Summary

Tony and Loki decide to go after Thanos before he can go after Loki. Only, things don’t go according to plan A, B or C. Sacrifices have to be made, plans have to be changed and sometimes there really isn’t a way out.

Or, Loki fakes his death again, Tony is maybe sort of a God now, and with the Infinity Gauntlet on one hand and a ring on the other, he loses it.

Notes

Kudos and comments fuel me, seriously!

See the end of the work for more notes

Ring around the rosy….

Pocket full of posies….
Ashes...ashes....

We all fall down!

An explosion rocked the ship, closely followed by a second and a third and Thanos stumbled with it, fingers curling tighter around his precious weapon, fear passing fleetingly through his eyes before they turned steely and cold with determination.

The Mad-Titan stalked through the large hole he’d thrown Anthony through and Loki followed, silent and invisible, undetectable, glancing absently at his “body” lying cold and dead on the ground in a pool of its own blood. Yes, it had served its purpose quite well; Anthony had fallen for the ruse easily enough, Thanos even easier, and now they were so close, Loki could taste victory on his tongue.

As silence from the previous explosion reigned, the song played again, echoing in the vast corridors of the ship.

Ring around the rosy....

Pocket full of posies....

Ashes...ashes....

We all fall down!

It wasn’t often Loki was unnerved, and he knew his lover had a tendency to play music when he had plans to make a big entrance, but Loki had also never seen his lover so broken, so anguished, as when he laid eyes on Loki’s body and charged; Thanos had tossed his unarmored body clean through the wall, and Loki nearly cursed him, nearly sprung forward, plans be damned, to help his lover.

But no, no. Showing himself too early would risk their chances of victory, and this was not something he could gamble, not now and certainly not here where any wrong move could, quite literally, be the difference between life and death.
And so he watched, and waited, and grinned something cold and vicious when they stepped through and Anthony was nowhere to be seen within the large control room, only the gutted remains of the ships sound system the sign he had ever been in the room.

Another explosion; this one larger, closer, trembling the very foundation of the Mad-Titans ship so violently that Loki and Titan alike lost their footing.

And so it began again.

*Ring around the rosy....*

*Pocket full of posies....*

*Ashes...ashes....*

*We all fall down!*

A childrens nursery rhyme, Loki mused; a rather perfect song to bring to an end the reign of a self proclaimed God.

Loki cast his gaze to Thanos, who stood stock still as he waited, before silently slipping from the room and down the corridor, searching, stretching his well hidden magic out, using his enhanced senses until he found- ah.

Anthony stood just inside one of the final doors in the corridor; a large, half decimated weapons vault, his eyes focused solely on an item in his hand, small and glowing.

Curiously, Loki moved closer, peering down at his lovers hand, trying to see what he- oh. *Oh.*

The mind gem.
The only remaining infinity gem that Thanos had in his possession, sitting harmlessly in Anthony’s palm, pulsating with warm blue light.

Loki felt a confusing mix of nausea and pride for his lover at the sight of the gem that had taken from Loki his mind and spirit.

Looking back, Loki could picture the exact moment Anthony had slipped the gem from around Thanos’s neck; a moment just after Anthony’s eyes had flitted from Loki’s body to Thanos, to the chain around the Mad-Titan’s neck, a snapshot replaying throughout Loki’s mind as he witnessed the split second decision on Anthony’s part just before he charged at the Titan with a snarl of anguish.

One single, snap decision.

That was all it took.

A snap.

And the war was won.

*Ring around the rosy*....

*Pocket full of posies*....

*Ashes...ashes*....

*We all fall down!*

Loki turned his eyes back to Anthony’s face and froze, felt a shiver of fear race up his spine, rattle him to his very soul, at the look upon his face.

There was no humanity left.
Anguish warred with fury, settled on cold determination and then something Loki would almost describe as mania; an expression of broken, unadulterated glee as Anthony’s lips widened into a crude grin with far too many teeth just before the laughter began, long and loud, edged with insanity, as the mind gem settled into its place in the gauntlet.

He heard Thanos’s cry of fury as if through a dream, faraway and echoing, but could not bring himself to look away from his lover as the colors of the gems raced through Anthony’s veins, settled brightly into his eyes flickering and bright, extremis soon chasing after it to heal the damage caused by the raw power coursing through his body, lighting him up so wholly Loki could actually feel the power like lightning crackling through the air, heat radiating scorchingly off his lovers body; a storm, ready and waiting to destroy.

Loki finally drew himself out of his daze, stepped backwards out of the doorway just as Thanos crashed through it, double edged sword grasped tightly in his hand, a wild look in his eyes as they sought out and finally landed on Anthony. Anthony met his gaze unflinchingly, smile only widening; fearless, as only one with nothing left to lose could be.

It was exactly what Loki had wanted, had planned for, but it didn’t stop his heart from aching at the sight of his lover in so much pain he was insane with it.

