Dolofóni

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Summary

Tony Stark had a rough childhood. One day, after a harsh beating, he runs away. He becomes apart of a legendary league of assassins and makes a new life for himself. Years later after his parents died he assumes his old life of a Genius, Billionaire, Playboy, Philanthropist. Most of the Avengers don't know of his past until one fateful mission when all hell breaks loose...Rating is for language, off screen rape and torture.

Notes

I am officially caught up, I will be posting a new chapter sometime this weekend or early next week...
Tragic Beginnings

Tony was sitting in his workplace in the lab he shares with his father. He was currently working on his first robot with an AI system. He has plans for it to help him with his work, because who wouldn't want a second pair of hands standing by to help. He attaches the last bit of wire to the circuit board and types in a line of code into the computer and voila, his robot is finished! He presses the on button and waits patiently for the robot to turn on. The robot springs to life.

"Can you hear me?" he asked the robot "If you can nod your head." he mimics the motion with his own head so that the robot could learn. The robot nods his head.

"It works! Now what should I call you?" the robot was in the shape of a dog, so potential dog names ran through his head. Spot, Max, Buddy? No these were too obvious, why his father given him a dog when he was younger, it would have helped him a lot in his naming process.

The perfect name suddenly came into his mind, "What about Boba? Do you like Boba?" The robot nodded his head enthusiastically.

"Boba it is then. Now for your first command, Boba fetch me the screw driver on the workbench over in the corner." The robot obeyed. "Good job, Boba!" Tony Stark, at the age of 13 had just successfully created the world's first AI system.

As Tony continued to train his new robot/puppy, his father barged thru the doors.

"What are you doing with this pile of scrap metal!" he inquired of tony in a slightly slurred voice.

"This is Boba, he's an AI I designed to help me in the lab. Do you want me to show you what he can do?" Tony asked, desperately seeking the approval that he both craved and deserved.

"No!" his father shouted, while he staggered up to Tony and lifted him by his shirt collar. "How many times have I told you to stop playing with your stupid robots and help me build the technology to help find Captain America! You are an miserable excuse for a Stark! Steven Rogers was ten times more of a man then you'll ever be! Its time you stop playing with baby toys and grow up!" With this Howard punched Tony, who sagged to the ground, and grabbed the robot from the table and picked up a hammer, after years of experience Tony knew what was going to happen next and the thought of it brought tears to his eyes. Howard brought the robot to Tony and tossed it next to him, he then began smashing the hell out of the precious creation, and in his blind fury landed a few blows to Tony who was sitting inches away from the mess too shocked to move.

With each smack of the hammer, Tony felt his heart break into a million pieces, pain from the blows to his body clouded his mind causing his eyes to water.

"Are you crying?" his father demanded in a cruel voice. "Starks don't cry! Do you need me to remind you again?"

Tony was too shocked to say anything, so his father grabbed pieces of the sharp metal and put it in his hands, he then began landing punch after punch on Tony's abused body. Tony vaguely felt pieces of rubble embed themselves into his skin and felt the warm stickiness of his blood cover his skin, he couldn't retaliate because he knew that his beating would only worsen if he dare punch protect himself. His vision was darkening yet his father wouldn't give up, he kept beating his brilliant son long after Tony went limp. When he finished Tony was an unrecognizable mass of bloody and bruised skin. He called up to Jarvis to gather his disobedient son and went back to his
bottle of whiskey.

"What has the bastard done to you this time?" He nearly shouted at the sight of his young ward covered in metal and blood. Jarvis carefully checked for broken limbs and found that the young Stark's left arm and leg were horrendously broken along with several ribs, he would have to call Dr. Misto, the family doctor, to set the Jones later. Jarvis gently cradled, minding not to jar any of the breaks, the boy, he had loved and cared for, and carried him up to his room. Jarvis then gathered some bandages and a washcloth to start the long process of tending to the boys wounds.

Dr. Misto, who had worked with the starks for years and knew that the story's about the boys accidents were false, after all how many times can a boy call down the stairs, but couldn't do anything about it cause who would believe his word over that of Howard Stark, came by in the morning to inspect the boys various injuries. Tony was still unconscious from the previous nights fight, and was running a fever.

"What happened this time?" he asked the vigilant butler.

"Well, the official story is that Tony fell down the stairs and landed in a pile of scrap metal..."

"And what really happened?" the doctor asked interrupting Jarvis.

"Howard attacked him when he found Tony with a robot dog. Howard smashed it to pieces, hit Tony with the hammer a few times, then considered to beat Tony with the broken pieces of metal for well over an hour. I tended to his wounds as best as I could, but I know he will need proper medical care." Jarvis informed Dr. Misto, knowing full well that he knew what was going on in the house.

The doctor went over to inspect Tony's obviously broken arm and leg, "Well, these will definitely need to be surgically set." He said after a thorough inspection, he then went to peel the bandages off of the various lacerations, "A nasty infection is also setting in on some of these wounds," He then went to the nasty wound on Tony's forehead, "He doesn't have a fractured skull, but if the wound was an inch over it would have caused some very serious damaged. He probably has a severe concussion," he pulled out a pen light and inspected Tony's pupils, confirming the concussion. "He needs to be in the hospital, while I inform my team on who the patient is and get prepared to move him, can you inform his bastard of a father that Tony needs to hospitalized."

Jarvis went to inform Howard and Maria, but as he left the room he heard the mutter "What kind of monster does this to a 13 year old boy?". When Jarvis got to his masters bedroom, Howard was probably still asleep despite the late hour of the morning, he knocked on the door.

"Come in." A gruff voice answered. Jarvis gathered up all of his strength and put on a stoic face before entering the bastards room.

"Sir, I regret to inform you but your son, Tony, requires hospitalization. Would you want him to be admitted under his real name or one of his aliases?"

"What do you think? That boy is such a baby, he needs to learn to suck it up. Inform me of the exact moment when he is able to get back to work. Steve Rogers is lying in a hole in the godforsaken arctic, we can't wait around for a lazy insolent boy. Now where is that maid with my coffee?"

"I shall go see, sir." Jarvis said walking out of the room. On his way back to Tony's room he spotted the maid, he went over to the maid opened up the lid to the coffee pot and spit it in. The maid looked up with a smile on her face.
"Have a bad day?" she inquired, already knowing the answer.

"Have you seen what he's did to Tony. He nearly killed him!" he informed her. She then took the pot and spat into it too. She walked away with anger brewing in the pit of her stomach. Everyone who worked in the house knew of the tragic story of Tony Stark. He was starved, beaten, neglected, and hated because he wasn't Captain America. His mother was no better, because half of the time she was off in her own little world, the other half she was as drunk as Howard. The various house staff doted on Tony, giving him candy and various trinkets that could easily be hidden away, as Howard and Maria never gave him anything, not even a stuffed animal to scare away the childhood terrors Tony had suffered from.

Jarvis finally reached Tony's room where Dr. Misto was making some final preparations before He and Jarvis would be taking him to the hospital.

"Howard, informed me that we will be using the Antonio Russo alias when he is admitted." Jarvis informed Dr. Misto. "I have to inform the house staff about what is happening with Tony. Is everything ready to transport him?"

"Yes I shall be ready shortly. Go inform them, I'm sure they are all worried. Howards really done a number to him this time. He seems to be getting more aggressive with each beating, I'm afraid that one day I'll come and find that I was too late." Dr. Misto announced remorsefully.

"I'm scared for his safety too" Jarvis said as he took Tony's hand and gently held it.

"I'll be back to help carry him in a few minutes." he said as he left the room casting a final look to his ward. He then set about his task of gathering the house staff in the kitchen.

Once everyone has gathered he starting the difficult job of informing them of Tony's condition.

"As many of you may know last night Mr. Stark attacked Tony in a drunken rage." At this a few of the maids gasped.

"Tony received multiple lacerations and Howard managed to crush both his arm and leg, along with a few ribs. Tony also received a severe blow to the head and has the onsets of an infection." he informed them on the verge of tears, He wasn't the only one to tear up as many of maids were patting their eyes with handkerchiefs, "Dr. Misto and I will be taking Tony to the hospital for medical attention, all we ask for are your prayers and for someone to take over my duties as I will be caring for Tony. I must take my leave now." He told them as he made to leave the room. By the looks on their faces the Starks, Howard and Maria that is, would be receiving a lot of spit in their meals over the next few days. There was not a dry eye in the room as he departed from them.

Jarvis made his way up to Tony's room again to find ready to take Tony to the hospital. Jarvis went over to the gathered Tony in his arms and gently carried him down the stairs. Jarvis laid Tony in the back seat and they left for the hospital. The ride was uncomfortably silent as both the doctor and the butler were in their own minds trying to rationalize why someone would do this to their child and neither came up with suitable answers.

Once they got to the hospital the nurses and fellow doctors went into a fury trying to treat Tony's various injuries. Tony was taken into surgery to set his bones and to take care of the various internal injuries that Tony had received. Jarvis was forced to wait anxiously in the waiting room, for what seemed like hours. Finally a doctor came into the room.

"Are you Antonio Russo's father?" he asked as he went up to Jarvis.
"No, I am his caretaker, his parents were unable to come."

"Oh," he said shocked, what kind of parents are busy when their son is lying in the hospital, "well I'm Dr. Michaels, the surgeon in charge of Antonio's surgery." Antonio is out of surgery and is expected to make a full recovery. We are putting him in the ICU due to the complexity of his injuries, usually we don't allow non-relatives into the ICU, but I think we can make an exception for you since no one else is here for him. If you would follow me." Dr. Michaels said as he guided a worried Jarvis out of the room.

"Well Antonio is a very lucky boy. His injuries could have killed him but it looks like you took care of him properly. His leg and arm required metal plates to be fused to the bone to allow him full use of his limbs. They should recover quite nicely if he doesn't use them for 2 months. He did puncture a lung but we fixed it up on the nick of time. He also had some minor internal bleeding. His most threatening injury is the blow to the head he received, it caused a severe concussion, which resulted in a cerebral edema, in other words his brain was swelling. We caught it in time, if you would of brought him in a few hours later we would have had to surgically decompress his brain, but right now he is on a diuretic which should return his brain back to normal within the next few days. He is in a coma currently, but he should come out of it by the end of the week. Well here is his room, I should be around shortly to check up on him." Dr. Michaels explained as they travelled thru the hospital.

As soon as Jarvis saw Tony lying on the bed looking fragile and hooked up to various machines and tubes he collapsed onto the nearest chair and began crying silently. He had to get Tony away from his father before the bastard killed him. Jarvis didn't plan on leaving his vigil, except to inform the house staff on Tony's condition, until Tony was well again.
Moth to the Flame

The next week was the worst weeks of Jarvis' life. It was pure agony watching Tony just lying there unresponsive. The brain swelling was going down and Tony was slowing regaining more consciousness everyday, but He was also getting sicker.

Despite the efforts of the medical team at the hospital an infection had set in on several of the nastier wounds. The skin around the wounds were angry and inflamed and there was nothing the doctors could do except add a round of heavy antibiotics to Tony's regime of drugs. They would just have to sit and wait as Tony's body temperature soared into the hundreds.

Jarvis knew that Tony would somehow find the strength to pull through but it was still heart wrenching to see the doctors frantically rush to reduce the boy you thought of as a son's fever. After a few days they eventually got the fever under control and the infection started to dissipate. But as each day passed the realisation that Tony needed to get out of the reach of his father's fists became more grounded in reality. Jarvis would save the boy's life, even if it was the last thing he would do.

"...Tony..."

As Tony gradually returned from the sticky black haze of unconsciousness he could hear someone calling to him.

"Tony...hear...me?"

Tony registered that the voice sounded familiar. As he became more conscious he realized that he was in the worst pain of his life, and as he tried to answer the voice, a pain suddenly came to his throat. He opened his eyes and immediately recognized the figure sitting next to him, Jarvis.

"Tony, thank God you're awake! Don't try to talk you have a respirator in, which should be removed as soon as the nurse comes by. You're at St. Joseph's hospital, ok? You've been in a coma for the past week, you also have a broken leg and arm. Do you remember why you're here?" Jarvis asked his slightly bewildered ward.

Tony thought for a bit remembering Boba his AI, remember the pure joy of creating him, then he remembered his father barging into the room, He could feel tears come to his eyes, He also remembered bits and pieces of his father beating him. What had he done to him?

Jarvis could see tears of sorrow, confusion and hate spring up in Tony's eyes. He knew that he remembered everything and scorned the boy's remarkable memory for not taking away those moments of severe pain away from him. He gently caressed the shoulder of the boy's uninjured arm and wiped the tears streaming down his face away. Just then the nurse came in to extract the respirator.

"Do you need a moment?" she pondered when she saw the touching scene.

" No, he was just overwhelmed by his situation." Jarvis sadly replied. They weren't enough moments in the history of time to take away the overwhelming barrage of feelings Tony was experiencing.

The nurse went over and started the process of removing the respirator. "Now this will hurt a bit."
she warned Tony, and Tony visibly braced himself. She pulled out the respirator as gently as she could, not wanting to give the child another ounce of pain. "Now don't try to talk for at least 15 minutes, ok? " Tony nodded in response. The nurse then went over to the nightstand and picked up a glass of water. She then helped Tony drink it. "Is that better?" she asked kindly, her eyes filled with compassion. Tony nodded with a faint smile gracing his chapped lips. "Good, now I'll be back in fifteen minutes to give you your meds." She told him pressing something into his uninjured hand and left the room.

Jarvis peeked at the thing in Tony's hand and saw the recognisable wrapper of a Hershey's candy bar. He took the candy unwrapped it and placed a piece into Tony's mouth. Tony smiled as he tasted the distinct flavor of the chocolate melt in his mouth, he rarely received candy of any sort from his parents, the only candy he got was from when the various house staff would sneak him some after he had a bad day or when he was sick.

"So a few of the maids have come by to visit and they left a few things." Jarvis informed Tony who then saw the cluster of candy and cards littering the window sill. "You're going to be in here for the next week due to your head wound and broken limbs," Tony then looked down to see both his left arm and leg in casts.

"You will also be under observation due to the coma you were in and because you had a nasty infection a few days ago. He almost did it this time Tony. I almost lost you" Jarvis told him with tears streaming down his face. Tony reached over and touched Jarvis's shaking hand for support. Both Tony and Jarvis were now in the midst of an emotional breakdown as Tony released the floodgates on all the feelings he had bottled up in an effort of pleasing his father.

Just then the nurse came in to get another heart wrenching scene. She knew that there was more to the story of Tony falling down the stairs, than they had told her. In fact nearly everyone knew, no one could sustain that many injuries from an instance of clumsiness. No one questioned the butler though because they knew he cared immensely for his ward, and he never left the boy's side through it all, even when the boys parents never showed up. The nurse measured out the doses of medication while the man and boy calmed down. She helped the boy sit up and spooned the meds mixed with applesauce into his mouth. When she was finished she told the boy, "You can talk now, but I wouldn't overuse your voice, wouldn't want you to lose your voice. Would you like some Ice Cream? We have chocolate, vanilla and mint." she told Tony, who politely responded "Yes, chocolate, please.", in a slightly hoarse voice. The kind nurse left to get the treat.

"Why is she so nice to me?" Tony asked Jarvis after the nurse left. He was completely bewildered, no stranger was this openly kind to him unless they wanted something from him.

"Well she seems to care for you. You probably remind her of her child, and she wants to make you feel better." Jarvis, whose eyes were suddenly sad, told him in terms the genius could understand. Jarvis knew the true answer though, Tony was a beacon of energy that drew everyone close to him, even complete strangers. No one could meet Tony Stark, or in this case Antonio Russo, and not feel for the boy. Yet he grew up not understanding the compassion and love that every child should receive.

"Well here you go, love." the nurse said as she handed him the ice cream and spoon. "Now get better soon dear, all the nurses on this floor are praying for your swift recovery." She told him as she ruffled his hair and returned to her duties. She didn't know why she felt this way towards the boy, this wasn't the first instance of abuse she had come across during her years as an ICU nurse. In fact all the nurses felt sorry for the boy even the strictest of them. It was like the boy was drawing them close like a moth to the flame.
Tony slowly got better. The doctors were right, he was good enough to go home by the end of the week, even though he dreaded the thought of returning home. During that week in the hospital, while eating the treats his nurses and house staff had provided for him, he and Jarvis came up with a plan for him to be out of reach of his father's hands. Tony, when he able to use his leg fully again, was going to run away.

Tony had the next few months to prepare himself for a life without his parents presence and he would finally be able to be free. With the help of Jarvis, Tony would slowly build a life for himself as Antonio Russo, one of the many aliases that he used in situations in which he couldn't be Tony Stark. It would be fool proof as Tony was the smartest kid in America, if not the world, and Jarvis had his resources from the time before he may Howard in Vietnam.

The ride back to the Stark mansion was filled with dread, as tony knew his father would put him straight to work as soon as he stepped, or rather hobbled, into the foyer of the devastating house. Tony kept reminding himself that he only had two more months and then he would be free.

When he hobbled through the front door, with Jarvis by his side to steady him If he stumbled, He saw the entirety of the house there to greet him. They all gave him words of encouragement and hugs, and for the first time in his life he felt truly loved and wanted, he would truly miss each and every one of them when he left. He only had a few moments of feeling this way before his father called down from the stairs.

" Why are lagging around boy? Because of your lazy patheticness we had to delay several projects for 2 weeks! And what are you all doing standing around" he yelled glaring at the house staff "I'm not paying for your lollygagging. If you don't start working this instant I will dock your pay for a week! Now, Tony, get back in the lab this instant!" and just like that the feeling of contentedness he was feeling moments before disappeared so suddenly he wasn't sure he had felt it at all.

The next two months couldn't have gone by faster. He was working on several projects for his father, while building a new life for himself in the wee hours in the morning. He was overworked and exhausted but he knew his efforts would pay off in the end. The day was finally here. Tony and Jarvis were going to a hotel in Boston under the guise of looking at MIT, Tony had gotten his GED the year before, while in the hotel tony would make his clean getaway. All he had left to do was say goodbye to the house staff he had considered family and leave. As he stepped through the foyer, still covered in tears from his farewell, he took one last look at the house he grew up in and left with Jarvis trailing behind him.
Slipping Away

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The drive to Boston was silent for both occupants in the car knew that their time together was coming to an end. Neither wished to think about the fact that in a few short hours the pair would have to go their separate ways.

Tony knew he had no choice but to run away, but he didn't want to say goodbye to the man who he had known since birth. Tony didn't know what he would do without the ever present butler by his side. Jarvis was more of a father to him than his own father. Whenever he was sick or injured, Jarvis was there to comfort him. It would be strange to be alone in an unknown city.

The 4 hour journey was over before they knew it and soon they were checking into their hotel. They planned to have supper one last time before they parted and they went to a nearby Chinese restaurant, Because both Tony and Jarvis found Chinese food to be comforting. After they ate their food, they each read their fortune cookies to each other.

"An unexpected journey lies in your future." Tony read with a smile due to how accurate the fortune was.

"You will overcome difficult times." Jarvis read to Tony. Jarvis took the saying to heart because he knew that the next few weeks without Tony would be hell.

"Come on Tony, let's go back to the hotel, I have a something to give to you before we go our separate ways." Jarvis said with a mischievous going in his eye.

When they got back to the hotel and neared their room Jarvis told Tony to cover his eyes. Tony did as instructed and began to wonder what exactly the surprise Jarvis had intended to give him. Jarvis went into the room to prepare the surprise, all Tony could hear was the unzipping of several bags and the rustling of objects. A few minutes later Jarvis informed Tony that he could open his eyes, and what Tony saw next he almost couldn't believe.

Tony saw lying on the bed before him was the most beautiful set of knives he had ever seen. There were 13 in all different shapes and sizes, each had a beautifully carved mahogany handle with golden designs traveling up and down the blade. They ranged from a small 4 inch blade to a 2 foot short sword.

"Where did you get these?" he asked Jarvis as he reached down to touch one of the blades beautiful wooden handles.

"Well, these have been in my family for a long time, being passed down from father to son, when the boy was deemed old enough to carry on his family name. I will never have a son of my own to pass these knives to so I'm giving them to you, like my father did to me, because for the last 13 years you have been the son I never thought I would have. I realize that though you might be out of your father's grasp, the world is still a dangerous place, and I hope that these knives will protect you better than I ever could. Now we have a few hours before you must depart, would you like me to show you how to handle these knives like an expert?" he asked Tony, who agreed eagerly.

