he talked about backup," Daisy admits. "It's stupid…." Daisy starts to say.

"Not at all," Melinda says. "You miss your sister, and she would be amazing backup," Melinda assures her daughter.

"Do people in SHIELD even know about her powers?" Daisy asks curious.

'No, not for the most part," Melinda admits, and Daisy nods. "Buckle up, I'm going to start take off," Melinda tells her daughter.

"Okay," Daisy responds, as she buckles herself in.

A while later Phil and Ward have gone to talk to Hayward's sister, and while Fitz and Simmons are in the lab with Fitz and Simmons Daisy has finished the work she had to do that and because of that she is placing a video call to her brother and sister. To Daisy's relief they both answer quiet quickly.

"Hey you two," Bobbi greats, with a smile.

"Where are you?" Peter asks, as he thinks it a rather strange background behind his oldest sister.
"That's classified," Bobbi answers, smirking at her siblings.

"He's not asking the actual place more like where you are in that place," Daisy explains to her sister.

"Oh, in a bathtub," Bobbi answers, like there is nothing strange about that.

"Why…" Peter starts to ask, then thinks better of it. "I don't want to know," Peter admits. "Daze, you're on your plane right?" he asks curious, clearly moving the focus from one sister to the other.

"Yep, we're working, but I've done what I had to do," Daisy admits. "I'm waiting for Mom," Daisy admits.

"And you decided to call us while you were waiting?" Bobbi asks curious.

"Well duh, it was the best idea," Daisy admits, and as she does her mother walks up. "Mom, say hello to Bobbi and Peter," Daisy says, turning her computer to face her mother.

"Hey," Melinda says, smiling at her kids.

"MOM I GOT A + IN PHYSICS," Peter says excited.

"So your Dad told me, I'm so proud of you," Melinda says, smiling at her son. "But Daze and I have to go. We've got to work," Melinda explains. "I love you both," Melinda says.

"Love you too," Peter and Bobbi say.

"We love you too, Daisy," Bobbi says to her sister.

"I love you guys too," Daisy says, moving the computer around to face her, and once she speaks Melinda ends the call.

"Daisy, we're a mission," Melinda tells her daughter, looking disapproving.

"I know," Daisy says. "I found something, but you were taking a while, so I thought I'd call Bobbi and Peter while I had a few minutes," Daisy admits. "I know I probably shouldn't have, but I miss them," Daisy admits.

"I know," Melinda says, as she pushes her daughter's hair back. "What did you find?" Melinda asks gently.

"Po only had one visitor during his prison stint," Daisy says, as she walks over to the command centre with her mother right behind her. "Her," Daisy says, referring to the image that is on the screen. "You notice the outfit?" Daisy asks, and Melinda nods. "Miles said that a girl in a flower dress asked him to hack SHIELD. This could be the same girl," Daisy explains.

"Can we hear the conversation?" Melinda asks curious.

"That's the bummer… there was no audio, but it's not a total loss," Daisy admits. "I was able to use SHIELD's lip-reading program, because we have one of those, which is awesome and I really want to talk to Dad and JARVIS to see if they have a program like that," Daisy says, clearly about to go off on a tangent.

"Daisy,"

"Right, it didn't work on the girl because she never looks up at the camera, but Po did, once, and it
caught this," Daisy says, before pressing a button.

"The Clairvoyant does not like to be touched," A creepy electronic voice says.

"I wrote that down, so we don't have to hear that again… ever," Daisy explains as while she is not a stranger to electronic voices, she grew up with Jarvis after all, that was creepy and the creepiness was only highlighted because of what was said.


"Yeah. Does that mean something to you?" Daisy asks, and her mother shakes her head.

"But it means something to them. To Po and whoever that woman is," Melinda explains to her daughter.

"Her name is Rania," Mike explains as he walks up to Melinda and Daisy.

"You know her?" Daisy asks surprise.

"Yeah, she recruited me for Centipede, came up to me at the hospital where I did my back therapy out of the blue. Told me she could change my life," Mike explains.

Over the next few minutes Melinda and Daisy work on a theory and send everything to Phil who they have called.

"We're running her through our system," Daisy reveals. "Maybe we can get an ID, but we're guessing she's Centipede's recruiter and Po's her latest recruit," Daisy explains.