Time seemed to freeze, if only for a moment; a split second where neither opponent moved, only watched, catalogued and learned, took upon themselves their own weaknesses against their opponents strengths; as they readied themselves for a battle they may very well lose, as they accepted their independent deaths and turned their fury, their passion, into their greatest weapons.

And then they lunged.

Ring around the rosy….

Pocket full of posies….

Ashes...ashes….

We all fall down!
Loki could barely see them, their movements as quick and precise as they were; it was as if he were watching them dance; a man made storm, constantly moving, crashing together in a clash of metal and fire, sparks twinkling in the air around them, distant explosions rumbling the ground like thunder, hot flashes of light, blinding and scorching, following their every move.

Loki finched, turned his gaze towards the crumbling wall at his back, watching as every other fell around them, as another explosion rocked the ground and sent the insane inventor and the Mad-Titan stumbling apart, leaving them encircled in rubble and dust.

Thanos turned his gaze outward as Anthony struggled to his feet, surveyed his broken ship and his slaughtered army with a look of acceptance and resignation, and bowed his head upon the flaming ruins of his legacy.

“You won’t win.”

Anthony’s voice went out, sharp and clear and so brutally honest, Thanos flinched with it.

“No,” Thanos agreed quietly.

Loki listened with bated breath, eyes sharp on the pair in their accidental arena, silent only for the warped vocals as the song began again.

*Ring around the rosy*....

“But neither will you, Stark. I am and will always be ...inevitable.”

*Pocket full of posies*....

In a move faster than even Loki had been prepared for, in a split second, in a heartbeat, Thanos’s blade was through Anthony’s chest and out the other side.

*Ashes...ashes*....
One single, snap decision.

That was all it took.

A snap.

And the war was lost.

*We all fall down!*

Silence reigned.

Ashes fell to the ground around them like snow, soft and gentle and almost mesmerizing.

Thanos dragged his blade from Anthony’s body, let him fall to the ground with a sickening thud, blood pooling thickly around him.

And Loki couldn’t breathe. Couldn’t move. He could only watch, wide eyed and confused, panic and fear clouding his judgement, his heart thudding painfully in his chest, but even that wasn’t enough to distract him from the pain of it shattering.

And then the anger started to build, a dam about to burst as he gathered his magic around him, ready to reveal himself and absolutely *demolish*, lips already curled into a snarl as he watched Thanos lean down to pluck the gauntlet away from Anthony’s lifeless body, head tilted to better head whatever the Mad-Titan was about to say only to be interrupted by….

Laughter.

Soft, wet, hacking laughter.

And Anthony’s shoulders shook with it even as Thanos jolted backwards as if he’d been shocked, and Loki could only stare in confusion, his emotions so wildly shifting that he wasn’t even sure what he was feeling.
The laughter faded away as Anthony slowly levered himself to his feet, extremis absolutely *blazing* in his chest as the blood slowly stopped flowing.

“And I,” Anthony said with a bloody grin, “am…..” Anthony brought his glowing, gauntleted hand into view as the colors once again raced through his veins.

“Ironman.”

A moment.

A split second.

A heartbeat.

A snap.

And Thanos was crumbling away into dust.

And slowly, ever so slowly, Anthony sunk to his knees and began to sob, yanking the gauntlet off and tossing it away, entire body shaking with it, fingers fumbling with his ring until he had it off and clutched desperately in one hand, the other scrabbling at the ground, trying to get ahold of something *solid*.

That was what it took to get Loki’s mind back to the present and then he was moving, letting his spells fall away completely to reveal himself, falling gracelessly to his knees next to his lover and holding him close.

Anthony startled violently, head snapping up to look at Loki and even when Anthony saw him, his tears did not abate. But his fingers moved to clutch at Loki’s instead.

Loki soothed his lover softly, quietly, held him as he calmed and together, they surveyed the destruction they had reigned.
Ring around the rosy….

Pocket full of posies….

Ashes...ashes….

We all fall down!

They would not be okay, Loki thought. Not for a while, at least.

The wounds were still far too raw for that.

Tomorrow, they would need to tell the Avengers of their actions. Anthony would have to explain everything; their secret meetings, their relationship, their engagement, their plans. And Loki would have to return to Asgard and explain much the same.

Thanos’s death brought about the end of one path, and the beginning of many others.

There were many, many hoops and trials they would have to go through before they could find their peace together again, and with an eternity together, there would be much time before they could finally rest.

But someday, the sun would shine upon them once more, and they would bask in the warmth it brought.

End Notes

Ugh. The ending. I know. I played with this for so long, but I couldn’t ever fix the ending to get it exactly how I wanted it, so I just posted what I had.

Maybe I’ll go back and fix it one day, who knows.
I hoped you all enjoyed and thank you for reading!

PS: This may inspire a longer, full length fic in the future. I’m not sure. I have a vague idea in my head, it might become a full idea in the future. Who knows?

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!