For the next few hours Jarvis taught Tony how to properly stand when holding a knife and how to defend himself. Jarvis also taught Tony how to properly clean and care for each one. Tony was also taught what each knife was for and how to wear them. After Jarvis deemed that Tony had
learned all that he could that night, which was a lot due to Tony being both a genius and a fast learner, he started the process of turning Tony Stark into Antonio Russo.

The process of transformation was simple, all they had to do was lighten Tony's hair, via drugstore hair dye, to a golden brown, instead of the deep chocolate of his natural color, and put in some tinted contact lenses to make his eyes look olive green instead of dark brown. The final touch was a pair of fake glasses. Tony could hardly recognize his reflection in the mirror. The lighter hair had brought out his cheekbones and made his complexion flow, unlike how the dark brown made him look pale. The colored contacts combined with his natural color made his eyes seem an unnaturally golden green color. Any person off the street would not be able to recognize him as the genius son of Howard Stark.

Tony was ready to leave the life of billionaire genius behind. He and Jarvis had landed him a tiny apartment in South Boston, no one would think of him being there, and established him a reputation as a computer fixer/hacker. Well it wasn't a true job, he was only 13, but once he had a few key customers, who had connections to Jarvis, who for being a butler for the last 15 years had a lot of friends in high places, he would soon have jobs coming in.

"You know I'm going to miss you, Jarvis." Tony's voice was heavy with unfamiliar emotion. He had his bags packed, a couple of knives secured on his body, he doubted if he would ever feel secure without them, and was ready to leave.

"Here, I wrote down my contact information. I want you to call me every week, and write me too. I will try to come here as often as I can. Now come here, boy, give me one last hug." Jarvis said with tears threatening to call down his face. Tony and Jarvis embraced for a final time, neither knowing when they would see each other again.

"Oh Tony, never let anyone say you are pathetic or weak for choosing this path" Jarvis whispered into Tony's hair, "you have strength beyond measure. I will miss you so much, my dear boy." they stood embraced for a few long moments, then Tony broke the embrace, gathered his two duffel bags and coat, and walked to the door. As Tony opened the door he cast one last look at the butler, whom he had considered a father, and left.

Both Tony and Jarvis thought they would see each other again soon, but little did they know that this would be the last time they ever saw one another.

As Tony walked down the street, looking every bit a runaway, he felt an unfamiliar presence trailing him. Every few blocks he would look behind him and see the same person lurking in the shadows. Oh how he wished that he would have allowed Jarvis to drop him off at his new place of residence, but he had wanted to spare the butler from incriminating himself further.

A mile later he felt the man creep even closer, and he prepared himself for the inevitable attack. A few moments later, just as Tony predicted, the attacker threw himself at Tony. Tony having realized he was about to be attacked threw his duffels down and drew two of the knives he has secured to his waist shortly after Jarvis instructed him how to use the weapons. The attacker was wearing a mask and seemed surprised at the sight of the knives. After The attacker drew his own knife the two soon launched themselves into the rhythm of the fight.

Tony had to keep reminding himself how to use particular moves, and therefore wasn't paying close attention to his attacker was soon overwhelmed. Sure he had the element of surprise but he also lacked the experience the other knife wielder had. With effort he blocked most of the blows from his attacker, the few he missed left nasty marks on his skin, but he failed to realize that he was being walked into a corner. The attacker soon had Tony in the door he wanted him to be in and
knocked the butt of his knife into Tony's temple. Tony crumpled to the ground as his world
darkened and he fell into the peaceful waves of oblivion.

He had been following Tony Stark and his butler all day. He had been given orders to attack the
boy by his superiors, who had been paid by a mysterious man named Obadiah Stane. Tony Stark
was the youngest man he had been ordered to hit, and he couldn't fathom the reasons behind the
hit.

He kept a close eye on the two's hotel room waiting for the perfect opportunity to attack. He had
been waiting for hours and thinking that they had both retired for bed, he was about to give up for
the night, when he saw the boy leave the room. Tony was carrying two duffel bags and looked
suspicious walking down the street. It was 11pm, who would let a 13 year old billionaire walk the
streets of south Boston alone at this time of night. He couldn't help but think that they was more to
the story than he was told.

He couldn't help but notice that Tony Stark was more perceptive than most boys his age, he had
picked up on being followed almost immediately but why hadn't Tony call for help? He continued
to follow Tony for another mile, then he decided to attack.

Almost immediately the boy dropped his bags and drew two knives from under his shirt. Knives?!
His mind screamed, What kind of 13 year old is armed with knives?! He drew his own knife and
the two were soon in the throes of battle. The boy was peculiar, never once did he fear show in his
eyes, even though he was still a novice at the art of knife fighting.

The boy held an aura of power and determination around him. Although he was short and
drastically underweight, in the midst of the fight he held himself as a man twice his size. The
assassin knew that he could not kill the boy, instead he wanted to take him back to his den. He
could scarcely imagine how the boy would fight once he became a master at his art. All he knew
was that the boy would be a formidable force.

Oh yeah back to the fight. The assassin pulled out of his thoughts and realised that the boy was
tiring. He took the opportunity to drive the boy into a corner. He could sense that Tony knew what
was happening yet never once did he see fear in his eyes. The assassin took the opportunity to
knock the teenager out.

Once the boy was lying on the ground, he went through his bags. Inside he found several pairs of
clothes, books, and more knives, how many knives did this guy have? He questioned himself. He
also found a thick wad of cash and a brilliantly made take id. The boy was running away! He
thought to himself. He quickly called up his partner to bring the car. Once he settled the boy, who
was still out cold, in the backseat, he informed his partner on his plan to make the boy an assassin.

Once Tony Stark woke up he would have the choice between joining the order or death. By joining
the order he would face a couple years of hell in which his identity would be wiped clean and he
would be trained by the best assassins alive to hone the skills he already possessed, but by dying he
would be spared any more pain. The assassin secretly hoped the boy would choose the order.

Chapter End Notes

I have decided to move the original time line up about sixteen years, so instead of
Tony being born in 1970, he is born in 1986. The rest of the characters, except Pepper Potts will be their original ages. I decided to do this because I want to play with the idea of Tony being like the avengers little brother. I also did this because of some technology that will come through in the upcoming chapters.
Tony could feel himself returning to consciousness, which was strange because he thought that he was done for when he saw the knife come up to his face. He could hear soft murmurings around him and was covered by something warm and fuzzy, which his concussion addled brain made out to be a blanket. He cautiously opened his eyes to find himself in a strange room, lying in a bed covered in furs, and surrounded by strangers donning animalistic masks. He felt a primitive urge to panic, but he didn't act out on it.

"I think our guest has awakened." a man wearing a mask shaped like a hawk, informed the rest of the group.

"Tony Stark, do not panic. We do not intend you harm." A woman, with long honey colored curls and wearing a mask resembling a stag, gently told Tony. The words had an opposite effect on Tony who was now starting to panic.

"How do you know my name? How did I get here? What do you want with me?" he asked nervously with his mind running wild with possible scenarios of how he ended up in the bed.

"Shhh...Tony, we will answer your questions in time. We know your name because a man named Obadiah Stane hired us to kill you" Another woman with short tousled red hair wearing a mask of a raven informed the boy. Tony only grew more panicked by them mentioning Obadiah. The man was his father's closest friend, why in the world did he want Tony dead? Tony knew that his father despised him, but he never would have guessed Obadiah did too.

"Why are you telling me this?" he inquired feeling every bit the 13 year old that he was. "Well we sent one of our guys after you to complete the hit, but when he attacked you, You showed great promise. He brought you here with the intention of training you." A man with a strong voice wearing the mask of a lion informed him.

"You want me to be an assassin?" Tony asked, his voice filled with confusion. "How can I be an assassin when I can't even fight off my father during one of his drunken rages?"

"We will train you. We are the Order of Dolofóni. We were all once in a place similar to where you are now, broken and weak. But we all share another trait, and that is fearlessness. You were facing one of our best, yet you showed no fear even though you knew you were greatly outmatched in skill. We believe that with proper training, you could be one of the best assassins in our order. The question is do you believe this?" A man with long golden hair wearing a mask of an eagle told him. Tony sat back and pondered the information that was just given to him.

"What will be involved with the training?" he asked the occupants of the room.

"Your identity of Tony Stark will be stripped from you. You must be broken before you can be made. The next three years of your life will be filled with pain, exhaustion, and grief. You will not
be allowed contact with the outside world until you are trained. But once you pass our tests of endurance you will be greeted with wonders you cannot imagine. So now you have a choice, will you join us? Or do you accept death?" A woman, with pale blonde hair wearing a mask of a wolf, asked him. Tony weighed his options for a moment. He knew he only had one choice.

"I choose to go through with the training." he said with a loud clear voice.

"Welcome to the Dolofóni." the six occupants of the room said as they took the masks off their faces.

"Now rest, will be the last opportunity you will have to sleep in a warm bed for a while." The woman with pale hair chided him. Her features were kind and gentle and she invoked a feeling of comfort.

"Wait I have one more question. What's with all the masks?" Tony asked before they left the room.

"You will soon find out, cub." the man with golden hair chuckled. And with that they left the room, leaving Tony alone with his thoughts.

Tony couldn't help but wonder the implications of what he had just done.

When Jarvis got back to Stark Mansion, he had to tell Howard and Maria that he had their son had ran away while he was sleeping. Jarvis prided himself on being prepared for most situations, but the Stark's reaction caught him off guard.

When he burst into the dining, they had just settled down for dinner, he told them the brilliant lie on how Tony Stark had disappeared while he was sleeping. He also informed them that he had filed several police reports, which he did because it would have looked suspicious if he had just left Boston without Tony, and that the police hadn't found any trace of their son. He had been expecting some emotion on their faces and at least a few years from Maria, and he also expected the very real possibility of being sacked, not that he would have minded that. But when he got done telling his well fabricated tale, the other two occupants just sat there, paused for a moment, then returned to their meal.

"Always knew the boy didn't have the guts to fulfill his duty as a Stark. He must have got it from your side of the family, Maria." Howard announced gruffly. Maria just sat there paying attention to her wine glass.

"Well aren't you going to do something?" Jarvis asked exasperatedly. Even though he knew Tony was safe, he still had to play the role of distraught caregiver.

"Why should I pay any attention to the coward. He'll come back when he runs out of cash with his tail between his legs." Howard exclaimed.

"And what if he doesn't?" Jarvis asked already knowing the answer.

"Then we tell the press a tragic story and move on with our lives. The boy was never going to amount to anything anyways, always stuck in the lab with his stupid machines." Howard said getting bored with the conversation.

"Don't you have work you should be doing?" he inquired of the butler who had a look of shock on his face.
"No! In fact I quit! If you won't look for your son, I will! I'll be gone before the sun rises." Jarvis yelled finally having had enough of the Starks. The two other occupants showed more shock at his outburst than they had when he told them that their son had ran away. Jarvis suddenly realised that if it wasn't for Tony, he would have quit years ago.

Jarvis stormed out the dining room, and went into his quarters. He started shoving his meager belongings in several bavs, got into his car and left. He was going to Boston. He thought that maybe he could find a decent apartment for Tony and him to live in, as they both were refugees from the Stark family.

Four hours later he was in front of Tony's new apartment. He went up to the door to find that it was locked. He drew out his spare key that he had made for this type of situation. He entered the tiny apartment and found no evidence of Tony. There was nothing to suggest that to suggest that Tony had even stepped foot in the place. Something must of happened to Tony before he could arrive to his new haven. A sickening thought ran through his head, Tony Stark was now truly missing, And he couldn't help but blame himself for the boys disappearance.

"Wake up! Its time for your training to begin!" A man yelled as he burst into the room drawing Tony from his blissful slumber. The man tossed a pile of clothes to Tony and yelled " Get dressed!"

Tony couldn't help but wonder who spat in this guy's coffee? Tony knew that his sarcasm would get him nowhere so he quickly threw on the clothes and followed the man out of the room. Tony soon found himself in a small room with only a chair, a table with various instruments, a bucket of water and a small fire. He was forced to sit in the chair and had his arms tied roughly behind him. Tony was bewildered, didn't he say he would submit to their training? The mysterious man left the room and Tony couldn't help but wonder what had just happened.

Tony wasn't alone for long because soon a figure wearing a dark hood entered the room. "What is your name?" He asked, well Tony figured it was a he since the voice was deep.

" Tony Stark." Tony stated, wondering what he was playing at, since they already knew his name.

"No! What is your name?" He asked, this time slapping Tony in the face.

"Anthony Edward Stark!" Tony stated, he was starting to get annoyed and his face hurt.

"What is your name?" the figure asked for the third time.

"You already know my name is Anthony Edward Stark!" Tony said now thoroughly annoyed. The man in the hood then went over to the table and picked up a small knife. He then went over to Tony and ripped off the short he had on. Tony sat there in the chair bewildered and now minus a shirt. The figure looked at Tony in a thoughtful manner went over a sliced a one inch incision on Tony's shoulder. Tony felt the blade glaze over his skin and yelled "Oi! What you do that for?! I told you my name is Tony Stark!"

" I will leave you in here to contemplate your answer. When I return you will answer my question truthfully." The figure stated then left the room.

Tony sat there utterly confused. Were these people crazy? He was sitting here hungry and thirsty, chained to a chair, all because they wanted to know his name? He sat there for who knows how long and he started to doze off. The guard who was standing outside the door saw the boy asleep
and tossed the bucket of water over him. Tony woke with a start, nearly knocking himself over.

"What you do that for?" he asked.

"No, sleeping!" The guard replied. He then left the room, And the figure from before walked in.

"Not you again!" he grumbled.

"This could all be over if you told me your name. Are you thirsty?" he asked pointing to the bottle of water he brought with him. Tony nodded his head. The men opened the bottle tilted Tony's head and allowed Tony to drink. "Now what is your name? " he asked when Tony finished drinking.

"Tony Stark, like I've told you a million times." Tony replied annoyed that he was going thru this again.

"What is your name?"

"TONY STARK!" He bellowed. The men in the hood went to grab the same knife he had before and sliced a similar incision to Tony's left shoulder, as he had to the right. The man then left the room.

Tony just sat there contemplating what had happened. He could feel his vision getting hazy and wondered what was in the water they gave him. He felt sick to his stomach and promptly vomited all of the water that was given him. Good thing he had nothing else in his stomach. He must have been hallucinating for he could swear he saw letters forming in his fresh vomit. He closed his eyes and let his mind mind drift. The next thing he knew was that he was dripping in water again. The man in the hood the standing over him.

"What is your name?" He asked once more.

"Samael." Tony announced saying the first thing that came into his mind, which also happened to be the letters that had formed in his vomit.

"Welcome, Cub Samael, to the Order of Dolofóni. Now there is one more thing I must do before you are a true initiate." he told Tony, now Samael, as he pulled out a brand from the fire. The man walked over to Tony with the brand in hand, called over a guard to help hold Tony down, and placed the brand directly between the two incisions he had made earlier. Before Tony could truly understand what was happening he felt his chest explode in pain, and sank into blissful unconsciousness.

Chapter End Notes

I'm introducing the Order of DDolofóni, the assassin league Tony becomes a part of, so here's an explanation of the masks.

Eagle (level 6) Takes average person 5* years to graduate to this level from Wolf

Wolf (level 5) 4* years to graduate from Lion

Lion (level 4) 3* years to graduate from Stag

Stag (level 3) 2* years to graduate from Raven
Raven (level 2) 1* year to graduate from Hawk

Hawk (level 1) 3* years to graduate from Cub

Cub (Initiate)

*this is an average number of years. People can be promoted easily for excellence
"Do you think he's the new kid?"

"I've never seen him around before."

"Doesn't he look a little skinny to be one of us?"

"I wonder what his name is?"

Tony woke to strange voices. The first thing he noticed as he opened his was that he had a pounding headache, then he noticed half a dozen boys surrounding him.

"Who are you?" he asked, voice heavy with sleep.

"The better question is, who are you?" The boy who seemed to be the oldest asked.

"I'm Tony. Now who are you guys and what are you doing in my room? Ever heard of personal space?" he replied sarcastically.

"Well actually you're in our room. We woke up and found you lying here on our space bed. And we meant your true name." Another boy with a thick mop of blonde hair informed him. All Tony could think was not this name thing again.

"Fine, my name's Samael. Now who are you?" He asked them again, then he saw looks of shock on their faces. "What did I say something wrong?"

"Do you realize what your name means?" A boy with sleek black hair asked.

"Uh no."

"Samael is the Hebrew Angel of Death. No one has gotten such a strong name in a long time." A boy with bushy red hair said. "The names Aiden, by the way."

"At least you have a normal sounding name." Tony replied groggily.

"My Names Duncan!" A boy with thick brown hair and a stocky build, said a little too eagerly for this time in the morning.

"I'm Maahas, but everyone just calls me Matt." A boy, with curly brown hair and tan skin, informed him.

"I'm Veto." The boy with sleek black hair told him.

"I'm Koen, the leader of our clan." The boy with thick blonde hair told him.

"Clan?" Tony asked.

"Yes, they separate us cubs into different clans. Each clan is made up with 5 to 6 people, we lost one of our group last week, because he got promoted. Now you're here to replace him. Our clan is the bears. Now that we know who each other are, we need to get dressed in order to make it to breakfast on time. Trust me you do not want to be late to breakfast." Koen informed him. "Now this is your chest, inside you'll find a couple uniforms." he said pointing to a large chest on the floor.
Tony got up and went to the chest. Inside lay several brown tunics with bear insignias on them, and a few pairs of Gray pants. A pair of soft soled boots pay next to the chest. As Tony got dressed he noticed that the other boys had healed scars in similar places to the ones given to him, disigniuring his supposed interrogation, and in the center of their chests there was a circular brand of two swords crossed with a bear claw in the middle.

"Wait you guys were branded too?" he asked indicating his own brand that had a bandage over it.

"Yes, Samael, all Cubs go through the same process when they are brought into the order. We all have two scars on our shoulders and a brand that in indicates what clan you go you move up through ranks you gang more scars to prove your position in the order. It's meant to symbolize that you are a member of the Dolofóni for life. Now are you ready, we need to get to breakfast." Koen told Tony. Tony nodded his head to answer.

As the bear clan made it to the dining hall, Tony couldn't help but notice how big the place actually was. Every person was dressed similarly in tunics of various colors, plain pants and soft boots. Tony couldn't help thinking how the outfits reminded him of the uniforms Jedi wear in Star Wars. He couldn't help but wonder if they also received robes when they went outside. When they got to the dining they could see other clans sitting at tables around the room. He followed his clan members to their table and sat with them. He couldn't help but notice that he was being stared at by many of the occupants in the room.

"Why is everyone looking at me?" he nervously asked his clan mates.

"You're new, We don't receive initiates very much, usually one or two a month. Also word about your name must have gotten around." Maahas informed Tony. Then a higher ranked assassin went to the front of the room and told them they got get their food. Tony expected everyone to rush up to wear the food was, but soon realized that everything happened in a specific order, as if there was a predetermined order on when a clan could go up. Soon it was his clans turn and they went up and got their food. He noticed that the food was composed of strange health foods.

"What's up with all the health foods?" He asked Aiden, who was sitting next to him.

"They have us training a lot so these foods help us, I guess. They also want us to eat all of the food on our plates, it might take a while to get used to it because they feed us a lot. But if you don't eat everything you could be forced, trust me you do not want to be forced." Aiden said in between bites of food. Aiden was right there was a lot of food. They all had eggs, fresh fruit, oatmeal, whole grain toast with peanut butter, and nuts. Not to mention a milky substance that tasted a lot like almonds. Tony wasn't used to receiving this much food, as he often had to make his own meals, because his parents often forgot to feed him, but somehow he managed to eat every bite of food. As he was getting up to dump his dishes a man with long dirty blonde hair came up to him.

"Samael, I am Jax, the elders wish to test your skills. Give your tray to one of your clan mates and follow me." Tony handed his tray to Duncan and followed the man.

As he followed Jax, he couldn't help but wonder what kind of tests he was going to have. He followed Jax into a grand room where a panel of people of various ages were sitting.

"Council, I bring before you Samael, previously known as Tony Stark, for you to test his skills." Jax informed them, slightly bowing at the end of the statement. Tony copied him, because he had no idea what exactly was going on. Then one of the council members chuckled.