"Three super soldiers dive-bomb a prison, pluck him out? he's her number one draft pick," Phil realises.

"Maybe they want Po to coordinate them, lead them," Daisy suggests.

"His background's tactical strategy. He fits the bill," Melinda reveals.

"So, these guys have super soldiers, an expert military strategist, and a Clairvoyant who can see the future," Daisy says. "Anyone else thinks about switching teams?" Daisy asks, and as she does her mother gives her a disapproving look.

"They couldn't have a psychic. There are none on the index. They're a myth," Phil comments.

"Ah, Uncle Phil, so was Thor," Daisy comments.

"Maybe it's an alias," Phil suggests. "Run it through our database and see if anything pops up," Phil instructs. "Ward is approaching Hayward's sister now," Phil reveals.

A while later Ward has talked to Hayward's sister and both he and Phil are back on the plane. Because she is curious about how he is doing Daisy has headed to the cage where through the open door she sees Mike looking at a picture.

"Oh, it looks almost homey in here," Daisy notes. "is that Ace?" Daisy asks, as she sits down next to Mike.

"Yeah," Mike says, as he hands the picture over.
"What a cutie," Daisy comments. "He must be so proud of you, his dad working for SHIELD, I know I always have been," Daisy comments.

"You knew what your mom did when you were a kid?" Mike asks, sounding surprised.

"Yeah," Daisy says, then she realises. "Right, sorry I forgot that for most of SHIELD things are classified," Daisy comments.

"It's alright, he knows I'm working," Mike reveals. "Called him on his birthday and gave him all the 'Heroes of New York Action figures," Mike reveals.

"Nice," Daisy says, wondering if she could arrange a signed set for him. "Are you two close?" Daisy asks curious.

"We're a team. I'd do anything for this little guy," Mike comments. "What about you? Are you and your mom close?" Mike asks curious.

"Beyond close," Daisy answers. "Me and my Dad too," Daisy admits, thinking about Tony. "I know I didn't grow up in the same way most kids did, but I loved every second. I always wanted to grow up to be a hero like both my parents, like most of my family," Daisy reveals, and before Mike has a chance to say anything Phil walks in.

"You wanted your shot. Here it is," Phil says, handing over an outfit.

"I'll let you get ready," Daisy says, before heading out of the cage, and as she walks out of the cage.

A little while later Daisy, Fitz, Simmons, Ward, and Mike are all in the cargo bay together, Mike is moving around in the suit to see how it fits.

"I think it's quiet smart," Simmons comments.

"How does it feel?" Fitz asks curious.

"Feels good. Comfortable," Mike admits.

"Having powers is cheating," Ward comments, as he really feels like that. "But the suits pretty cool," Ward admits, as he can't help it.

"It's perfect for an array of tactical missions," Fitz explains.

"Yeah, also measures your heart rate, systolic pressures, and glucose levels. All while providing state-of-the-art ballistic protection," Simmons explains.

"Thanks," Mike says, feeling grateful as he really likes the suit.

"Oh no, thank you," Simmons says.

"We've never been so proud," Fitz comments as Melinda and Ward walk up to the group.

"Hayward's cellphone has been traced to an abandoned factory about eight miles from here," Phil explains.

"Probably Centipede's new lab," Ward comments.

"Certainly, been there MO. We destroy one factory, they set up another, putting us back at square
"one," Phil explains. "This time I want answers," Phil says.

"Means we go in quiet, do minimal damage to the facility and the people inside," Melinda explains.

"Ward, May, you'll go in through the west entrance," Phil explains. "Mr Peterson and I will enter through the loading dock," Phil explains. "Daisy, Simmons, Fitz, you'll run back end from outside," Phil explains.

"And you will stay in the van unless told otherwise," Melinda says, looking at her daughter as she stresses her words.

"Yeah, okay, but are we seriously doing this just us?" Daisy asks. "We've been playing whack-a-mole with these guys since I decide to stay away. Shouldn't big SHIELD be sending in backup?" Daisy asks, thinking of her sister, or Aunt and Uncle, or Sharon and Trip.

"Trust me, they already did," Phil says, looking at Mike. "Let's go," he instructs.