"Samael, there is no need for such formalities. We have heard much about your intelligence, and of your fight with Marx. We only wish to figure out where exactly to place you in our training program, and to figure out what weapons you have affinities for." A man with a cheerful face and
The rustled black hair said, as though he could read Tony's mind. "and my name is Elder Fane. Just relax and do your best." he said with a glint of humor in his eye. Tony could tell that he was going to like this man, and visibly relaxed.

"I am Elder Atheni, master of strategy. Now, we would like to test your skill at strategy. We have all heard of your renown genius and believe you could make a brilliant strategist. Now follow us." A woman with wise eyes and Gray streaked black curls, spoke. All the elders got up and went over to a table nearby.

The 6 elders split up into three groups and each took a side of the table leaving one side for Tony to stand by himself. On the table was a map and four sets of ships and armies. "We will be playing a game of strategy. The goal of the game is for you to protect your people while we," gesturing to all the elders "attack you. You must survive as long as you can. Let's begin." Atheni said.

Tony, being a genius, could anticipate most of the moves the various Elders made. The game lasted for two hours and ended with Tony having about three quarters of his army and navy left, and one group of elders, the group with Atheni, with about a tenth of theirs left. The other two groups of elders had lost all of their forces. As they looked at the aftermath of the game, they began laughing.

"This is the first time Atheni has been beat in over 20 years." A female elder with gorgeous red hair stated.

"Well Samael, you and I, will get to know each other very well over these next few years. I have never seen such a natural strategist before. I believe that one day you will be better than me!" Atheni stated with a smile on her face.

"Samael, My name is Andreas, master of swords. Now I hear you can wield a knife fairly well, what training have you had?" A man with a serious face and long brown hair asked.

"Well, I've had about one day of training with knives before I left. I've also had a couple months of martial art training, specifically karate and kickboxing, before my father found out and withdrew me from the training." Tony stated.

"Well I will test you to determine your overall skill. Before we go on though I will teach you a few basic moves, blocks, and stances to employ in the fight, okay?" Andreas said as he tossed Tony a good sized wooden training sword. After picking up a few moves they engaged each other in a fight. Tony was surprised at the fact that they ended in a draw, and Tony had even managed to get in a few hits. Andreas was shocked.

"You've never picked up a sword before?" Andreas questioned suspiciously.

"Besides for today, no." Tony answered honestly.

"The last time I ended in a draw during a training session, was to a boy who had years of training in fencing, yet you, a novice, has completed such a task today."

"I'm a fast learner. When I took karate I managed to gain a Orange belt, even though I only had a months worth of training." Tony stated trying not to sound snotty.

The entire group of elders were shocked by what they had just witnessed.

"I'm placing you in a group of advanced cubs for sword training, because it appears that you have an affinity for swordplay." Andreas announced.
"Now don't get greedy Andreas, he still needs to be tasted in the other weapons. Samael, I am Elder Bowen, master of the bow. We will see if this ability of adaptedness applies to all weapons."
The woman with red hair stated, guiding him over to the archery range. "Have you ever handled a bow before?" she asked, he shook his head in reply. She then instructed him how to handle the bows, there were four of them, a recurve, a longbow, a compact bow and a crossbow, and how to shoot. Tony then started on the course, he was supposed to shoot each bow 5 different times at various distances. Tony had managed to shoot multiple bullseyes with each bow, and showed a strong affinity for the recurve bow.

"That was amazing, I have never seen a novice shoot so well!" Bowen stated.

"He has the makings of a sharp shooter! Samael, I am Elder Hawke, Master of the arms. Let's see how you handle the big boys, guns!" a man with a military buzz stated guiding Tony to another shooting range. " I'm assuming you've never handled a gun before, right?" Tony nodded his head in agreement. He was then instructed how to shoot and handle three different types of guns, a pistol, a rifle, and An assault rifle. Like with the previous tests, he performed beyond all of their expectations. Showing a certain affiliation with the assault rifle.

"I think you'll make a perfect sniper, we shall begin our training soon!" Hawke said with a smile, it was obvious that he didn't get many potential snipers.

"Not so fast Hawke. He still needs to be tested in hand to hand combat. Samael, I am Elder Kai, master of the fights. Now you have had training in karate and kickboxing, I want you to use elements of both in this fight. We try to teach the Cubs to incorporated different styles of martial arts in their fights, to confuse our targets." An average sized man of asian descent stated. When they reached the mat, they went to the middle, bowed and began their fight. The fight lasted for 10 minutes and by the end both were exhausted so it ended in a draw.

"You are an amazingly gifted boy, no cub had lasted that long with me before." Kai stated.

"He has the potential to be an amazing assassin." Andreas stated.

"Yes, I believe he could move up in ranks in less than 2 years, instead of the average 3." Atheni stated.

"2 years? I think he could do it in a year and a half!" Fane said with a laugh.

"Ok stop fanboying you guys! Samael, how would you feel if you received training in all of our arts? It will be hard but I believe you could handle it." Bowen stated.

"I believe I can handle it." Tony stated.

"It's settled then, Samael, it appears you will live up to your new name. You will become a true Angel of Death." The only Elder not to introduce herself stated. She had long steel grey hair and an wizened face. " By the way my name is Elder Pandra, Master of Masters. Now how about we get some lunch?" Every head nodded in agreement. "Jax, please escort Samael back to his clan, we wouldn't want our prodigy getting lost." Tony had totally forgotten about the shadowy figure. Once Tony got back to his clan, they were all asking questions about the testing.

"How'd it go?" Aiden asked.

"Well. They said I could be promoted in a year and a half." He informed the group. All 5 of his clan mates looked at him in shock

"What?" Tony asked, mouth full of food.
"It takes a person 3 years to be promoted!" Veto stated.

"What are your affinities?" Maahas asked.
"Strategy, sword fighting, archery, shooting, and hand to hand combat. Elder Hawke said he will be training me as a sniper." he said, the group still looked shocked.

"How did the tests go?" Keon asked.

"Well I beat Elder Atheni at strategy, I ended in a draw with Elders Andreas and Kai, and I managed to get 14 bullseyes with the bows and 6 with the guns." his clan mates looked at him as though he was a god. Tony just scooped more food into his stomach. Then he felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Jax.

"Here's your schedule, Samael. Good luck!" he said handing him a slip of paper, and left. Duncan managed to grab it before Tony could even read it.

"Guys, he's telling the truth. They have him in level 2 and 3 classes. He also had individual lessons with all of the elders." Duncan said with reverence.

"Why didn't you tell us you could fight?" Koen asked.

"I didn't know, in fact today was the first day I handled a sword, gun or bow." Tony said honestly as he finished his food. Then Elder Atheni came up to him.

"Hello, bear clan," all the boys said their greetings, "I've come to collect Samael for his first lesson, I didn't want him getting lost since it is his first day." Tony got up and left 5 awestruck boys in his wake.

Tony came back to the dorm at 11pm that night, collapsed on his bed and fell into a dreamless sleep, exhausted from his first day of lessons.
"Today we received news that Tony Stark has been kidnapped. His parents, Howard and Maria, are giving no comment on how or when the boy genius had gotten kidnapped. There are currently no leads on who may have taken Tony Stark, as no ransom has been declared. All we know is that the Starks have involved both the local police and the F.B.I. with the search for Tony. If you have any information on the disappearance of Tony Stark please call..." The newscaster from Fox news reported.

Jarvis flicked off the news. It had been three months since anyone had heard from Tony, three months of the Starks doing nothing. He knew that the investigation into Tony's "kidnapping" was a rouse, something to explain the disappearance of the famous genius, but he couldn't help but wonder if Tony had really been kidnapped.

Jarvis had been actively searching for Tony for the last three months and he came up with nothing except that Tony had disappeared somehow during the mile and a half walk from the hotel to his apartment. Jarvis only had one option left, he had to call in some favors from some old "buddies" of his.

Jarvis had been involved in MI6 for most of his life, and for the past 15 years he had been undercover as a butler for the Stark family, as a way to get close to some of the weapons Howard Stark had been developing. He was also there to ensure that Howard kept his weapons within the U.S. and U.K. government's.

Jarvis was never meant to become attached to Tony Stark, who wasn't even born when he started his mission, but the inevitable happened and he had nearly blown his cover multiple times in order to get Tony to safety.

Jarvis was actually quite surprised that his cover had never been blown despite the fact that he resided in a house with not one, but two geniuses. Jarvis picked up the phone and dialed the number that he had dialed twice a month for the past 15 years.

"Long time no hear." A crisp British voice answered.

"I need a favor."

"Is this pertaining to the Stark boy."

"Yes, the news is wrong, he hasn't recently gone missing. He's been gone for the past three months."

"And how do you know this?"

"Because I may have planned his initial disappearance." Jarvis said with his voice filled with guilt.

"This is a secure line?" the voice on the other side of the line sounded eager.

"Yes."

"Continue with your side of the story about Stark."

"Well about 2 months before I aided Tony in disappearing, he was brutally beaten by his father. The bastard nearly killed his son and Tony ended up in the hospital for 2 weeks. I started making
plans to get him out of the house, after that. I secured him a safe house and some jobs with some old "friends". The plan was foolproof, but the night when he left for his new life, he disappeared, he never made it to the safe house. For the past three months I have been looking everywhere for Tony, you're my last option."

"This is bad. We can't allow Tony to get into the wrong hands, especially with his brain. I'm sending over a team of agents. Be ready to receive them in a few days. How did you let the situation between Howard and Tony, to escalate so badly?" the voice on the other side said accusingly.

"Howard always abused Tony, but before it only ended in a few bruises and a broken bone or two. This time Tony had internal bleeding and was in a coma for a week. I took him from the Starks before the bearings could worsen. I didn't know Howard had it in him to beat Tony this badly. There's something else I need to tell you."

"What?"

"Shortly before Tony left I noticed something peculiar about him. I had given him a set of knives that had been in my family for generations, and before he left I planned for Tony to learn a few basic things about knife handling. He had never handled knives before, so I didn't expect him to learn much, but he surprised me. He ended up mastering moves that would take an average person years to master, in a matter of hours. John, I think Tony Starks a mutant."

"...What? Why hadn't this shown up earlier?"

"Well I've been reading up on mutants, and it appears that abilities often don't show up until puberty, Tony's thirteen."

"Did you manage to collect any DNA from Tony before he left? Because if you did we can test it for the X-gene."

"Yes I managed to pull out a few of his hairs before he left. I figured they might be important in the days to come."

"Good. Now there's one more thing I need you to do, before the agents arrive. Contact Charles Xavier. He's an ex-patriot who lives in upstate New York. He's a mutant, who has ways of finding other mutants. If Tony Stark is truly a mutant, he might be able to help."

"Thanks." Then Jarvis hung up. Hopefully this Xavier guy would help. He then went about searching for a way to contact him. He picked up the phone and dialed the number listed next to the address he found.

"Hello, Is this Charles Xavier?" he asked trying to hide his English accent, because if this Xavier guy was an ex-pat, he might get suspicious of a strange English man calling him.

"Yes, this is Charles, Edwin."

"Samael! Wake up, you're gonna be late for breakfast!"

"Mmmghh." Tony mumbled before turning over. He was exhausted for the past three months he been training non-stop. He had rose through the ranks of the cubs rather quickly. He was now in classes filled with 3rd years, even though he had been three for three months. Tony then felt the blankets get taken off his body. "Hey!" he yelled, now fully awake.
"Come on if you're late for breakfast we'll all have to scrub the floors." Maahas pleaded.

Tony got up from his bed and went through the process of stretching that he had picked up from months of hard physical work. He then made it over to his chest and got dressed. The months of training and good food had finally allowed him to fill out with lean muscle. He went over to a mirror and rustled his hair, trying to get the sleep out of his hair. The blonde dye that he had used to disguise himself had faded and now his hair was a rich chocolate color, much more vibrant than his hair color before he had dyed it. He figured that the new vibrancy had come from the food that was packed with nutrients. He put on his boots and the bear clan made its way to the breakfast hall.

After breakfast, the clan split up and went their separate ways. Tony headed for his private lesson with Elder Hawke, who going to start his sniper training today.

"Samael, I'm gonna take you outside today to give you a few practice shots, ok? I want to see how well you perform with the sights and the long range shot." Hawke said as soon as he saw Tony come up to him. Tony picked up one of the cases that contained his rifle and gear. And followed Hawke to the range. Once they got there Hawke told tony to put down the gun case and handed him a pair of binoculars.

"Today you will be shooting at the target 50yds directly ahead of us. Today is just a practice because I want you to get used to inputting external factors into your shot, such as the wind and adjusting your shot due to your breath and pulse. Now I will be shooting there first so you can observe. Ok?" Hawke said as he set up his equipment. Hawke then laid on the ground took a few moments to adjust himself and took the shot. It was a perfect bullseye.

"Now I want you to take a preliminary shot, just by aiming." Hawke informed him. Tony set up his gun, spied the target in his sights, aimed and took the shot. To his surprise, the bullet barely grazed the outer edge of the target.

"Don't worry. Nobody hits the target on the first shot. I brought you out here today because I needed to teach you that there's a lot more to shooting than aiming and pulling the trigger. Now would you like to learn how to make that shot?" Hawke said with a smile on his face.

"Yes." Tony replied eagerly. Hawke then showed Tony how to calculate the factors of making a sniper shot. They practiced till the sun went down, only taking a break for lunch, which Hawke had packed. Hawke was right, there was a lot that went into making a good shot, and by the time they left the range, Tony had perfected the 50 yard shot.

"Samael, I'm not sure if you know this, but you are an amazingly gifted young man. Not many would be able to accomplish what you have today. I'm proud that you are my student." Hawke said as he drew Tony into a hug. After the hug Tony came to the realization that he was actually wanted. He finally belonged in a place where people loved and cared for him, even though the majority of them were highly trained assassins. For the first time in his short life he was truly happy.

Jarvis was sitting at a table with 3 MI6 agents, sipping tea, waiting for an important phone call. When the phone finally, They all grabbed for it. Jarvis was the first to have it.

"This is Jarvis."

"We have the results back." An anxious voice answered.

"Wait let me out this on speaker, I'm pretty sure we all need to hear this," he put the phone on speaker, "ok, we're ready." he said as he placed the phone on the table.
"The results from the rest are conclusive, Tony Stark, is a mutant." All the agents were shocked.

Jarvis suddenly felt sick, the boy who he had raised had been officially declared a mutant. Yeah, he had had his suspicions, the boy was too good at the things he did, but that didn't ease his panic.

"His case has just been moved up to high priority, do not let any of the information, that is about to be shared, out." Then the spies got to work.
"Today marks the 6 month anniversary of Tony Starks disappearance. Today is also his 14th birthday. Despite the valiant efforts of both police and F.B.I. task forces, they are no close to finding Tony, than they were 6 months ago. Speculations have been made that Howard and Maria Stark are somehow involved in their only son's disappearance, and today they are hosting a press conference to dispel such rumors. We are now reporting love from said press conference...Mr. Stark, why do you say about the rumors of you being involved in the disappearance of your son?"

the reporter asked bluntly.

"I was not, nor am involved in my son's disappearance." Howard Stark answered emotionally.

"Mrs. Stark, if Tony was being allowed to watch this press conference today, on his birthday, what would you say to him?" the reporter asked the supposedly grieving mother.

"No comment!" Howard yelled

"I would tell him to stay strong, and that I love him." Maria said with the poise of an actor.

"Maria! I said no comment!" Howard yelled at her.

"Mr. Stark, what do you have to say about your weapons being involved in illegal weapons trade and in the hands of our enemies?" the reporter asked trying to break up the domestic dispute.

"No comment!"

Jarvis shut off the news. In the last six months the various national news stations had been displaying coverage over Tony's kidnapping, and Howard and Maria deserved Grammy's for the show they were putting on. Jarvis was quite sick of it. The last 6 months had been hectic for him. He and the other agents were following every lead they had trying to find Tony before his captors could use his powers and skills for ill use. The MI6 agents had teamed up with Charles Xavier multiple times to see if Tony's signature had shown up.

Every mutant had a unique signature and Charles kept telling them that although Tony had a fairly strong signature, that apparently was getting stronger with each visit, he couldn't pinpoint it due to it being shielded somehow. Jarvis didn't like the visits with Charles very much, because frankly the man in the wheelchair have him the creeps. How he had guessed his first name, which he never revealed to anyone, by just hearing his voice on the telephone, Jarvis would never know.

The MI6 agents were also busy investigating the mysterious stark weapons that kept ending up in the enemies hands, due to Jarvis still assigned to the case. Howards starks behavior kept getting more and more risque after Tony disappeared, and neither the American or British governments liked it. Jarvis was overworked, but he would not rest until Tony had shown up, alive and well or otherwise. Jarvis prayed that Tony would show up before his fifteenth birthday, because he didn't know how much more of this madness he could take.

Tony had matured a lot in the nine months that he had been with the Dolofóni. If someone had compared Samael to Tony Stark they would find very little similarities. Sure they both had intelligence and a personality that shined brighter than any star, but Tony Stark had been weak, skinny, emotionless and soft spoken, whereas Samael was confident, strong, as muscular as a 14
Tony had quickly risen through the ranks and was each of his teacher's favorite student. In the time that he had been with the Dolofóni he had mastered sword fighting, archery, and 5 forms of Martial arts. He had picked up four new languages in the time he had been there and now was fluent in 7 including, Italian, German, Russian, French, Mandarin, and Arabic. Sure he still needed to mature a bit, he was also a master prankster, but he was still a boy.

He performed every task given to him and emerged with a smile on his face. Of course there were rumors going around that he wasn't human, due to his fast mastery on difficult tasks, but most dispelled said rumors based on his geniusness. Tony could now shoot any target with a gun within 500 yards and was improving every day. He was even dabbling in blacksmithery because his talent for engineering and making things never left him. Before he was being forced to make crude explosives for his father, but now he was forging beautiful pieces of art that everyone admired, even if you were facing the receiving end of the weapon.

The elders had a bet going around that Tony would receive his hawk mask before he turned 15. Some of the elders were thinking he would be promoted in a few months while others said in a half a year. Tony had also started to collect a group of high level assassins, who all wished that they could be Tony's mentor during his years as a hawk. Tony was excited for today, because not only was today his 14th birthday, it was also the day of a cub tournament. Tony had been honing his skills for weeks in anticipation.

The tournament was set up bracket style, since there was only 32 cubs at anytime. The rewards for the top 4 finalists was a trip to the nearest city for a movie and they went for a minor shopping trip, the winner got $50, 2nd got $25 and 3rd and 4th got $15. It wasn't a lot but it sure was a break from their day to day lives. Out of all the things Tony had left behind the thing he missed most was pizza. So he was planning on winning the tournament.

They were all gathered in the large gym and paired off. There were a few simple rules which were you can use any combination of martial arts moves, and fight fair which means no biting, hair pulling, or kicking between the belt and knees. Each match lasted 3 rounds and you got the other person out If you got the person on the ground for 10 seconds. Then the winner moved on.

Tony's first opponent was Koen, since they were now about the same size, after Tony bulked up. They went to the middle of the mat and bowed to each other. Then the fight began. Tony won the first round by flipping Koen over his shoulder and pinning him to the ground. Koen won the second by tripping Tony, who wasn't watching Koen's feet. Then Tony won the final round by landing a perfect roundhouse kick to Koen's jaw, not hard enough to break it but effective in knocking him down. They got up and shook hands.

"Nice kick." Koen said nursing his jaw.

"Thanks, I'm sorry about the bruise you'll get later." Tony said apologetically.

"No, problem. Make sure you buy me something nice with the prize money." Koen chuckled. Tony knew exactly what he was going to get for each of his clan mates if, no when, he won.

In the second match he faced a tall muscular girl who was a year older than him. He didn't know her very well, but recognized her face from one of his advanced fighting lessons, and he knew her speciality was kicks to the face, due to her long legs. Tony anticipated most of her kicks, ducking just before they landed, but did receive a nasty one to the face that broke his nose and got him out in the second round. Yet he managed to finish strong, despite having difficulty breathing due to the nose, and managed to knock her out with a strong punch to the jaw. She was only out for a few
seconds, and when they shook hands, they did it with no hard feelings. After the fight Tony got his nose set and got ready for the third round.

The third match was surprisingly easier. He faced another girl who was fast on her feet, but didn't have much strength in her punches or kicks. He managed to pin her to the ground, and in the second he knocked her breath out by kneeing her in the stomach. Even though he won the match she did land a pretty good blow to his eye, and he knew tomorrow he would be sporting a black eye along with the broken nose.

He was in the fourth match, the semi-finals. In this round he was facing Duncan, the last of his clan mates left in the tournament. Now Duncan both outweighed him and was about 4 inches taller than Tony, and Tony knew that his ability would work the best for him, because Duncan was a brute and not very fast on his feet. In order to win this match he would have to tire Duncan out before getting him down. In the first round he was moving so fast, delivering quick hand here and there, that Duncan had trouble aiming his punches. Tony managed to deliver a set of 5 successive punches to Duncan's jaw and before Duncan knew what was happening he was on the ground. In the second round Tony used a Muay Thai kick to Duncans chest knocking him to the ground, but not before Duncan gave him a pretty strong punch to the jaw, that was sure to leave a bruise similar to the one he gave Koen earlier.

In the final match Tony was put up against a boy who was even larger than Duncan, but quicker on his feet. Tony knew that he wasn't going to last long with the big guy, but he knew he was going to put up the best fight he could. Tony and the giant circled each other, and then the fight was on. Tony managed to get in a few good punches and kicks, but In the end he didn't see the knee come up to his jaw. The next thing Tony knew was that he was laying on the ground with the ref and medic looking down to him.

"Are you okay, Samael?" the medic asked. Tony nodded, then the medic helped him get up. And guided him to the middle of the gym.

"Here are your champions. In first place, Goliath, from the cougar clan. In second place, Samael, from the bear clan. In third place, Alaihi, from the fox clan. And in fourth place, duncan, also from the bear clan. Since two champions are from the bear clan, the bear clan will receive an extra serving of dessert tonight," this brought a loud cheer from the beaten up clan.

" Now go hit the showers!" Elder Fane announced with a smile. After everyone left the medic guided Tony, who was still jumbled up, to the healers station. It was ruled that Tony had a minor concussion, and Tony was given a few pain pills, and then, when the dizziness subsided, released to go to the showers.

Everyone was tired from the fights, so after dinner each cub went to their dorms and promptly went to bed.

The next day, the four champions, in their glorified bruises, along with Elders Fane and Atheni, arguably the two most easy going elders, went to the nearest city. The champs weren't allowed to know the name of the town, all they knew was that it took about two hours to reach the city. When they reached the city, they went to a pizza place, where they literally stuffed their faces with the greasy manna from heaven, Tony had about 12 pieces himself, then went shopping.

Tony and Duncan combined their cash and bought junk food for their entire clan. Then they went to movies and saw the latest action. Overall it was a fantastic day. But little to both Tony's and the group's knowledge, The events of the day were caught on the cameras of multiple cell phones, for even though Tony had changed a lot in the past 9 months he was still an easily recognized figure.
"This just in... A series of videos caught on the cameras of multiple shoppers in Boulder, Colorado, have surfaced. The videos seemed to have caught the images of four adolescents and two adults going about their days in Boulder, and one of the adolescents appears to be the long lost genius, Tony Stark. Now the video shows that the adolescents have multiple bruises and contusions marking their bodies, so could they all be kidnap victims? And who are the two adults? The Captors? If you have any information on the people featured in these videos please call The hotline featured below.

Jarvis hit the pause button just as the screen showed an enlarged picture of the boy. He pondered the picture closely and gasped as he realized that it was his ward. "We found him." He said as tears of joy went down his face.
"Today marks the one year anniversary of Tony Starks disappearance. Today, due to insurance laws, Tony Stark will be declared dead, by his parents Maria and Howard Stark. The F.B.I. and police task forces will be pulled off the Stark case tomorrow afternoon. No one has seen any evidence that Tony Stark is alive and well since the series of videos emerged 6 months ago. The Stark family wishes for there to be no funeral for their son, but in his memory they will be donating $10 million dollars to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, in order to prevent more families from having to experience a child being abducted. Now onto other story's...

Jarvis couldn't stand watching the news anymore, because ever since the videos had surfaced 6 months ago every newscaster had there own theory on why Tony was in Boulder. Jarvis and his team of MI6 agents, looked into the videos and found that Tony had been in the city, and had discovered a cctv video showing all 6 of the people featured in the videos getting into a mini-van and driving off. They managed to get plate numbers off the van, but they turned out to be fake. The van itself wasn't able to help pinpoint their location due to its extremely popular make and model. There were over 5,000 in a 250 mile radius and there was a high chance that the owners even registered their van. The videos ended up being a cold trail, but they did assure Jarvis that Tony was alive, or at least that he was alive six months ago.

Tony had no idea on what was happening in the outside world, and frankly he didn't care. Today for the first time in over a year, he was being brought before the high council. He was nervous because he didn't know what he did to get summoned to them. Once he got to the doors that led to the council chambers, he became even more anxious due to the fact that both guards were dressed in full dress uniform and had their masks on. Both were Ravens, so their uniforms were pitch black, and both looked really ominous. When Tony got to the door they both flanked him and guided him into the chambers. The room was dark and each elder held a tall candle in their right hand, and a ceremonial sword in their left. They each had on eagle masks and their golden brown hoods were drawn up. At the head of the circle stood the Master of Masters. She had on a folded eagle mask and a robe rich golden fabric.

"Cub Samael, we called you before us today we believe you are ready to take on the role of assassin. You have proved yourself a worthy warrior and today your efforts will be rewarded. Samael, remove your tunic and kneel before me." She beckoned to Samael, who withdrew his shirt in a swift movement, and handed it to one of the guards. Then he went to kneel before her.

"Samael, will you vow to uphold the values and beliefs of the Order of Dolofóni? " She asked him.

"I do."

"And do you vow to protect your brethren to the utmost ability?"

"I do."

"And do you vow to willingly lay down your own life for the Dolofóni?"

"I do."

"Samael, with the power that has been passed down to me from the line of Master of Master's before me, I dub thee Hawk Samael." she then took her sword and made two precise incisions to each scar that already adorned his shoulders. He kept a straight face throughout the entire process.

"Elder Fane, please stand next to Samael. Elder Fane, do you vow to watch over Samael?"

"I do." he replied

"And do you promise to guide Samael through the trials he will embark on as a Hawk?"

"I do."

"And do you promise to uphold Samael to the best of his abilities?"
"I do."
"Then I appoint you Guardian of Hawk Samael. May your journeys together be filled with luck and fortune. Now Hawk Samael, what weapons choose you?" she said as she directed him to a table laid out with every weapon one could choose from. Tony's heart filled with glee as he saw the set of Knives that Jarvis had given him laid out on the table. He was allowed to choose five weapons, and since the knives were a set he choose them as his first weapon. He then selected twin tanaka swords, a beautifully carved bow, that would strike envy into any archer, and a ultra lightweight sniper rifle.

" You have chosen wisely, Samael. May each and every weapon you have chosen today become an extension of who you are." The Master of Masters said as she stepped forward to place a hawk mask on Tony's face. As soon as she had done so, the other masters stepped forward to place Tony's new weapons on him, Tony felt as though he was preparing for battle. Then as soon as he had been adorned with The weapons, excepting for the sniper rifle, which his Guardian carried the Elders fell into a V-shaped formation with Tony and Fane in the middle and went through the doors. On the other side of the doors every assassin and cub had gathered, assassins doning their full dress uniform while the cubs were wondering who had gotten Knighted.

"Today we have had the privilege of knighting one of the best students to have come through our doors. We are proud to have had the pleasure of training this amazing young man and are pleased to introduce our newest Hawk." when she finished speaking, as if on cue, all the Elders moved aside and Samael stepped forward. "Guardian Fane, would you take the honor of removing the mask?" She asked Fane who was standing behind him.

As Fane stepped up to remove the mask he whispered into Tony's ear, " I am so proud of you, and guess what I won!" Tony was bewildered for a moment, and then he remembered the bet, along with the pot of money, going around the high level assassins. "Let me introduce my new fledgling, Hawk Samael!" Fane yelled as he removed Tony's mask. The whole room erupted in applause. At 14 1/2 years old, Tony was the youngest Hawk in a century, and everyone was excited to see the assassin he would become. Tony and the elders dispersed into the room. The bear clan rushed over to him and embrace him in a massive group hug, being mindful of the assortment of weapons Tony had on his body.

"Why didn't you tell us you were being knighted?" Maahas asked.
"I honestly didn't know until I was in the council chambers." he answered
"Is Elder Fane, really your Gaurdian?" Koen asked with awe.
"Yes, I don't think he knew until Elder Pandra, announced it at the ceremony."
"You must be something else if you have a Elder for a Guardian." Aiden announced.
"So what weapons did you choose?" Duncan asked. Then the boys finally saw the numerous knives and swords that were strapped to Tony's body, and the bow in his hand.

"Well I choose this beautiful set of knives," He then withdrew one and handed it to the boys so that they could examine the knife. " Twin Tanaka blades," he took back the knife and handed them a blade. When they saw the blade their eyes glowed in awe. "A wooden recurve bow, and a lightweight sniper rifle, but that's only for special missions." he then took back the blade and handed them the bow. As they were finishing examining the weapons, Fane came up to him.

"Follow me, we need to get you ready for your first mission." Fane whispered into his ear.
" So guys I'll talk to you more later, I've got to go!" he said with a smile, Then he followed Fane out of the room. Fane led him to a set of rooms that know belong to the both of them. Lying on the bed in the smaller room, which Tony assumed was his laid Tony's new mission uniform, he now had three; dress, the uniform he would wear for missions and the uniform for every day. Fane helped Tony remove his weapons, and helped Tony put on his uniform for the first time. It was a bit more complicated than he was used to and consisted of a tight brown undersuit with thick pieces of leather sewn into the places where he would receive the most damage. An looser pair of grey pants that would be tucked into knee high soft soled leather boots. A form fitting light brown tunic, with a dark grey over tunic that's bottom had slits cut in to it to aid his graceful hand to hand combat movements. He then wore arm braces and a archers glove on his right hand. His final part
of the uniform was a leather utility belt and a dark brown hooded robe, that could easily be discarded, in a fight. Fane then helped adorn him with his weapons. Then Fane led him to a room with a wide assortment of hawk feathers, which would act as his token. Tony choose a set of beautiful red teachers with light brown spots.
"Good choice." Fane said as he withdrew a quiver of arrows, that were adorned with feathers of the same color from a nearby table. "After each kill, you will leave one of these feathers behind. Now you are ready, now before you go on your first mission, I need to introduce you to some people I sometimes work with. Now follow me and do everything I say." Tony followed him and for the first time in 6 months he left the den behind him.

"Remind me why we're here again." Director Fury asked Agent Coulson. "We're meeting with a representative of the assassin league Order of Dolofóni. We, meaning me and Agent Barton and Romanov, sometimes join forces with them when we get landed with the same targets." Coulson informed Fury. "But why are we meeting in the middle of a field in God Knows Where, and not on the helicarrier?" Fury asked. "Well these assassins take their cloak and daggerness pretty seriously, you should see the costumes they wear. But they're some of the best assassins we've ever seen."
A sudden snap of a twig made Fury jump, he would never admit to it of course, Agents Coulson, Barton and Romanov, knew it was the assassin singling his presence. Then they all turned around to see two cloaked and masked figures emerge from the woods. The man in a Eagle mask and light grey clothing was walking proudly towards them, and an unknown figure in a hawk mask and a mixture of brown and grey clothing trailed about five feet behind him. Agent Barton, otherwise known as Hawkeye, immediately recognized the older man's features and embraced him in a bro hug. "Long time no see, Eagle Fane! Know who's this with you?" Hawkeye greeted Fane. Fury was a little curious to the friendliness between the assassins. "Remember how I told you I had a surprise for you? He's the surprise, hawkeye!" Fane said with a laugh. " I see that you've brought a friend." he said gesturing towards Fury. "I'm Director Fury. I run S.H.I.E.L.D. Now who are you and Your friend, and why are you so buddy-buddy with my best Agent?" Fury demanded.
"I am Eagle Fane of the high council of the Order of Dolofóni. I've been working with Agent Coulson, Black Widow and Hawkeye for the past couple of years, due to us getting the same target so very often. And this is Hawk Samael, my new fledgling." he said gesturing to the boy who was practically hiding in plain sight. Samael went up to his master's side. "He just received his hawk mask tonight. Samael, you can remove your cloak, let them get a good look at you." Samael took off his cloak and the Agents inspected him. They could see that he was adorned with multiple weapons, the knives drew The Black Widow's attention, and when Hawkeye saw the bow that lay across Samael's back, his eyes grew wide. "You can shoot?" he asked the boy.
"Yes, I am very efficient with shooting, both guns and bows. I've been also trained as sniper." Samael said in a strong voice.
"And you know the art of sword and knife fighting?" The Black Widow, asked intrigued. "Yes, I'm quite fond of knife fighting, I'm also trained in ten forms of Martial arts." He replied. "And how old are you?" Coulson asked the boy that had both of his agents intrigued. "14 and a half." he answered.
"он так молод. (he's so young)" Natasha muttered in Russian. " Я зрелый для своего возраста. ( I'm mature for my age)" he replied back fluently. "And you speak Russian?!!" Natasha asked shocked. "I'm also fluent in Spanish, French, Italian, Arabic, German, Mandarin and 5 other languages." he said.
"I say we test his skills. Shooting contest right here and now!" Hawkeye said eagerly. Samael looked to Fane for guidance, Fane have the look that meant 'go ahead' then burst out laughing. "You don't know what you've gotten yourself into Hawkeye, I've never seen anyone shoot as naturally as him. On the day of his testing he managed to hit 5 bullseyes, with a long now, from all feet, and he never handled a bow before that day." Fane informed Hawkeye, whose mouth had dropped.

"Okay you see that tree directly ahead of us, about 300 feet away," Samael nodded, "well you that branch about to fall off," Samael nodded once more, "that's your target."

Samael eyed up the target took out his bow, notched an arrow and hit the target managing to make the branch fall to the ground, all in about 10 seconds.

"Святое дерьмо! он лучше, чем вы Клинт! (Holy shit! He's better than you Clint.)" Natasha yelled out in Russian.

"Shut up Natasha, it was a lucky shot!" Hawkeye said nervously.

"It's my turn! Let's see what you got little hawk!" Natasha said as she ran up to Samael, like a kid in a candy store.

"Samael, you might want to lose the knives." Fane warned with a laugh, "he's quite deadly with them." Samael nodded, and withdrew the dozen knives he had hidden all over his body, along with the two Tanaka blades. The group of shield agents watched with awe as he withdrew knife after knife, Fane was laughing up a storm, and Fury was watching with morbid curiosity.

The Black Widow then withdrew her own weapons and met Samael in the middle of the field. Coulson agreed to be the mediator for the match. Samael and Natasha then paced each other waiting for one of them to make the first move. Samael was confident in his abilities and having never heard of the notorious Black Widow before, made the first move. Then the fight was on. The two fighters became a furious tornado of black and grey. The fight lasted for half an hour before Samael managed to land Natasha on her back, pinning her to the ground.

Agent Coulson realised that a 14 year old boy, who possessed the skills of both the Black Widow and Hawkeye, two of the best assassins in the world, and that boy had managed to beat both of them.

"Samael, I know the people of the Order of Dolofóni take on names with special meanings, what does your name mean?" Coulson asked the boy, who wasn't even out of breath from his fight.

"Samael is the Hebrew Angel of Death." he said as four sets of jaws simultaneously dropped.

"Where did you guys even find him?" Fury asked Fane.

"A little more than a year ago, one of our agents were ordered to hit him, but when he showed up to take him out, Samael took out a knife and fought him, with absolutely no fear. Samael had barely known how to handle a knife at that time, and was knocked out by our agent and brought back to our den. he's been with us from that day on. He's actually one of the youngest Hawks we've ever had, and he is promised to be one of the best assassins our Order had ever spawned. And now he's my fledgling." Fane told the group.

"Can we keep him?" Natasha said eagerly. Fane laughed.

"Well Samael, if you ever wish to leave your order, you will have a place with us." Coulson stated.

"Well, it's been fun, but right now he has to complete his first mission. Oh wait before I leave I have to give this to you. It's his token." Fane took one of Samael's feathers and handed it to Fury, while Samael put his weapons back on. Then assassin and fledgling left as suddenly a they arrived.

"Coulson, I want you to start a file on this Samael. He's too talented not too watch. And next time you team of assassins, tell me right away! Now get me out of this goddamned field!" Fury stated, well, furiously.
New Looks and Big Appetite's

Tony's first mission was to kill a man who had beaten his daughters to death. It's seemed as though his wife didn't take kindly to her husband getting away scott free for murdering her two precious daughters. Tony had been stalking the man's, he wasn't even worthy of being called a man, house for the past two days and he had gotten a pretty good schedule for when the bastard was most vulnerable. He appeared to care for his two pet schnauzers than he did for his twin daughters, and he walked them every evening just as the Sun was setting, the perfect time for an assassination.

Tony informed Fane, who kept constant contact with Tony via ear plug and a wireless mic place on the corner of his mouth, that he was going to complete the hit that evening. Now Tony had a flair for the dramatics so during the time that he spent waiting, he composed a pretty realistic fake blood that he used as an ink to write a note, that he would place on his targets body, the note read "I am an unworthy selfish bastard, who murdered my innocent twin daughters in cold blood, because I couldn't control my anger. I deserve to rot in hell." Tony used a bit of blood to make his mask even more terrifying, because he wanted the cold hearted devil to be absolutely terrified as he passed from the land of the living.

Finally it was time to go on his first hunt. Tony had chosen to forego using his bigger weapons such as his bow and katana blades. He wanted to make this as personal as he could, for when he saw this man's picture, he couldn't help but imagine Howards face gazing back at him.

As the man left his house with his spoiled pups, he took an alternative path through the woods, which provided perfect cover for Tony to sneak behind him waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike. As one of the dogs went to go to the bathroom, Tony snuck up behind his target and slit his throat. And as man laid on the ground choking on his own blood he stared directly into the man's eyes and said,

"I am Samael, the Angel of Death, and I have come to take what is mine." Tony then stared into the man's eyes until he had become still, ensuring that the last thing the bastards saw was his terrifying mask. Tony then put the note in the man's hand, pulled out one of his feathers and laid it in the still warm blood. Tony then reached into a pouch on his belt and withdrew two dog treats, which he had packed for this mission, and gave it to the dogs, and vanished.

"The job is finished." he told Fane as soon as he was a safe distance away from his target.

"How'd it go?" Fane asked curiously, first hits could go one or two ways, bad or extremely well, but whatever the outcome the young hawk always came back matured in a way beyond measure.

"Well, I did feel bad leaving his dogs there." Tony had said emotionlessly.

"Okay, meet me by the pickup site, I'll be around in a few minutes. Fane out."

Tony made his way to the pickup site and quietly hide while waiting for Fane to arrive. Tony wasn't sure what he was feeling, he was feeling guilty, yet glad at the same time. He also felt as though he had just consumed a six pack of monsters. Was he now a murderer, since he took a man's life? Or was he something else for getting rid of a man like him? Tony didn't know what to think, but luckily he didn't have to ponder his thoughts for much longer for Fane's car had just pulled up. Fane parked the car, got out, and looked over his fledgling.

"What happened to your mask?" Fane gestured to the kids blood covered mask, fearing that Samael had been injured, or had gotten 'messy'.

"Oh this," Tony gathered a drop of the fake blood on his index finger, "is a bit of fake blood I made. I may have gotten a bit melodramatic in my boredom." he told Fane, who looked on like he was on the verge of laughter and confused at the same time.

"This I've got to hear, but first how are you feeling."

"Honestly, I don't know. I guess I'm conflicted on whether I feel guilty for killing a man, or if I feel glad about the fact that he would never hurt another innocent again. I also feel as though someone has feed me caffeine intravenously."

"Don't worry kid, we've all been there, it takes a long time to harden oneself against the taking of a
life, whether it be a guilty life or an innocent one. In fact I would feel worried if you didn't feel anything at all. And that buzz of energy you're feeling, that's called an adrenaline rush, as soon as that wears off you'll be out like a light. Now tell me more about this fake blood business." Fane ,as always tried to end heavy discussions with a light note, said on the verge of laughter as they got into the car.