A while later the team have gone after Hayward, but to their disappointment they didn't get much info as he was killed by an eye device just like Amador. As they have a lot to discuss Daisy, Phil, Fitz, Simmons and Mike, who was hurt, are all in the lab together.

"The one on the left is Akela Amador's. Hayward's is on the right," Fitz explains. "Now, his prosthetic was slightly damaged, but based on digital reconstruction, we can now confirm that the technology is virtually identical," Fitz explains. "Hayward's prosthetic has the same internal power source, backscatter capabilities, and biomechanics as Amador," Fitz reveals.

"So, Centipede also designed the eye implant?" Phil asks.

"These guys are serious multitaskers," Daisy comments.

"Who's akela Amador?" Mike asks curious.

"Former SHIELD agent, the first person we encountered with this eye technology, a good agent who was forced to do some bad things," Phil explains.

"We helped her," Simmons explains.

"Kind of a pattern with you guys," Mike realises. "So then, those soldiers at the warehouse were forced to attack us through that eye thing?" Mike asks, trying to make sense of everything.

"They were getting orders," Phil explains. "When the tide turned in our favour, Centipede flipped Hayward's kill switch, told the other guys to run," Phil explains and as he does he realises something. "Can you track the eye feed like before, find their location?" Phil asks curious.

"Nope. They've upgraded since Amador. Their feed's untraceable now," Daisy explains, though she wants to get permission to send the feed to her father to see if he and Jarvis can trace it.

"Their technology keeps advancing at a disturbing rapid pace. They must have endless manpower, resources," Phil says, feeling worried.

"And someone with a fat wallet," Daisy says, knowing that they would have to.

"That makes sense," Fitz says. "If I could see the future, I'd go straight to Las Vegas," Fitz comments.
"Whoever's behind them may or may not be psychic, but they're one step ahead of us every time," Phil says, looking worried. "I need to update HQ. this is bigger than we thought," Phil admits, and as he does Daisy wants to loop in her father even more.

Upstairs, May who is angry at something Ward did during the fight, is storming up to Ward who is at the bar.

"I'll pour you a Scotch," Ward says, as he sees Melinda.

"Don't do that again," Melinda says angrily.

"Brandy then?" Ward ask confused.

"I've been fighting since before you were born, I don't need your or anyone else protecting me," Melinda says angrily as she has never let anyone protect her and she is not going to start now.

"Time out. still playing catch-up here. What are you talking about?" Ward asks.

"You, taking a punch for me," Melinda says. "I didn't need you to do that, I do not need your protection," Melinda explains.

"You think I don't know that? I took that punch cause you're faster than me. You could do more good on your feet. It was tactical not out of some misguided attempt at protection," Ward explains.

"My mistake," Melinda responds.

"Good, glad that we're on the same page," Ward says, before walking off, and as he walks away Melinda leans on the bar.

"Wow, that seemed intense," Daisy says, walking up to her mother and as soon as she hears her daughters' voice Melinda looks happy. "You okay?" Daisy asks concerned.

"I'm okay," Melinda assures her daughter. "Daisy, I think you should go home to New York," Melinda tells her daughter.

"What! NO!" Daisy exclaims.

"There's a Stark Facility nearby, from there you'll be able to get a plane home, a safe one," Melinda explains.

"No, I'm not going anywhere," Daisy argues.

"Things are getting dangerous," Melinda tells her daughter.

"That's nothing new," Daisy tells her mother. "Mom, I a member of this team, and yeah it was scary when I knew you were fighting in that warehouse, but I did my job, and I'm going to keep doing it," Daisy argues.

"Daze…." Melinda starts to say.

"Mom, I know you want to protect me, but I want to do this. I'm not going back to New York," Daisy argues.

"Okay," Melinda says, against her better judgement.
"But I do want to send a copy of the eye feed to Dad. I've done everything I can think of, but maybe there is something he and Jarvis can do," Daisy explains.

"Do it," Melinda tells her daughter.

"On it," Daisy says, before heading to her bunk.

A little while later, to Mike's horror he has learnt that his son has been captured and so the entire team are in the main area of the plane talking about what they are going to do.

"They want a trade… Ace for his father. They've sent a time and a place," Phil explains, and as he does Melinda can't help but glance at Daisy.