On the ride back to their hotel room, obviously without their masks on because it would be suspicious if two masked people were driving a black sedan, people would think they were mass murderers, which in a way they kinda were, Tony told Fane about his theatrics. Fane burst into laughter at the end of the story.

"Samael, I believe we've found your calling card. Your dramatics suit your name, when you hunt you truly become an Angel of Death. I bet you didn't know this, but we're allowed to personalize our masks to an extent, maybe you could hook up something that will make your mask appear to be weeping tears of blood, because that would be absolutely terrifying to your targets."Fane suggest.

"Thanks for the suggestion Fane. I'll get to working on it. " Tony's mind was already running with ideas for potential rigs that would work.

" Now, are you hungry? Because I want to grab a burger from McDonald's, after living in the Den for a while, you start to appreciate fast food." Fane said with a laugh, it was true the Den, the home base for the Dolofőni, only served health food to their assassins, which was delicious, but one started craving a greasy burger after a while of eating tofu and low fat meats.

"I'm starving." Tony laughed back. When they got to the McDonald's Fane ordered them both 2 double quarter-pounders with large fries and large vanilla shakes. The amount of food they were receiving was enough to make any normal man sick to his stomach, but it didn't even phase the assassins because they needed about 4,000 calories to function on a daily basis, due to their intense training routines and their large muscle mass. The drive to the hotel was only five minutes long, but Tony has already managed to wolf down one of his burgers. Tony and Fane got into their room and rapidly consumed the rest of their feast, it was a feat that would have made any big eater envious. Within moments of finishing eating Tony passes out in his bed, completely exhausted from his adrenaline rush. Fane removed Tony's boots and the knives that were visible, then covers Tony up with a blanket. Fane was pretty exhausted himself so he turned on the news as he got himself ready for bed.

"Today we're memorializing Tony Stark's short life. He was a genius having built his first circuit board at four, and getting his G.E.D. at 13. But shortly before he was due to start going to M.I.T. he was kidnapped, and despite all efforts from the police and the F.B.I., he was never seen again. His parents decided that they would declare their son dead, as he had not been seen in over a year."

Fane paused the T.V., and glanced at the sleeping boy in the bed next to his and the boy on the television. He knew that Samael was truly Tony Stark, but he didn't realize how famous he was or how much he still looked like the boy they had took in over a year ago. Sure Samael had put on about 50lbs of muscle and had grown a few inches, but he was still unmistakably Tony Stark. He reached for his phone and called the den.

"We may have a problem. It appears that Tony Stark was more well known than we thought." Fane said nervously.

"What do mean?" a confused voice answered.

"Well, I'm staring at a year old picture of Tony Stark on the evening news. And let me tell you that Samael still resembles his old self. We need to make him unrecognizable. Because we will never be able to walk into a public space without being recognized."

"Do what you have to do."
When Tony woke up in the morning he jumped into the shower, as Fane was still asleep. When Tony finally finished washing off the dirt and grime that had accumulated after an evening of stalking a man in the woods. He changed into civilian clothes because he obviously couldn't walk around in his Dolofóni uniform. Tony exited the bathroom to find Fane awake and watching the news. Then he saw a picture of himself, that had been taken a month before he ran away.

"I didn't know you were so popular," Fane said.

"Well I was the genius son of the lead weapon producer in America."

"Then why run away?"

"My father was an abusive bastard. Two months before I ran away, he beat me into a coma, broke both my arm and leg, all over building an Artificial Intelligence. In fact if you look at that picture on the screen you can still see the cast."

"How did no one ever see that you were abused that severely?" Fane said, remembering his own upbringing.

"I actually don't know. I guess with aliases and enough money one could potentially get away with murder."

"Well we, the Dolofóni, didn't anticipate you would be this famous. We need to disguise your looks. One of the best ways to do so is facial scars, and well facial hair, but I don't think you're old enough for that yet though. But don't worry the scar would disfigure you, in fact it might make you look more rugged." Fane told Tony.

"What else so we have to do to make me not look like Tony Stark?"

"Hair dye, and maybe a haircut, to make your curls more wild. Don't worry I know what I'm doing, I've had to do this before to a friend of mine, and he actually came out more good looking. But you have to agree to the changes I will give you."

"Okay I agree, do you want to do this scaring stuff before or after you dye my hair."

"After. I need you for the dye, I don't want your hair looking off color. Plus I need to pick up supplies for the cut not to get infected. Let's go." They went to a close by Walgreen's to pick up the supplies, Fane decided that dark blonde would be a good color on Tony, Tony was kinda spectacle about it though. When They got back to the room Fane got busy. He dyed Tony's hair first, trying to make it appear as natural as possible. While Tony's hair was setting, They discussed where the scar should be made. Both decided that it should be thin and long and should cut through his eyebrow, and go down his face.

Once Tony got the dye out of his hair, it was lighter than he was used to but he supposed that it would look fine once dry, Fane began the process of cutting his hair. When Fane was done, he handed Tony a few pain relievers.

"This may hurt a bit." Fane warned before bringing knife up to Tony's face.

"Next time say, I'm gonna stab you in the face, instead of 'this may hurt'." Tony muttered, eying the blade nervously. Fane was laughing.

"Okay, then. Now I'm going to scar your face with knife. Better?" Fane warned before wielding a knife dangerously close to his eye.

"You better not blind me." Tony warned.

"I'm nowhere near your eye, that just your depth perception, fooling with you." Fane laughed. "Ok, all finished. Now this is the really painful part, so do me a favor and take a swig of this." Fane said as he passed Tony a bottle of a brown liquor. Tony took a big swig of it and gasped as it burned his throat.

"What is this stuff?" Tony shouted, once he recovered from the shock of the drink.

"That my boy, is whiskey, and not a bad brand of it either. I probably should've warned you about it potency though, but I think you handled it pretty well. On my first drink, I spat it out all over my friends." Fane said with a laugh. "Now relax, I have to stitch this up. Try your best to zone out, sorry I don't have any stronger pain killers." then he got to the process of caring for the wound he gave Tony. When he was done he told Tony to look in a mirror. Tony almost didn't recognize his own face looking back at him. His new hair color and cut along with the scar gave him a dangerous rugged look, but he looked far older than 14.
"You like your look?"
"I think if you ever want to quit hunting, you could live a life as a stylist for spies who need to go undercover. I can hardly recognize myself."
"Ok stop looking in the mirror, you little narcissist. We have a new mission, this one is going to involve those agents I had you meet the other night."
"You mean the agents I wiped the floor with?"
"I still can't believe you beat Natasha Romanov in a fist fight. Not many men who've been in a fight with the notorious Black Widow live to tell the tale, yet you took her out. Not to mention the fact that you made a shot that Hawkeye couldn't make on a good day, without even trying." Fane said laughing his ass off. "Now lets get packed, we have a lot of distance we need to place between us and this town."

As soon as they finished packing the room, and wiping any evidence that they had been in the room, they headed out. Before they left the small town, they stopped by the K.F.C. to pick up two twenty piece buckets of chicken, along with sides and drinks. The fast food worker gave them a strange look when she asked if they needed any silverware, and they only requested two forks. And when she handed them the chicken meals, her face was priceless as she imagined the two rather average looking men eating 40 pieces of chicken along with two large sides of Mac and Cheese, Coleslaw and French fries. As they drove away she began to question her sanity.
"Is he asleep?"
"Yeah, he's still exhausted from his first kill, and the 20 piece bucket of chicken that he are on the way here. I'll wake him up."
"No! Let him sleep."
"Excuse Natasha's behavior, she's nesting. Did you say he ate a 20 piece bucket of chicken?!"
"Yeah and a large order of Mac and Cheese, Coleslaw and French fries."
"Where does he put it?"
Tony woke up to laughter and muffled voices. He open his eyes, panicking for a moment when he felt a strange object on face, then he realizes that Fane must have placed on him, to protect his identity. He stretches a little and then gets out of the car, and goes over to the small crowd of people.
"You're blonde! When did this happen, I swore you were a brunette." Hawkeye announced, marking his appearance.
"Yeah we had to obscure his identity, for when we go unmasked for missions." Fane explained.
"I heard you ate a full twenty piece dinner. How did you do it? I can't even do that on a good day." Hawkeye announced perplexed.
"I like this kid!" Hawkeye exclaimed.
"I thought you would. Did I mention he's the Dens master prankster?" Fane told Hawkeye.
"Do not give Hawkeye any ideas, Samael." Coulson warned Tony.
"But I really want to know how you ate the chicken, and survived to tell the tale." Hawkeye said still curious about the chicken.
"Well we need a lot of calories, due to intense exercise regime, we can spend anywhere from 10 to 14 hours a day training at the den. So we consume between 2,500 to 4,000 calories a day. I've eaten more than a 20 piece bucket of chicken." Hawkeye suddenly envied the assassins.
"Remember the time the Den decided to hold an all you can eat barbecue night?" Tony asked Fane.
"Ah yes, one of the best and worst ideas the Dolofóni has had." Fane said cryptically.
"What happened at the barbecue?" Hawkeye asked curiously.
"Well the den had about 150 people, and we managed to consume about too chickens, 10 pigs and an entire cow. It was delicious, but the mess made by the barbecue sauce and chicken bones, took a week to clean up." Fane said. Hawkeye just looked at the assassins in awe.
"Okay enough talking about meat, let's talk about the mission." Coulson said putting an end to the delicious conversation. "What have you guys managed to gather on the target?"
"Well we've done a basic profile, the man's name is Daniel White, he is 45 years of age, and has killed 16 people, that we know of. He's been put on trial for 10 of these murders, each time getting off with a fine and being declared innocent, despite having sufficient evidence that places him as the killer in each case. The victims seem to have no correlation with each other, excepting for the fact that each victim is good looking. Also he's extremely powerful and rich." Natasha informed everyone as she handed packets to the two assassins. Tony sped read his looking for anything the Widow may have left out, and then he spotted it.
"uh...the victims do have something in common, besides being beautiful, their people he's slept with. He sleeps with them for a few weeks, in one case three nights, then kills them." Tony announced. The four adults were shocked at how fast he picked that up.
"How did you figure that out so fast?" the Black Widow asked, "did you tell him?" she directed to Fane.
"Samael, knew nothing of the case, besides what you just told him. Go on Samael tell them how you figured it out." Fane said to Tony.
"Well I sped read the papers, for minute things, you may have left out, and found that Mr. White is
a bisexual who likes pretty things, but since he's rich he gets bored very easily. He treats his lovers like a kid treats toys. He falls in love with a pretty man or woman, gets bored after seeing the same person for a while, then he kills them." Tony explained.

"But how did you figure it out, so quickly?" Natasha asked amazed.

"Well Samael, is a genius. His brain processes thinks 4 times as fast as a normal person. He's also been training with our best strategist and analyst for the past year." Fane explained.

"Wait you all knew?" Tony asked all of them.

"Well it took me a week to figure it out, but yes we all knew. This was a test, to prove your skills. And Samael, you passed marvelously." Fane explained. "Now what time do you want to meet up tomorrow? I need to train with Samael before the sun goes down."

"What about 7am? " Coulson asked.

"7am's perfect." Fane agreed.

"If it wouldn't be intrusive, can we perhaps watch you two train? We've never seen two of your order spar before." Natasha asked. The two assassins looked at each other and nodded.

"Ok. Let me just look around for a good spot. We'll play a little game, you guys call capture the flag. We call it the hunt." Fane said, then he whispered into Tony's ear "let's give them a show, worth watching." Tony grinned in reply.

"Man I knew I should have brought popcorn." Hawkeye mentioned, always thinking with his stomach.

"Okay I've located a spot. I need you two," gesturing to Hawkeye and Black Widow, " To hide this." giving them a camouflaged flag. "Hide it well." Hawkeye and Black Widow nodded, and ran into the woods looking for the spot. They then climbed into a nearby tree to get a good spot to watch the show.

Back in the clearing both assassins were decked out in full hunting gear, with the exception of Tony's arrows being blunt. They both ran to opposite sides of the woods, and Coulson counted them in, then they were off.

Tony loved these games, they allowed him to use all of his skills. He climbed up a tree, and starting making his way to the center of the forest. Once he got to the center, where he saw Clint and Natasha in a tree trying to watch The show. Tony played a minor trick on them by shooting an arrow at the two. Clints reaction was hilarious, as he obviously wasn't paying attention, so when he heard the arrow whiz past him he immediately began to duck, but then realized that he was in a tree, so He was caught in an awkward position sprawled on the tree branch, Natasha broke out in laughter as she saw her partners predicament. Tony then heard a noise on the forest floor. He looked down to see Fane directly below him, so he dropped out of the tree and on his way down he grabbed two of his knives.

Fane noticed the movement above him and turned around just in time to see Tony land gracefully onto the forest floor, with knives in his hands. Fane withdrew his own knives and the two began circling each other. Clint and Natasha heard the commotion and saw the master and student engaged in ferocious battle.

Tony then spied the flag attached to the drew, and kicked Fane in the chest knocking him down. Tony ran towards the tree but just as he was about to grab the flag he was tackled by Fane, he must have not kicked him hard enough. The two were engaged in throes of battle again, this time Tony used his katana blades. Clint and Natasha were watching every move Tony was making due to their never having seen the katana blades in battle before. Tony moved with the grace of a dancer, with the swords becoming extensions of his arms. Then Tony spied the chance he had been waiting for Fane was wide open, so Tony made a move to kick his master again, but Fane was expecting this and grabbed his ankle in an effort to knock Tony off balance, but Tony instead brought his blades close to his body and launched into an impressive twist managing to free his leg before he landed in a crouch on the forest floor. He then sprung up and continued his fight with his master. He launched himself into a series of twists, kicking master in the chest, then launched himself at the tree and grabbed the flag winning the hunt.

Clint and Natasha emerged from the tree with looks of shock on their faces. They had never seen
such a close and precise battle before. Sure Natasha's been involved in quite a few battles such as the one she had just witnessed, but she's never seen one.

"что было удивительно.(that was amazing)" Natasha exclaimed in Russian, for it was in moments like these when she forgot her English.

"You shot an arrow at me!" Clint exclaimed at the audacity of the boy.

"Это было весело! (That was hilarious)" Natasha said laughing.

"Shut it Natasha! You know I can understand Russian. He nearly knocked me out of a tree!"

"You shot an arrow at them?" Fane inquired.

"It didn't even come close to hitting them, birdbrain here is over reacting!" Tony explained.

"What did you call me?" Clint exclaimed.

"Birdbrain? I love it! How come I never thought of it?" Natasha exclaimed. Just then Coulson came running in.

"What's with all the commotion? Is someone injures?" he demanded.

"No we're fine, birdbrain here is overreacting!" Natasha explained.

"How can I even be called birdbrain when I'm not the one wearing a bird mask?" Clint questioned, annoyed with his new nickname.

"Will someone please explain what's happening here?" a very confused Coulson yelled.

"Well we were playing our game and I saw Birdbrain"—"Stop calling me that!"—"and Widow sitting in a tree watching. They weren't paying attention, so I shot an arrow at them, don't worry it was blunt, and came up with a brilliant name for Hawkeye here. I also won the game." Tony explained.

"So you shot an arrow at my two agents, managed to startle them, call my agent names, and won the game? You know what kid I like you." Coulson told Tony. " and Clint, grow up, the names sticking Birdbrain!" Clint had a look of indignation on his face.

"Coulson you should have seen the kid, he was brilliant." Natasha exclaimed.

"I have to admit I've never seen anyone so graceful in battle, besides Natasha." Clint added.

"I told you he was good. He's the Dolofóni’s prodigy."

"Okay, the kids a prodigy. I'm starving, do you guys want to get a bite?" Clint asked Fane and Tony.

"Sorry we can't, masks, not that we aren't hungry." Fane explained. "See you guys tomorrow. I'll bring donuts."

"You know you guys eat really unhealthy for two elite assassins." Clint told the two.

"Like you're one to talk?" Natasha shot at Clint.

"Well when we're at the Den, they practically shove health foods down our throats. Every time we're off base we take the opportunity to stuff ourselves with junk food." Fane explained "Now we have to go. We have to be up at 4 for more training."

"You guys do that, I need my z's." Clint said.

The two groups separated and went to their own cars. Just as Tony and Fane were about to get into their car they heard a strange beeping noise, and before their brains could register something was wrong, their world's exploded in a fiery inferno.
As Agents Barton, Coulson and Romanov were about to get into their car they heard an explosion behind them. They turned around to see Fane and Samael's car go up in flames. All three went jumped straight into action. Clint and Natasha went to look for the two assassins, hoping that they were not in the car at the time of the explosion, and Coulson called in for backup.

As Natasha neared the car, she could smell the burning of flesh. Then she heard slight moaning coming from her right. She looked around and saw a body lying on the ground, and his pants were on fire. She quickly put out the fire, and glanced at the figure's uniform. It was Fane.

"Fane, can you hear me?" She asked eager for a response, but all she received was a moan.

"Hawkeye, Coulson, I've found Fane. He's unconscious and needs medical attention. Have either of you spotted Samael?" She yelled urgently.

"No, but I ..." Clint was cut off.

"What's the matter?" she yelled.

"We're surrounded." Clint yelled.

"I'm gonna need that back up, Now!" Coulson yelled into his walkie talkie.

Then she noticed the men in black ops uniforms surrounding them.

"What do you want?" she asked them, going into Black Window mode.

"We only want the boy." A crisp British voice answered her. Great MI6, she thought angrily.

"We don't have him." she answered.

"We know you don't, because we do. We only wished to tell you that we have him, so that you don't get your knickers in a twist, thinking he's in the car." the man answered with a coy politeness, only a MI6 agent could possess.

"What do you want with him?" she asked.

"What would MI6 want with a 14 year old, who happens to be a highly trained assassin with a beyond genius intelligence and a mutant? And I thought you shield Agents were supposed to be smart." the man said sarcastically.

"Mutant?"

"Yes the boys a mutant, don't feel bad though, I don't think the boy even knew that he was a mutant himself. Oh, would you look at the time! Sorry I can't to chit chat, I must get going!" the man said then gestured for the rest of the Agents to leave, Just as the shield Agents showed up.

"About time you got here!" she spat angrily. Then she disappeared into the woods, everyone could hear her spit out phrases in Russian that could make KGB agents blush. When she was done, she calmly walked out of the woods, leaving a mass of confused Shield Agents in her wake.

"What happened?" Director Fury asked as soon as he saw she was calm enough to carry a conversation in English.

"They took him. The MI6 took Samael." she said.

"What would they want with a 14 year old boy?" Fury asked.

"Why you don't know? He's a fully trained assassin who also happens to be a genius and a mutant."

"He's a what?" Fury demanded.

"A mutant. Don't worry he apparently didn't know himself. Though I have no idea on how the MI6 received sole ownership on this piece of information."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to find, Samael, who is probably injured and scared out of his mind, and kill some MI6 agents." And with that she stormed off, reminding everyone why they did not mess with the people the Black Widow cared for.

A junior agent then walked up to Fury. "Um, Sir, Eagle Fane is asking for you."

Fury made his way over to the stretcher, that held the injured assassin.

"What's going on? Where's Samael?" Fane asked on the verge of panicking.
"Eagle Fane, the MI6 were behind the car bomb, and they have Samael in custody." at this Fane paled. "Don't worry, we will do everything to our utmost ability to get your fledging back." Fury assured the man.

"You better find him quick, because if you don't find him within a week, You will have the deaths of two of the best Dolofóni assassins on your hands." Fane stated gravely.

"Why, would I have the deaths of two assassins on my hands?" Fury asked confused.

"Because if we can't find him within a week, I'll be forced to partake in a ritual suicide. Us, Dolofóni, take our apprenticeship very seriously. If our fledgling happens to die or stray away from the path we follow, the Guardian must kill himself, as an act of Honor. So you better find him or you can consider yourself a dead man, for the price of having Dolofóni blood on your hands is also death." Fane stated.

"Coulson, Barton get in here!" Fury yelled into his walkie talkie. "Go find Romanov, and start tracking down Samael immediately!" he ordered them as soon as they made an appear. "And hurry, because if you don't find Samael within a week, consider yourself and every shield agent fired. Because if you don't find him I am a very dead man." Fury stated gravely.

Tony opened his eyes to find himself in a strange white room. He figured it was a hospital of some sort, because he was hooked up to various medical machines. He tried to get out of bed, only to find himself being restrained. Just then a doctor ran in.

"Ah Tony, I see that you're awake!" the doctor said in a heavy accent.

"Where am I? Who are you? And how do you know my name?" Tony's head was filled with questions.

"I am Dr. Yinsen. You're in a top secret medical facility runned by the MI6. I know your name is Tony Stark, because the MI6 has been searching for you for the last year and a half. Any more questions?" Yinsen asked in his heavy accent that Tony couldn't identify.

"How long have I been here? Where's Fane, my guardian? And why am I being restrained?" Tony spat out the last one quite angrily.

"You've been here for three days. The bomb did quite a number on you. The explosion landed shrapnel in your chest, we removed the shrapnel to the best of our abilities, but some still remained in places we couldn't reach without killing you. I had to perform an experimental heart surgery to prevent the shrapnel from reaching your heart, so you now have a low-powered electromagnet powered by a small but extremely powerful battery in your chest. You are restrained because we know of your abilities, and since we don't want you escaping, we decided to go his route instead of pumping You full of were the only one they brought in" Yinsen said. Tony's face paled when he realizes that Fane only had four more days before he was forced to commit suicide. He had to get out of here.

"I'll be right down the hall if you need anything." Yinsen stated as he left the room. Then a bald man in a wheelchair came in, followed by a tall woman with red hair.

"Hello, Anthony, I am Professor Charles Xavier, and this is Dr. Jean Grey. There's no reason to be frightened of us," the man in the wheelchair stated. Then Tony heard a man's voice in his head

"We are both mutants"

"And we believe you are too." a woman's voice, who he presumed was Grey, finished.

"Wait I'm not a mutant. I'm a genius but that's about it." Tony said.

"We believe your ability surfaced a year and a half ago, We're not entirely sure what your ability, or abilities are, but we would like to test you." Charles stated. "We would also like to invite you to stay at our school for gifted children." Charles added, as he noticed Tony's fear about being a mutant, and what others might do him if he found out.

"Fine, I'll do your testing, and go to your school. But I have to get out of here, and find my guardian. Because if I don't he'll die in four days. Plus if I stay here the MI6 will use my abilities, both mutant and otherwise, for their own personal gain, I can not be used like that again . Can you
help me?" Tony said desperate to get as far away as possible from the MI6.
"I'll see what I can do." Charles stated "don't worry we'll get you out of here." Charles added, he
could see Tony was absolutely terrified at what the MI6 would do to him, and that he needed to
help him. Just then two doctors came rushing in.
"Natasha, Clint, about time you got here!" Tony stated, extremely glad to see the two shield
Agents.
"Что они с тобой сделали? (What did they do to you) " Natasha asked when she saw Tony in
bandages, and the seemingly fresh scar on Tony's face.
"I'm not quite sure." Tony answered.
"Now who are you guys?" both Clint and Jean asked at the same time.
"Jean, stand down, these are two of Anthony's allies, they're here for the same reason we are. Clint
Barton and Natasha Romanov, I'm Professor Charles Xavier, and this is Grey. We're also here to
help Anthony." the three young adults visibly relaxed, then got to business with Operation Save
Tony Stark.
Clint and Natasha began unhooking Tony from the various medical machines, and his restraints.
Tony couldn't walk, as he still weak from his open heart surgery and various other wounds. So they
managed to locate a wheelchair in the hallway.
"Now how are we going to get out of here?" Clint asked.
"Don't worry. I have a plan." Charles explained vaguely. Then Charles led the way down the hall,
motioning for the rest to follow. Clint was totally confused, for they passed numerous people in
the hallway, but none seemed to suspect anything. "I'm a telepath Clint. I'm projecting images into
all of their minds making them think that nothing is amiss."
"But what about the cameras?" Clint asked.
"Well, thats where my ability comes into play, I'm a very strong telekinetic. I've managed to turn
all of the cameras off. So right now the entire building is blind."
"And how are we going to deal with security? Oh right telepaths." Clint asked and then answered
himself. "But how are we going to leave the building?" Clint, seemingly full of questions asked.
"Well we may have called in for help from some of friends who also happen to have a supersonic
stealth jet. " Charles said amused by all the questions.
"The X men." Natasha said in awe.
"Yes Natasha, you are correct."
The group of assassins and mutants made their way to the roof of the building, where they spotted
a group of people in leather outfits and a jet.
"Let me guess, you're the X Men. " Clint blurted out.
"Yes, now who are you, bub?" a man with an unusual haircut and a cigar almost growled.
"Logan, these are the people we need to help. This is Anthony, the boy we came here to help with
his abilities, and Agents Barton and Romanov of Shield, who also came to help the boy." Charles
explained.
"Enough with the pleasantries, we need to get Samael, or as you call him Anthony, to the
helicarrier. He needs medical attention now!" Natasha exclaimed as she saw how pale and clammy
Tony had gotten and how raspy his breath sounded.
This got everyone's attention and the quickly loaded Tony into the jet. Clint went to the front of the
plane to explain how to get to the helicarrier and the codes they needed to use. While Natasha sat
with Tony muttering soft words in Russian to the boy who was now unconscious. When they got to
the massive ship Director Fury, Eagle Fane and a team of medics, who were waiting to receive
Tony, greeted them.
"Now who would like to tell me, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!" Fury asked, or rather yelled. His
outburst has cause the majority of the X Men to step back a few feet, and made Romanov and
Barton cower.
"I'm Professor Charles Xavier, and I was sent, with my assistant Dr. Jean Grey, to help Anthony
adjust to being with the MI6. When we got there we found Anthony, panicked and frightened," at
this Fane visibly paled beneath his mask, it took a lot to send a Dolofóni into a panic like that, "and
I had found out some of the things they wished to do to Anthony. I had no other option but to take him from there. So luckily your two agents came at the right moment and we were able to rescue Anthony." Charles explained.

"Now who is this Anthony?" Fury asked.

"Anthony is Samael's birth name. When one enters the Order of Dolofóni, we go through a process to find our true names, and Anthony was given Samael, the name of the Hebrew Angel of Death. Now what's wrong with my fledgling?" Fane asked nervously. "And why are the X Men, helping him?"

"We believe that Anthony is a mutant, and we wish to allow him to gain control of his powers."

"Well that actually explains a lot. You see, he came to us completely untrained, excepting for a night of knife training and some instructions in Martial Arts, yet on the first day, for out tests, he managed to perform at a level of one who's had years of training. We, meaning the council and I, suspected it had something to do with him being a genius. We thought he could be a mutant a few times, but we never tested him, because the Dolofóni are very accepting of mutant initiates. Tony basically progressed from being an untrained novice to one of our best assassins overnight. Tony is in fact one of the youngest hawks, first level assassins, we've ever had. The process of going from cub to hawk takes 3 years, Tony managed to do it in a year and three months. Now I need to go check up on my fledgling." Fane explained and once he was finished, ran out. Of the room in search of Tony.

"Why do I have the feeling things are about to get very hectic around here. Barton, Romanov, find the X Men some rooms, because I don't think they'll be leaving until the whole situation with Samael, or rather Tony gets sorted out." Fury yelled. Then he saw a junior agent walk by, "You! Get me some coffee, now!" he ordered the junior agent who was scared out of her mind. "Uh..Yes, Sir. Right away Sir." Then she scurried out of sight looking for coffee.

Fane was sitting in a chair next to his fledgling. The shield doctors had checked his over and came to the conclusion that Samael had gone through extensive open heart surgery to insert the electromagnet into his chest. During the open heart surgery, the doctors had also partially removed 4 of his ribs, and his sternum. The doctors concluded that Samael was deaf in his right ear, due to a ruptured eardrum, that he had received numerous wounds from the shrapnel and fire, and that he had contracted pneumonia from the current state of his lungs and being moved entirely too soon after the complex surgery. But the doctors deemed that Samael was going to make a full, or rather nearly, recovery, and due to the physiology his training as an assassin gave him he should, be healed in a manner of weeks.

Fane had contacted the council as soon as he got the prognosis, and they deemed that they wanted a video conference with representatives of The X men and from Shield, to discuss how they should move forward with Samael because too many people knew his real name. Fane relayed the information to both Fury and Professor Xavier.

Once the conference between the three groups was set up, Fane had retreated to Samael's room, where He took up vigil next to the sleeping boy. He couldn't help but wonder how the boy's life would change after this. He was now being hunted by the FBI, had attachments to Shield, and was wanted by the X-Men. Fane had no doubt that Samael was now the most sought after and dangerous 14 year old boy in the world.

"Where is Tony Stark?" the man asked angrily.

"He...uh... somehow managed to escape..uh.. with the X Men, sir."

"You mean, you let the most dangerous teenager in the world go?"

"Well, yes, Sir." the agent gulped.

"Well then what are you waiting for? Go find the boy! I will not have my plans thwarted by a man in a wheelchair!"

"Yes, Sir!" the agent scurried out of the room.

"I may not know where you are Tony Stark, but I will find you, not today, perhaps not tomorrow, but one day soon you'll be in my hands again. And then I will use you to get the world's leaders to crumple to their knees in reverence of our power." the man said, despite there being no one in the
room.
Family

Jarvis was excited when they told him that they had found Tony, he wouldn't be able to see Tony for another week, as he was currently overseas for a series of important meetings. His excitement soon turned to worry, when another agent told him that Tony had been seriously injured when they apprehended him. Then three days later he was furious when that same agent told him that an invalid Tony had somehow managed to escape with the X Men. Jarvis immediately dropped his meetings and went stateside to figure out how Tony had managed to escape a secure MI6 base swarming with highly trained agents.

What he found made him even angrier. Somehow Tony had managed to get inducted into an infamous league of assassins, the Order of Dolofóni, and in a year and a half he had managed to become one of their best. Tony had also managed to secure strong attachments to some high ranking Shield Agents. And now he was allied with the X men. In a year and a half, Tony had managed to transform from an abused, anti-social genius, into one of the most deadly teens in the world, not to mention most sought after.

When Jarvis dug a little deeper into MI6s files on Tony Stark, he found their plans on what they wanted to do to the boy. MI6 had never planned on releasing Tony into his custody. They're were planning to exploit the boy's genius and skills, and to experiment on his mutant gene. They were going to turn Tony into a weapon. Jarvis was suddenly glad that Tony had managed to secure some pretty powerful friends, but Jarvis was also beyond angry when he realized that Tony would never have a chance to live, he would be sought after for the rest of his life. Jarvis didn't know what to do anymore, does he stay with the agency who betrayed him, or does he become rouge?

Fane couldn't believe his ears when he heard the council's ruling. The council had decided that Tony would be given six months off from his duties as an assassin. During those six months he would be able to discover the full extent of newly discovered mutancy and learn how to use it with the X men. After the six month break Tony would remain as an Dolofóni assassin, but he would also work with both the Shield Agents and the X men, on special missions.

Fane was still worried about how Tony would feel when he found out that he was deaf in his right ear, but he was relieved when he found out that Shield scientists had created prototype hearing aids, got Agent Barton who apparently was 80% deaf, that would allow him to hear out of his right ear. Fane was sitting vigil by Tony's bedside, the doctors said he would probably wake up that afternoon, when Clint and Natasha came in.

"So is he going to be alright, with that thing in his chest?" Clint asked gesturing towards Tony's chest, that was still covered in bandages.

"Yes, his lung capacity will be reduced, and he will have to rebuild his chest muscles. He's strong and a fighter, So he should be able to rebuild the muscle in a manner of weeks, plus his body will adapt to it rather quickly since he young." Fane informed him.

"I wonder what gave him that scar. It looks to well placed to be from the bombing," Natasha wondered out loud. Fane suddenly had a guilty look on his face. "Wait. You gave him the scar?" Natasha accused Fane.

"Well, I actually gave him it right before we met up with you the second time. His identity was too well known, so I had to change his appearance, and since he's too young to grow a beard, I had to scar him. What? I thought I did a good job, it gives him a rugged look." Fane explained to Natasha, who was giving him a death glare.

"Actually I have to agree with Fane. The kids gonna be quite the lady's killer when he grows into his looks." Clint added, Natasha then shot him a death glare.

" Who's gonna be a lady's killer?" a voice groggy with sleep asked.
"Samael! You're awake. Do you feel any pain? Do you want me to get a doctor?" Fane asked. 
"I've never pegged you to be such a mother hen, Fane." Tony jokes. Everyone in the room started laughing. Then Tony realised something, his face was uncovered, he hurriedly made efforts to his it. 
"What's he doing?" Natasha asked worriedly. 
"Samael, don't worry they've seen your face already, they also know your first name. We've kept your identity on the down low. Ok?" Fane reassured Tony, who dropped his hands from his face, but when he brushed his hand by his right ear he noticed something else. 
"Why can't I hear on my right side?" Tony asked panicked. 
"Your right eardrum burst in the explosion, your left took a bit of damage too, but don't worry they have a pair of prototype hearing aids that should help, once your ears are healed." Fane said. 
"Don't worry Tony, the aids work perfectly. In fact let me tell you a secret, I'm 80% deaf. I lost my hearing in an explosion too, but with the aids I can hear." Clint said trying to reassure Tony that he would be able to hear again. Tony looked visibly relieved. 
"So any other debilitating injuries that I should know about?" Tony asked, but he got worried when he saw the three of them glance at each other. "I'm not missing any limbs am I ?" 
"No you aren't missing limbs." Fane told him half laughing, Tony sighed a sigh of relief. "But-" "Buts are never good news." Tony cut Fane off. 
"Let me finish. You received a traumatic chest injury. It's a miracle you're even alive, but you have an implant that's keeping your heart beating, and keeping shrapnel away from your heart. It was a pretty invasive surgery, they had to remove your sternum and several ribs to accommodate it. The doctors here say that if you wouldn't have had to have this surgery, if you were brought here, instead of being captured. But now there's just too much trauma to your heart, so it'll will have to stay. Sadly you lost a lot of muscle tissue, so you'll have to endure some of my specialty workouts to build it back. Also you probably shouldn't take any chest kicks, but I've informed the Den on your injuries, and currently they're making a custom chest plate, to protect against that during future missions." Fane said. 
"But what about this whole mutant thing?" Tony asked remembering meeting with Professor Xavier before the whole prison break. 
"Well that's why I'm here." Professor Xavier, flanked by a man with a red visor, and . It's like you can read my mind!" Tony said, as Clint, Natasha and Fane moved to accommodate the newcomers. 
"Exactly, my boy. Your thoughts were so loud I could hear them across the building, so I decided to stop by. I'm not sure if you remember the rescue last night so Anthony, this is Scott." Charles gestured to the man wearing the visor, who tilted his head in greeting. 
"The council had given you 6 months off, for you to discover what your ability is and to learn how to use it." Fane told Tony. 
"6 months? But won't I be behind in my training?" Tony asked. 
"Well I'll be making weekly visits, to train with you, and see how your training is coming along." Fane explained. 
"And I'm pretty sure some of my X men can train with you." Charles added. 
"What happens after the six months are up?" Tony asked. 
"Well the Council has made an allotment for you that none have had before. You will still be a Dolofônî, but you'll also become an agent of Shield, and be considered to be an X man, if you choose to play that part. You'll only have to take on Dolofônî sanctioned hits every once in a while, and you'll be allowed to move up in ranks as the others do." Fane explained. 
"This is real? I'm not having an injury related hallucination right?" Tony asked, taking in all the new info. 
"Yes this is real." Fane replied. 
ни один из нас не хотел расстаться с вами. (None of us wanted to part with you.)" Natasha explained. 
"О, Наташа, я не хочу, чтобы попрошаться с вами тоже ( oh, Natasha I didn't want to say
goodbye to you either.)" Tony replied. 
Then Clint and Natasha both ran over and gave Tony a bone crushing hug, being mindful of his chest wound.
"The kid's fluent in Russian?" Scott asked incredulously. 
"And about ten other languages too." Fane stated.
"Well this will help with some of our foreign students." Charles said hopeful. Then he started tearing up at the heart warming scene. He knew that neither of the three assassins hugging in front of him, had loving families as they were growing up, each coming from a childhood filled with abuse and neglect, so they had formed their own family with each other.
The Shield Doctors wanted to keep Tony in the medical bay for 2 weeks, the kid did just have open heart surgery, But Tony managed to get out in three days, due to all of his wounds being miraculously healed. Sure he still had hearing damage and a battery in his chest, but all the wounds were fully healed. The stay in the medical bay was beneficial to Tony, because it had brought him, Natasha, and Clint, closer, and now the super assassins treated Tony as a kid brother. Tony found out that each of them never truly had a family so they decided that they would be each other's family. Fane couldn't help but smile when he saw the three of them together, he had never seen either shield agent so happy. The three of them were like a super crazy family of assassins, but it worked for them.

Charles was watching the three of them from a distance, when Jean snuck up behind him. 
"Why are you watching them?" Jean asked. 
"It's curious isn't it? Whenever Tony is happy, everyone near him is also happy. I've been watching them for a while and Tony's feelings seem to broadcast to everyone nearby." 
"You're not thinking, what I think you're thinking, are you?" Jean asked, already knowing the answer. 
"I believe that one of Tony's powers is empathy." 
"One of his powers? How many do you think he has?"
"Well at least two more. He's most definitely gifted with an innate ability to do things, plus I believe he has a sort of superhuman mentality." Charles explained. 
"You're not thinking he's an alpha, are you?"
"Jean, thats exactly what I'm thinking. He's one of the most powerful mutants I've ever seen. It's a good thing we got him away from the MI6." 
"Why?"
"Are you telling me you couldn't guess what the doctors were going to do to him? They were planning on experimenting on him, and using his abilities for their own gain. If we wouldn't have gotten him out, we could have had another Magneto on our hands. Except, Tony would be much more powerful, and dangerous too." Charles explained gravely.
When Tony first came to Xaviers School for Gifted Youngsters, the first thing that came to mind was that they definitely needed a new name. He didn't know what to think of his fellow mutants. He had never had friends when he was growing up, besides the few he made with the Dolofóni, and he didn't know what to think of the friendly demeanor of the mutants.

Over the next few weeks he had learned the true nature of his powers, apparently he had an Innate Ability, meaning he could do things without really learning anything, a Superhuman Mentality, which explained his genius and could allow him to develop telepathic or telekinetic powers down the road, and he was an Empath, meaning he could control what others were feeling. His empathy also allowed him to draw minor amounts of energy from others to enable faster healing.

He started training with the teachers, who made up the X Men, almost immediately to explore the full range of his powers. He also continued to do his workouts, that the Dolofóni had trained him to do, every night after classes were over. At first he did these in solitude, until one day Storm found him down there, and got lost in his graceful movements.

"You know, I've never seen anyone fight with blades the way you do. Would you mind if I brought down a couple others, tomorrow? I'm pretty sure we could all learn a few things about fighting from you." She asked Tony, when he was finished.

"Sure, why not?" Tony replied.

The next day, true to her word, Storm brought down Jean, and they both sat watching Tony go through moves that could make any martial artist envious. By the end of the week a little crowd had begun to form, all quite as they watched Tony's deadly moves. The next morning Charles had asked for a meeting with Tony.

"So I hear that you've collected quite the audience watching you fight." Charles said with a smile.

"Yes, the crowd has grown quite a bit, but I don't mind them, as long as they're quite."

"How would you feel if I had you give a few lessons to the X Men?" Charles inquired.

"Lessons?"

"Yes, it seems as though the X Men's close combat skills are pretty dreadful, and since you seem to know a lot about fighting, I figured that you could give them a few lessons."

"Okay, so a little bit of basic Martial Arts. I think I could do that, but I don't think you have enough blades for me to teach them knife combat."

"I think basic martial arts training will do. There's no need for them to use weapons in fighting, as one of our main enemies has the power over metal, so blades will be useless in fighting him." Charles explained. Then he saw Tony get a strange look on his face and zone out. "Tony are you alright?" He questioned.

"..oh..yeah I'm fine." Tony said a bit confused.

"What happened?"

"Well I just got an idea. What if I could make weapons out of plastic? They wouldn't do much harm, but they would be useful in fighting against Magneto."

"And how would you do that?" Charles inquired, curious.

"Well I've had a bit of training in weapon forgery with the dolofóni."

"A bit? Tony, you forget that you're 'bit' is comparable to years of training for the rest of us." Charles laughed.