"Bloody savages," Fitz comments.

"They want to experiment on him, determine how he still has his abilities," Simmons explains.

"And we're gonna let them?" Daisy asks, sounding horrified.

"We've fought these guys before. We don't have a chance," Ward says, saying what he knows he should rather than what he really thinks.

"The instructions they gave Mr. Peterson were very specific. I called HQ told them to stand down," Phil explains.

"Stand down?" Daisy asks shocked.

"So we take them alone," Ward says, as that is exactly what he wants.

"We should at least have a hostage-rescue unit in support of this," Melinda says, saying what she would want if it was one of her kids in this situation.

"They said they would murder my son," Mike says, and as he does Melinda feels her heart sink. "If we make one wrong move. Any electronics, any comms, any sign of surveillance and they'll terminate the arrangement," Mike explains, and as he does Melinda can hear the pain in his voice, the pain of a parent which she recognizes. "I'll give myself up, no problem, get him back. I can figure it out from there," Mike explains.

"You're still recovering," Daisy points out. "We can't just hand you over to them like that, can we?" Daisy asks, looking between her mother and uncle.

"Fitz-Simmons have a non-electronic method of tracking him," Phil reveals, as while he doesn't like the plan he knows it is necessary.

"Simmons has fabricated an odourless scent," Fitz reveals. "I have an instrument which can detect it. Works like a bloodhound. Can track someone from over 50 kilometers," Fitz explains, and as he does Ward knows that that could be potentially problematic.

"After we make the trade, we'll be able to follow Mr Peterson. Buy him some time to get his strength back. We'll find him," Phil explains.

"I don't care what happens to me. As long as my boy is…” Mike says, and Melinda knows that she would do the same to save one of her children.

"I promise you, we will get your son back," Melinda says, looking right at Mike and because he
A little while later Melinda and Phil are in the SUV at the bridge where the exchange is going to go down. While they are in the car Fitz, Simmons, Daisy and Mike are by the van, and Ward is in his chosen location with a gun.

"At least let me escort him out for the exchange," Melinda says, as she feels it would be best.

"Mr Peterson requested me. I'm comfortable with that," Phil explains. "And if things go south, I need you back here, taking point on the team," Phil explains. "Is Ward in position?" Phil asks curious.


"There'd be something wrong with you if you did," Phil says, and they head out of the car.

"Once the swap happens I'll fire up my equipment," Fitz explains as Simmons puts the substance on Mike. "We'll be able to track you wherever they take you," Fitz explains.

"Just don't do anything that'll endanger my son," Mike requests.

"We won't, but we want to make sure Ace has his dad at the end of the day too," Daisy explains.

"Time to go," Phil says, as he and Melinda walk up, and once he speaks he and Mike walk towards where Rania and centipede solders are.

"This will work, right?" Daisy asks her mother concerned.

"I hope so," Melinda says, as she leads her daughter back to the SUV where she, Fitz, and Simmons sit to watch the exchange.

"Let me know when I can activate comms and the tracker," Fitz says from the backseat, and Melinda nods.

"There's his son," Daisy says relieved as she sees Mike.

"Oh thank god. I have no stomach for this," Simmons admits.

"On my mark, activate comms and tracker," Melinda instructs, and to her horror they watch as Coulson is taken as Mike starts to run back towards them with his son.

"What happened? They've taken Coulson," Ward says through the coms. "We need backup. I have a shot," Ward reveals, even though he doesn't.

"Do not engage. They'll kill Coulson," Melinda says as she, Daisy, Fitz and Simmons hurry out of the car. "Stand down. I'll contact HQ," Melinda says, grabbing a wakie. "This is SHIELD RG422. We need immediate satellite support," Melinda explains, as Mike and Ace get to them, and Mike puts Ace down on the ground and squats down.

"Ace, I've got to make something right. Daddy loves you so much, okay? Stay with Daisy and Melinda. You remember them right?" Mike asks, and Ace nods.

"Keep him safe. Take care of my boy!" Mike says as he runs off and Daisy puts an arm around Ace.
To everyone's horror they watch as part of the bridge blows up and then a helicopter files away, clearly with Coulson onboard.

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