"Oh right. Well I figure that if I made the plastic hard enough, I could balance it well enough to make a pretty decent weapons. And if I perfect the recalibration of the plastic, I could use it to make other weapons such as Arrowheads and perhaps even bullets that would act like tranqs instead of having mutants die in battle, they would only be sedated."

"Tony, has anyone ever told you that you are absolutely brilliant?" Charles asked tony, who in return looked shocked at the admiration, all these compliments took time getting used to.
"Sorry professor, but I've gotta go see Hank in the lab. Oh yes I agree to the lessons, what time do you want me to start?"
"What about tomorrow at 5?"
"Sounds good." Then Tony rushed out of the room almost colliding with Scott on his way out.
"What's up with him?" Scott inquired.
"He just came up with a game-changing idea that will allow him to make weapons out of plastic, that we could use to fight Magneto with." Charles explained.
"Oh wow. Knew the boy was smart, but I didn't think he knew weapon forgery."
"Well it's another one of the things he picked up with the dolofóni." Charles explained.
"You mean along with picking up 10 languages, mastering 7 different forms of martial arts, becoming a master archer, and a fully trained sniper? I'm glad he's on our side, because we would be screwed if he was with the Brotherhood."
"So what did you come here for?"
"I was wondering if you asked Tony about the lessons."
"He said yes. I told him they start tomorrow at 5."
"Good, I know none of us could ever hope of being as good as him, have you seen him fight? But at least with a couple of lessons we could be a little better."
"That's what I was thinking."
"I was wondering..."
"Yes Scott?"
"Well there's kind of a bet going around that Tony could wipe the floor with Wolverine. Do you think you could arrange a little exhibition round with those two?"
"Actually I was planning on having a battle royale with the adults. I'm thinking Tony would be classified as an adult due to his extreme combat skills. What would you do if I allowed Tony and Wolverine to match up for the first round?" Charles asked Scott with a smile on his face.
"I would take on that extra class you've been wanting to take. Plus I'll volunteer to be Tony's practice dummy for class." Scott said almost begging.
"Sounds like a deal. Oh and put me down for $50 on Tony. I can't wait to see Logan lose to the kid." Charles laughed as Scott left the room.

"So what did the professor say about the fight?" Jean said as she came up to Scott in the hall.
"He totally agreed to it! His exact words were 'I can't wait to see Logan lose to the kid.'" Scott said in a bad imitation of Charles voice. "And he bet $50 dollars on Tony." Scott was dumbfounded.
"Don't ever do that accent again. What did you do to get this?" Jean asked.
"Well I may have volunteered to be Tony's practice dummy for class tomorrow."
"Have you seen what that kid can do? You have no idea what you volunteered for." Jean said to Scott mournfully.
"I swear that kid's an alien. Did you also know that he took up weapon forgery as a hobby?" Scott said.
"No, but in the last couple of weeks I've learned to accept the unexpected, with Tony. He's an amazing boy, I just wish we could of found him sooner. You don't even want to know what his father did to him." Jean explained.
"What did he do?" Scott asked worriedly, knowing that some of the mutants at the school came from troubled homes.
"I don't know all of the details, but I do know that it was enough to give him nightmares." Jean said cryptically.
"How do you know?"
"Let's just say that his mind is pretty loud and vulnerable during them. All I can do is hope that he tells someone, before the emotions he keeps bottled inside tears him apart. Don't tell no one what
I've just told you, alright?"  
"Yeah. We're gonna be late for class." Scott said as he glanced at his watch.  
"We're the teachers we can't be late." Jean said as she and Scott went their separate ways to their classrooms.

When the X Men showed up to the gym the next day, Tony was nervous, he was a 14 year old kid teaching the X Men. Would they even listen to him?  
"Okay, so the Professor told me that he wanted me to teach you all some basic martial arts moves. So have any of you had any experience with Martial Arts before?" He addressed the intimidating group of adults as calmly as he could. Only Wolverine raised his hand.  
"Does Cage Fighting count?" Logan asked gruffly.  
"Uh...sure, Cage fighting probably gave you first hand experience with the mentality of a fight. So since none of you have had any Martial arts experience before, I'm going to give you a quick demonstration on what I plan on teaching you. Um...Scott, the Professor told me that you volunteered to be my training dummy, so could you come up here? I promise I won't hurt you." Tony said. Scott looked a bit afraid, every other adult had a smirk on their faces, knowing that the arrogant leader of the group was about to get schooled.  
"Ok, so Scott I want you to stand about three feet in front of me, with you knees slightly bent and your legs shoulder width apart. Oh and relax. This is correct fighting posture, it allows all of your muscles to be easily assessable in a fight." Tony explained as he gestured to how Scott was standing. Then he went into a quick high kick aimed towards Scotts jaw, pausing before his foot made contact. "That was just a basic kick. By the end of your training you will learn how to block kicks like this with minimum effort." Tony explained, still in position. Then Tony relaxed and showed off a few flips. The x men were amazed when Tony effortless flipped Scott, who easily outweighed Tony by 50 lbs and was about 6 inches taller than Tony. " flips are designed to distract your opponent and to get out of tight situations. With training you could easily overthrow an opponent larger than you too. To prove this, Logan would you mind stepping up?" Tony asked. The big man came up grudgingly and stood where Scott was. Tony mentioned for Scott to the side. Then tony charges wolverine and with a little effort, wolverine does weigh about 350lbs, flips him to the ground. The next thing Logan knew was that he was on the ground being pinned by Tony. The rest of X Men were shocked, they had no idea that Tony, although he was very muscular for a 14 year old , could flip a man who was more than twice his weight.  
"How did you do that?" Jean asked.  
"Well its all about leverage." Tony explained.  
"No its leverage when you flip over a man like Scott, but Logan? What did they feed you in the Dolofóni?" Storm asked.  
"Well we pretty much ate healthy foods, like tofu and weird vegetables. But we ate a lot. Like we all had to eat at least 3500 calories a day." Tony explained rather casually.  
"3500 calories a day?!" Jean asked.  
"Yeah, but I usually aimed for 4000."  
"Well that explains why you're so hungry all the time." Scott said.  
"Well we train about 10-14 hours a day, I trained more like 16 hours a day, but that was because I had a lot of specialties." Tony explained.  
"Wait how much muscle did you gain when you were with them?" Jean asked with morbid curiosity.  
"About 50 lbs. But I was really weak before hand. You guys have seen the pictures of me before I joined the Dolofóni."  
"We didn't think it was that drastic. Can we test how much you can lift?" Asked Scott who was quite curious on whether Tony had super strength above all of his abilities.
"Uh OK...I could just tell you. I usually bench about 400lbs."

"Now this I've got to see!" Logan stated with excitement.

Tony walked over to the bench press and loaded the bar until it weighed about 400lbs. Then he removed his T-shirt.

"What? the shirt restricts movement." he explained to they're shocked faces.

"Its not that, you're more ripped than Scott!" Jean said.

"Hey! I'm standing right here!" Scott cried out in offense.

"Well its true, bub." Logan confirmed Jean's statement.

Tony then got down on the bench, and started lifting the weight like it weighed nothing.

"Tony would you mind if we see how much you can lift?" Jean asked.

"Okay, sounds like a plan, but Logan and Scott, you're gonna have to check me."

About half an hour later, Tony had either reached his limit or was exhausted, he really couldn't tell anymore.

"So how much did I lift?" Tony asked.

"This can't be right." Scott murmured.

"Come on guys just tell me."

"Tony you just lifted 1000 lbs."

"What?!"

"And I don't think that was your limit. You're probably just tired. But kid, you've got superhuman strength."

"That can't be Professor Xavier's said he'd never encounter someone with four powers before. And with this I would have 4."

"Well kid, you must be that person then." Logan said.

"We have to tell the professor." Jean added.

"But first I've got to eat, I'm starving." Tony announced, and they all agreed.

The next morning Charles came up to Tony.

"Tony, I've heard about what you did last night. How are you feeling?"

"Hungry, but that never seems to go away now days." Tony and Charles laughed.

"I'll like to run a few more tests on you, to see if your superhuman strength applies to any other aspects of yours, such as speed, sight or hearing."

"Well you can count out hearing. I lost about 30% in my left ear and am completely deaf in my right, from the explosion. That's why I got to wear these buddies." He said as he pulled out a hearing aid.

"Really? Nobody told me that." Charles inquired.

"Yeah, only a few people know, I didn't want it to come out, if I ever choose to return to being Tony Stark. I also told them not to say anything about me being a mutant or an assassin either, because of public opinion rating." Tony said sadly.

"Oh well that's unfortunate. Its a wonder how nobody noticed yet, you've been with us for a month."

"Well, I do forget to put them in sometimes, but I think people believe that I'm antisocial in the mornings rather than deaf." Tony explained with a smile.

"Ah...well your abilities might be quite extensive, so would you mind if we tested you today? I'll let you skip classes."

"Sure sounds like a deal. Well I got to get to breakfast, I heard Ororo, made pancakes." Then Tony left a smiling Charles behind. Charles couldn't help but wonder what other secrets Tony had hidden from people to portray a false picture of normalcy.

After a rather exhaustive afternoon Charles and Tony discovered that Tony had super sight, which allowed to be an expert sharp shooter, super strength, they didn't know the true weight limit.
because they ran out of weights, and super speed, he wasn't as fast as quick silver, but he was two times faster than an Olympic sprinter. Tony had a total of Four abilities, equally strong in all, and he was technically a level 6 mutant, the scale only went up to 5. When Tony finally finishes the test, he's about to drop from exhaustion, not necessarily from exertion, but from the lack of caloric intake. Charles then sets tony up on a schedule that would allow him to eat 6 full meals a day, because all those extra abilities needed to be fed by an extraordinary amount of food.
The six months Tony had been with the X Men, flew by quickly. Tony had managed to develop his powers and had learned to integrate them into his fighting style. Plus he had designed a line of nonlethal weapons that the X Men could use in order to fight Magneto. He had made a lot of friends with the mutants, and Charles had even made him part of the X Men, should they need his help. Sure he was going to miss living at the mansion, but he missed the Dolofóni more, plus he couldn't wait to team up with Clint and Natasha. So to celebrate his last day at the mansion Charles had decided to throw a competition between the X Men and Tony, a battle royale of sorts. "Today we are having a competition between the X Men, and Tony. So since Tony is parting ways with us today, the first battle will be between Tony and Logan. Next will be Jean and Storm. Then Bobby vs Scott. The winners will advance to the next round. Let the fight begin!" Charles announced on the field where they would fight each other. Tony and Logan made their ways to the opposite sides of the field. Then Charles gave the single and the two ran towards each other, Tony with his blades and wolverine with claws extended. Tony is but a deadly blur as he twists around Logan, causing little nicks all over his body, which only seemed to infuriate Logan more. Logan got in a few minor swipes, mostly tearing Tony's clothing revealing the soft leather armor that Tony wore. The fight then escalated into a glorified fist fight, mainly involving the two tossing each other around. Tony then saw the moment he had been waiting for, wolverine was wide open. Tony went into a fast series of kicks that disoriented Logan and then Tony got Logan to the ground and pinned him, with a knife at his throat proving a kill shot. "And it looks like Tony is the winner of the first round. Jean, Ororo, your turn." Charles said with a smile. "That was a pretty close fight." Fane, who had came early just to watch Tony in action. "I let him win!" Wolverine said trying to cover up his embarrassment of losing to a 15 year old. "Uh huh, right..." Scott said as he clasped tony on the shoulder "That was an amazing fight. I admit I had my money riding on Logan, but that's only because I wanted to beat up Logan myself in the second round."
"Money?"
"Oh yeah, nearly everyone made a bet on who would win a fight you or wolverine. Usually people only bet a few bucks, but Professor Xavier bet $50 on you to win. That's why he's so happy." Scott said. "So Tony, after we leave the mansion, I have a special surprise for you." Fane said . "Surprise?"
"Well if I remember correctly today's your 15th birthday." Fane said reminding Tony of the date. "Oh yeah."
"Birthday? What's this about a birthday?" Ororo said walking towards the two assassins, after winning her match against Jean.
"Wait, Tony, you didn't tell anyone today was your birthday?" Fane asked curious. "Well I don't really have fond memories of birthdays. So I guess I kinda forgot." Tony said sheepishly , remembering all the years where his only present from his parents on his birthday being a drunken beating from his Father, or seeing his mother passed out in her own drunken stupor on the couch. Fane instantly felt regret as he noticed the look on Tony's face. "Be careful of your feelings Tony" Charles reminded Tony, who was accidentally causing everyone to feel the feelings he felt at that moment. Tony instantly reminded himself of a happy memory, casting a festive atmosphere over the mutants. "Well, I say we start a new tradition of making your birthdays memorable and full of happiness." Fane stated. " I agree with Fane. Tony we're your family now, forget your parents. You don't need to remind yourself of the past." Ororo stated.
"Thanks guys. Now what's this about a surprise?" Tony eagerly asked Fane.
"Well it involves a little spider and a purple hawk." Fane said cryptically.
"Clint and Natasha?! I haven't seen them in ages." Tony said excitedly.
"Yes, we're not returning to the den yet, we have a little mission before we go back. I can't tell you anymore details, or I'll find myself hunted by two of Shields top assassins." Fane said with a laugh.
"Ok, since Scott and Bobby's fight ended in a draw, next up for the final round is Tony and Ororo."
Charles announced.
"This is going to be good." Jean said to Fane as the two walked onto the field.
Tony and Ororo went to opposite ends of the field, then Charles gave the single and they engaged in the fight. Ororo immediately used her elemental power to make herself fly as Tony was chased by lighting. Tony took a literal leap of faith as he leapt into a jump in an attempt to knock down Ororo, who was 15 feet in the air focusing on the storm she wasbrewing. The jump worked and before Tony or Ororo knew it they were on the ground, Ororo in a heap, and Tony in a graceful crouch. As Storm got off the ground chuckling, Tony launched himself towards her. Then he found the reason why she was laughing, she had surrounded herself in an electrical bubble, that tony couldn't touch with the battery in his chest. Instead tony grabbed a few of his dull plastic knives and threw them at her, distracting her long enough for her to drop the bubble. Then Tony pounced after her, with the grace of a cat, and tackled her to the ground. She was still quite electrified, so Tony got a few zaps as he pinned her to the ground, with a knife pointed at her side.
"Kill strike" he announced with a laugh.
"And it appears as though Tony won. Now let's go inside and have the cake we prepared, for today is Tony's 15th birthday." Charles announced. Tony had a look of confusion painted on his face.
"How did you know? Oh right telepath."
"Well I managed to tell everyone that your birthday was today. I'm surprised they all kept it a secret. Now Tony I have a gift for you." Charles said as Jean walked up behind him with a box in her hands. "Go on open it."
Tony opened the box, trying to hold back his excitement as he never received a gift from anyone besides Jarvis before. He pulled out what was inside and held it up.
"I figured that you should have your own X Men uniform, in case you ever find yourself available to help us."
"Oh, thank you so much!" Tony exclaimed as he embraced the professor in a deep hug. The leather uniform was one of the best gifts he had ever received. Tony then took out the uniform to examine it further.
"I thought you could wear your Dolofóni mask when you joined forces with us, that way you can keep your identity secret. Now I only need one more thing, what would you like to call yourself?"
Charles asked Tony.
"I would like to be called by my true name Samael."
"I always wondered what your name meant."
"Its means the Angel of Death in Hebrew." Tony explained.
"Its very fitting."
"Well according to Fane I am a bit dramatic with my costume, but don't worry I only take hits when the people are guilty of pretty horrendous crimes and are walking free. Its kinda like cold justice."
"I completely understand Tony." Charles explained. "Now why don't we go inside and grab some cake?" Then they left. Charles knew that the Dolofóni did a lot to keep the scum of the earth from walking free, he didn't think it was right in his mind, and he knew he would never be able to do something like that, but he knew that with the Dolofóni around the world was a better place.
After the party Tony said his farewells. He knew that one day he would come back, but it still felt sad saying goodbye to the people he had gotten to know and care for over the past 6 months. All of the students thought that tony was just going to go to college, so he received a lot of 'do well in school' comments. The only ones who knew that he was picking up the mask of an assassin were the X Men. After the party they pulled him and Fane away from the crowd to say their own farewells and not freak out the students.
"Oh Tony, promise me you'll stay safe!" Ororo said.
"I promise, plus I'll have Fane to protect me." Tony explained.
"Don't worry guys I'll protect him, I have to. I never want to experience what I felt 6 months ago when they took you. " Fane explained.
"Are you sure you have to go back to the Dolofóni? You'll always have a place with us." Jean said.
"Well I'm too young to retire. Plus if I leave the Dolofóni, Fane will have to kill himself, because I strayed from the path. I don't think I would be able to live with myself if that happened." Tony said gravely.
"Don't worry. We have already set it up with the Dolofóni. Tony will not take hits unless the target is guilty of a horrendous crime, and is walking free. He will not assassinate people without cause." Fane explained. "Plus he will be teaming up with Shield most of the time so he'll have not only me but Agents Coulson, Barton and Romanov protecting him." Fane explained.
"Well can we at least know your calling card, that way we don't you know chase you, or so that we can divert people on your tail." Scott asked. Tony glanced up to Fane, Fane nodded.
"My calling card is a letter written in realistic fake blood, declaring the targets crimes, along with a red hawk feather dipped in the same fake blood." Tony revealed.
"You've got a taste for the dramatics, bub." Wolverine stated, while the rest of the team was debating between laughing and being concerned.
"Oh thats nothing. I rigged up my mask to weep fake tears of blood too. I have to live up to my namesake."
"And what would that namesake be?" Jean asked.
"Well my name is Samael. It means the Angel of Death in Hebrew. " Tony explained.
"I hope I never get on your hit list Tony. You sound absolutely terrifying when you're on the hunt. I'm pretty sure I would just keel over if you appeared in hunting gear with your mask on." Ororo admitted.
"Sorry but we have to go, or else we're going to be late for our rendezvous with Shield. Don't worry he'll be back before you know it."Fane explained.
Jean and Ororo gave Tony a bonecrushing hug, while Scott and Logan gave him a pat on the back while they said " Good Luck kid". Then Tony and Fane went back to the party to say farewell to Charles.
"If you ever need anything, Tony, I am always just a phone call away, or just rather extend your thoughts to me and I'll talk to you in a heartbeat." Charles told Tony telepathically. Then they left. When Tony and Fane got into the car Tony was exhausted.
"So Fane, how long until we get there."
" Oh, about 3 hours."
"OK then. I'm taking a nap. Um is it alright if I rake my hearing aids out?" Tony asked.
"Why?"
"Well they're a bit uncomfortable to sleep in."
"Don't worry, take them out. I'll shake you when we get there."
"OK, just remind me to put them back in when I wake up. I forget a lot." Tony said guiltily.
"Don't worry I know ASL. So if you forget, and can't hear me, I'll just sign to you. Plus I'm pretty sure Clint knows ASL too. Now go to sleep, I'm pretty sure dueling with x men is exhausting." And with that Tony fell asleep.
Tony woke up, when he felt that the car wasn't moving anymore. The first thing he noticed was that his head hurt and that he was surrounded by inky black darkness. At first his sleep muddled brain thought that it was only night time. He then realizes something is covering his eyes. In a panic he tries to take the thing off his face only to find his arms tied down to the chair he was sitting on. He examines the chair, which seemed pretty lightweight, whoever his captors were, they definitely didn't do their research. Tony then braces himself, hoping that the chair was wooden, to break the chair. After the chair is broken he frees his hands from the rope and rips the blindfold from his eyes. He realizes that he is in an empty room, with a single door. He opens the door to find four very familiar figures yelling "Happy Birthday!" Well at least thats what he thinks they're yelling, because all he hears is muffled voices in his ear, because he didn't have his hearing aids in. "What?" Tony asked thoroughly confused.

Fane opens his mouth to say something, but then realizes that Tony didn't have his hearing aids in. Fane then runs to get them. "What's happening?" Tony asked once he had his hearing aids in. "Well you were totally passed out when you guys got here, so Clint here decided that this was the perfect opportunity to prank you." Natasha asked. "Hey you guys had a part in this too!" Clint said. "I'm actually pretty surprised that you didn't wake up earlier, or while we were moving you. Clint here knocked your head into a wall, for an assassin, he's pretty clumsy." Fane explained. "I thought we agreed not to tell him that part!" Clint yelled again, feeling betrayed. "Well he was bound to notice the big bruise on his forehead." Natasha explained. "So let me get this straight. When you guys saw that I was innocently sleeping, you decided to prank me by tying me to a chair with a blindfold on? Plus Clint, I think you gave me a concussion."

"How did you escape anyways?" Natasha asked. "You guys tied me to a wooden chair. I broke it." Tony explained. Which resulted in four shocked faces. "Uh Tony the chair wasn't wooden. It was a steel chair." Natasha explained. "This I've got to see." Clint stated excitedly. Then all five people went into the room to examine the chair. "You didn't break the chair, you obliterated it!" Natasha said. "How did you do this."

"Well I may or may not have superhuman powers." Tony explained cryptically. "What are your mutant capabilities?" Coulson asked. "Well let's see...I'm an empath, meaning I can control people's feelings, and harmlessly siphon others energy to quicken my healing process. I also have an Innate Ability, meaning I can pick something up, such as sword fighting, with a few basic lessons. I have a Superhuman mentality, which explains my genius, plus Charles said that as I get older I could develop telepathy or telekinesis due to it. And above all that I have superhuman abilities, such as strength, speed and vision."

"How much can you lift?" Natasha asked. "Well last we checked 2000lbs."

"What do you mean last you checked?"

"Well we ran out of things I could easily lift. Plus we would always go up in increasing weight, so I would get pretty exhausted, from not eating. You can't believe how many calories benchpressing 2000lbs burns."

"What level are you?" Clint asked. "Well on a level of 1 to 5...I'm a 6." "A 6?!" Clint said not believing Tony.
Well do you want to see me in action a bit? I'll go outside to show you I can bench press a car, but I'll need food afterwards.

"Ok, well let's get a few pizzas, you can show off a bit, Tony, before we eat, but afterwards we have to talk about the mission we're all on." Coulson explained.

They all packed up in Coulson's SUV and drove into town to grab the pizzas, as it was the only vehicle able to fit all 4 assassins and the handler comfortably. After they got to the pizza place carrying 5 large pizzas, Fane and Coulson ran into a store to grab a couple 12 packs of soda. When they got back to the cabin they had rented for the week, Tony got ready to show off. First he challenged the Clint and Natasha to a running a mile. He finished in 2 minutes thanks to his superspeed. Clint and Natasha both finished at just 5 minutes.

Tony then got under Fanes car, got in position and to the amazement of everyone lifted the car off of the ground.
"You weren't lying." Clint said astonished.
"I wouldn't lie to you guys. Now let's eat!" Tony said as he got out from under the car.
"Now that sentence is music to my ears." Natasha said.

The five of them sat at the table with plates full of pizza.
"So what's the mission?" Tony asked curiously.
"Well we're going after a group of people who are in charge of a child trafficking ring." Fane explained.
"Group, how many are there?" Tony asked after taking another bite of pizza.
"Well we have 3 primary targets, but there are a total of 8 people directly in charge, so if we can get them too it'll be great." Coulson explained.
"So what's the plan of action?"
"Well that's where you come in, Tony." Natasha explained regretfully.
"Um, why are you all looking at me like that?" Tony asked seeing the four adults expressions.
"Well we plan on 'selling' you to them." Fane explained.
"Ah...what?"
"Well Tony you're fifteen, the target age for...uh... Child trafficking. " Clint explained.
"And Tony, you're a pretty handsome boy, another desirable quality child traffickers look for." Natasha said.
"Yeah, but we have one problem... I have a battery in my chest. Don't you guys think that the traffickers will find that a bit odd?"
"Well Shield has come up with a good way to cover that." Coulson added. Then left to get said item. "This is a sort of cover, that will hide the battery and make it feel like flesh. With a decent paint job, it will be very convincing."
"OK. But... Uh.. What if they want to...uh...you know...'test' the merchandize before we complete the mission?" Tony said trying to discuss the very uncomfortable white elephant in the room.
"Well, um.. That's very easily fixed...uh...you've never been with anyone before, right?" Natasha said trying to hide the very difficult topic.
"What Natasha's trying to say is, Are you still a virgin?" Clint said bluntly.
"Yes, I'm a virgin, I'm only 15!"
"Well you see the...uh.. Traffickers can get more profit, if they sell a good looking boy, who's never been...uh..taken." Fane said uncomfortably.
"Ok, so you want to sell me to some sex traffickers, so that I can infiltrate them. Where will you guys be, while I'm with them?" Tony asked.
"Well we'll inject you with a tracker. You'll have to be with them for a bit. But we'll be within close proximity, in case they try to sell you early." Coulson stated.
"How long is a bit?" Tony asked.
"A month." Fane said gravely.
"Why a month?" Tony asked.
"Well for starters, we need you to get friendly with the other victims. They usually respond better
to being freed, if they know one of their rescuers. Plus we'll need the time to track the Trafficking rings activities."
"Okay, anything else I need to know?" Tony asked.
"Well you can't be American, so you have the choice of being French, German, Italian or Russian. Plus you can't have your hearing aids...so what form of sign language do you know best?"
"Well I know Italian the best, but I'm pretty fluent in Russian too. Which works better for you guys." Tony asked. The four assassins looked over Tony.
"I'd say he looks more Italian, he'll be more believable." Natasha brought up. The other three nodded in agreement.
"I guess I'm Italian then. When do I get 'sold'?"
"In a week. Until then we'll go over everything, and give you a bit of normalcy before you get thrown into that hell hole." Fane said.
"There's one more thing. Tony we're going to have to beat you up a bit, to make the story believable." Clint said.
"But we'll be as gentle as possible. No broken bones, just superficial markings." Natasha added.
"So enough with the heavy conversation. Tony we have a surprise for you." Fane announced. Then Coulson who had somehow left the room during the cover station, walked in with a huge cake.
"When did you get this?" Tony asked.
"When we were at the store." Coulson admitted.
"I don't know what to say! This is the first birthday cake I ever gotten, well second considering the cake we got at the mansion!"
"What? You're telling me that you're the son of a billionaire, but you've never had a birthday cake before today?" Clint asked astonished.
"Well Howard and Maria, never really celebrated my birth, as it was the thing that drove them apart." Tony admitted.
"ой, Тони, мне так жаль. (Oh Tony, I'm so sorry)" Natasha said as she gave Tony a huge hug.
"Для чего? (What for?)" Tony asked Natasha.
"Ни один ребенок никогда не должен чувствовать себя нежелательными! (No child should ever have to feel unwanted)" Natasha said on the verge of tears.
Tony and Natasha hugged for a bit more before the group dug into the cake and sat down in the living room to watch a Star Wars marathon.
The next week passes by in a blur. Tony was beaten every night, to make the bruises look reasonable. And by the end of the week he looked every bit a child slave. The group boarded one of shields jets and headed towards Italy, where they were planning on making the drop.

Tony was a nervous wreck, he knew that the next month will be completely miserable. He was going in weaponless, except for his powers, and a small mic connected to his battery in his chest. All he knew was that the others would be following him. As they got closer to the drop off time, Natasha and Fane got dressed in their disguises. Then the time they had together came to an end. They had decided it would be best to transport Tony if he was unconscious, but before Fane knocked him out, Tony had the chance to say his goodbyes.
"Мы вас сбился там Тони. Даже если у нас есть, чтобы взорвать миссию.( we'll get you out of there, Tony. Even if we have to blow the mission.)" Natasha whispered into Tony's ear, obviously too overcome with emotion to speak English.
"Don't worry, I trust you guys to pull through." Tony said to the group.
"Tony we'll do everything in our power to put an end to these animals." Fane assured him.
"I know you will."
"OK, this is going to hurt, when you wake up." Fane said as he clubbed Tony in the head with his handgun. Tony slumped to the ground unconscious. Fane then removed Tony's hearing aids, and placed a blindfold on his head. Then Fane secured Tony's hands with duct tape.
"Okay let's do this." Fane said in a heavy Italian accent as he got into his role.
"Yes I don't know how long I can stand looking at Tony like that." Natasha replied, in an equally
heavy Italian accent. "Don't worry we'll get him out." He assured Natasha even though he wasn't feeling that confident in his abilities.

Then they silently drove to the rendezvous spot. When they reached the location they got out of their Car and stood next to the car, looking every bit the criminal. The Traffickers arrived moments later, in two intimidating black SUVs. A man in an expensive looking suit got out of the SUV and was escorted by two men loaded with weapons.

"Allora, cosa hai per me? (So, what have you got for me?)" the man asked the two undercover assassins.

"Un ragazzo, quindici anni, molto carina. (A boy, 15 years old, very pretty)" Fane spat out in fluent Italian.

"Portatelo fuori! (Bring him out!)" The man ordered. Fane went to the trunk of his car and got Tony, who was still unconscious. He then hefted Tony over his shoulder and laid him down in front of the man. "Togliere la benda! (take off the blindfold)" the man order Fane. Then the man examined Tony's face. And then he ordered the guards to strip Tony.

"Ah, molto carina. E 'in ottimo è una vergine? (Ah, very pretty. He's in excellent condition. Is he a virgin?)" The man asked.

"Sì!(yes)" Natasha spat out.

"Tutto sbagliato con lui?"

"Sì, egli è per lo più sordo. può ancora sentire un po 'il suo orecchio sinistro, ma nulla in suo diritto. (Yes, he is mostly deaf. he can still hear somewhat out his left ear, but nothing in his right.)" Fane explained.

"OK, stavo per dare 50.000 €, ma quando è danneggiato, ti darò 45.000 €. Deal? (OK, I was going to give you $56,574.84 but since he is damaged, I'll give you $50,917.36. Deal?)" The man asked.

"Sí." Both Natasha and Fane said at the same time. The man opened up the case of money, withdrew 5.000€ and gave the rest to Natasha and Fane.

"Piacere fare affari. (Pleasure doing business)" the man said before he ordered his guards to drag Tony to one of the vans.

Fane and Natasha, all but broke down when they got into the car. Who knew when they were going to see the precious boy that they had all grown to love, again.
Slavery

Chapter Summary

This Chapter does have an off screen rape scene and discusses the aftermath of the rape...

Chapter Notes

All italics are sign language...
Each page break is a different point of view

Tony woke up to an unfamiliar face looking down at him. He could hear the woman muttering something, but couldn't make out what she was saying, because he was without his hearing aids. "Can you speak louder. I'm mostly deaf." Tony explained in Italian. She seemed to get it, and spoke louder and enunced her lip movement.
"What is your name?" She asked
"I am Antonio." He replied.
"How old are you?" She asked.
"I just turned 15."
"Oh. You're so young." She said as her face fell.
"Who are you? Where am I?" Tony said confused.
"I am Anna. You've been sold into slavery, just like all of us." She said gravely.
"Slavery?" Tony asked. The girl then went off in a long rant. "Um.. I couldn't pick that up, you're speaking to fast. Plus try not to use long sentences, its hard to decipher." Tony said.
"Wait one moment, I'm going to try and find something to help." Then the girl disappeared. When Anna was gone Tony suddenly realized that he was barely dressed. All he had on was a pair of sweats. He wondered what happened to the clothing he came with. Then the girl came back with another young woman.
"I am Merina, do you understand Italian Sign Language?" Merina asked.
"Yes."
"You can speak fine, did you recently become deaf?" Merina signed.
"Yes there was an explosion, I was to close to. I'm completely deaf on my right side, and about 30% on my left, so I can hear a little but its muffled." Tony signed back.
"Okay, I understand, my mother was in a similar accident, that's how I know sign language. Do you know where you are?"

"Uh, Anna said something about Slavery. All I remember is that I was taken off the street by a man and woman dressed in black. They kept me in a room for a few days, I think, then the man slammed my head with something. The next thing I knew I was here." Tony explained.
"Oh my dear, you must be so frightened. Your parents must be worried about you." Merina signed sadly.
"I'm an orphan. My mom and dad were killed in the same explosion that took my hearing. The fire department said it was a gas pipe explosion, I was the only one to survive." Tony explained.
"What is he saying?" Anna asked Merina.
"He's an orphan, he lost his family and hearing in an explosion. He said that he was taken off the street before he came here." Merina explained sadly.

"How sad." Anna stated.

"Do you think you can stand? We should get you on your feet before THEY come back. I think you have a concussion, so be careful." Merina signed.

Tony nodded. Then he got up with help from the women, playing the pity card. The women then guided him to an adjoining room.

"This is Antonio. He's 15 and an orphan. He's also mostly deaf, so if you need to talk to him, have me or some paper sitting by." Merina said to the crowd mostly composed of women, with a few men scattered about. Merina then guided him to the closet woman and introduced her.

"I am Maria, I'm 18." The young blond covered in bruises said. Merina signed her response.

"Nice to meet you, Maria. Call me Tony." He said. The introductions went on for a while. It appeared that he was the youngest one there, the rest were between the ages of 18 and 25. He also gained a shirt from a man, who took pity on Tony, as the men knew what Tony was going to be used for, for even when Tony was covered in bruises and grime, he was still a good looking boy. Tony felt much less exposed when he had the shirt on, even though it was a bit tight. The group went back to the activities they were doing before. A few of the slaves had managed to get a book or two from somewhere. Marina explained that each of them were prostituted out as a way to gain money for THEM, while each slave only received a tiny portion of the money they made, anywhere from 50€ to 3,00€ a night. They would save up the meager amounts to buy extra portions of the meals, which cost 2,00€, extra clothing, costing anywhere from 5,00€ to 10,00€ depending on the item, or stuff to keep themselves entertained; books, a notebook and pencil, or cards, which all cost an extreme amount. Tony was suddenly filled with hate at the thought of being owned and exploited for his body. Then a few men that he had never seen before came into the room.

"You, come with us!" They shouted at Tony, then they grabbed him by his arms and led him out of the room. They roughly guided him down the hall and into a large room with Three men in it.

"So this is the new arrival." The man in the middle said.

"He's quite the looker." The man on the left said. "Remove his shirt and pants. I want a better look at what we just paid for." The guards stripped him of his clothing. Leaving Tony standing there buck naked trying to cover his manhood.

"Don't worry boy, you'll get your clothes back." The man on the right said. "Oh he'll make us quite the profit, look at how filled out he is. Turn around boy." Tony just stood there confused, because the man had spoken too fast. "Turn around boy! Are you deaf?!" That Tony understood.

"Yes...I..uh..actually am mostly deaf, sorry." Tony said as he turned around.

"Oh, how much can you hear boy?" The man said louder and slower.

"Completely in my right ear, 30% in my left, unless you talk loudly and slowly, I can't make out what you're saying." Tony informed them.

"Someone mark that down, that way we can tell his future partners, so they won't beat him to death when he doesn't respond."

"Partners?"

"Yes boy, in a week we will be auctioning off your precious virginity to the highest bidder. What did none of the others tell you?"

Tony shook his head no.

"Well we're just getting a good look at you, and now that we know what we got you can go back." The man said kindly. They had never gotten a sex slave as young as the boy, and they didn't want the boy to panic too much.

Tony walked back to the room, with dread filling his heart, his mentor and partners didn't do their research enough, for Tony was about to live an existence that none of them were prepared to face, for in a weeks time he will be sold to the highest bidder for the sole purpose of the buyers pleasure.

"How long do you have?" Merina asked.
"A week."

"We have a major problem. The people who bought Tony didn't put him with the children. They put him right with the adults they use to gain a profit from." Clint announced as he stormed into the room.

"Does that mean what I think it means." Natashed said, shuddering from the implied thought.

"Yes. In a week, they are going to sell Tony's virginity to the highest bidder, then he will be a sex slave." Clint said coldly.

"Wasn't he supposed to be placed with the children? He is 15." Fane said outraged.

"Well apparently they liked what they saw," Each person in the room got a sickened look on their face, "And they decided that they wanted to make a profit off of Tony's looks." Clint said.

"We need to get Tony out of there. If Tony has to spend a month living like that, it'll ruin him." Natasha said.

"Do you think he'll survive two weeks? Because in two weeks we have the best chance to get all 8 of the leaders of the ring. " Coulson asked.

"I think he will. He has to. He survived 13 years with his father, who put him in the hospital many times. His father even put him in a coma, yet Tony came out stronger." Fane explained.

"I agree with Fane. If we go in too early we may end up signing Tony's death sentence." Coulson added.

"The other people he is with, seem like they have already taken Tony under their wings. Trust me they will prevent tony from physical if tony is harmed they will care for him, to the best of their abilities." Clint said, as he had been the one to listen to the mic feed.

"We just have to sit and pray, that we can get Tony back, before any real harm is done." Fane said gravely.

That week went past dreadfully fast. Tony's bruises had healed nicely, he'll have to thank Fane, Clint and Natasha for those when he gets back, because those bruises had spared him a week of prostitution. But he was fearing this evening. All he could do was hope that the highest bidder was gentle, though Tony knew that the chances of that happening were slim to none. The other men did give him a few tips, to prevent any unnecessary beatings. Then shortly after his small supper, which never seemed to satisfy him, the guards came back, to escort him to the room again. He was given a flashy pair of briefs, that were designed to show off as much of his body as possible, without him being naked, for the bidders to bid on.

Then the guards led him into the room where he was told to stand in the middle. The room had about 15 men in it, who appeared to be the bidders. Tony had never felt so worthless in his life. How demeaning was it to be auctioned off like a rare piece of art. He should have the right to his own body. Then he realized that he didn't have the right to his own body anymore. His body now belonged to whoever was going to pay the highest. The auction went on for what seemed to be forever. Then finally the winner offered a price none of the others could match. 50,000€. Then Tony saw the man who won. He was at least 6 inches taller than Tony and must have been at least 75lbs heavier, plus the man looked downright mean. Tony was absolutely terrified.

Tony was then taken from the room and led into a large room with a large plush bed and a bathroom. Tony had no idea what to expect from this man. When Tony saw the man up close, and completely naked, he almost ran away. The man then stripped Tony and forced Tony onto the bed. Then Tony's world erupted in pain.

"We were too late." Natasha said as she stormed out of the surveillance room. She had just started
hearing Tony's screams of agony, and she couldn't take anymore.
"Is it that bad?" Clint asked not wanting to know the answer to his question.
"Take whatever you're thinking and multiply it by 100. The man who won the auction is an animal." Natasha spat.
"Don't worry, we'll get Tony out of there." Coulson added.
"Don't worry we're going to find that bastard who's doing this to tony, and we will hunt him down like the beast that he is."Fane added. The room full of assassins were silent for the rest of the night, as they were trying to think of how they were going to kill the animal who was raping tony, and also trying not think about what was happening to Tony.

When the Animal was done doing his business, one of the guards took Tony, who was unconscious, into his arms and carried him to the room where the rest of the slaves resided. The guard had been forced to listen to the entire session as he guarded the door, and he couldn't seem to get the boys screams out of his head. What kind of bastard took pleasure in doing that to a 15 year old boy. The guard couldn't help but picture his own son, who was only a few years younger than tony, in Tony's place. When he got to the room he saw all the others standing vigil, for their youngest member. He laid Tony on the bed another slave had pointed him to.
" Don't worry, I've already sent my partner to get the doctor."
"Thank you. Now go before you get into trouble." The slave named Merina said. Then he left the slaves who had already started washing the blood from the boys body.

"Ok, they have a doctor with them checking over Tony. That Animal sure did a number on Tony. Apparently the bastard did not only rape Tony, without lube mind you, but he also tossed Tony around a bit, and beat him to a bloody pulp. The good news is that I've got his name. I'm figuring once Tony is recovered, we go after him and let Tony make the kill." Fane announced after hearing the doctors prognosis.
"I second that idea."
"I also agree. Now let's get Tony back." Coulson added.

Tony was in a world of pain. But he was dragged out of blissful unconsciousness by feeling a hand being run through his hair. Tony opened his eyes, or rather eye, as one was swollen shut, to see Merina sitting vigil.
"You're awake! You've been out for the past two days, that bastard did a number on you. Even the leader's are infuriated at him. Don't try to talk, he tried to strangle you, nearly succeeded too. How are you feeling? Are you in pain? Thirsty?" Merina signed.
"I'm thirsty and every part of my body aches." Tony signed. Merina helped him sit up a bit to let him drink. Then she gave him two pain pills.
"Sorry I can't give you anything else for the pain. THEY won't allow it. THEIR giving you a few days off to heal, then you have to get back to work. I'm sorry for what he did to you. He gave you three broken ribs, broke your zygomatic bone in your cheek, multiple lacerations from god knows what, a broken wrist, and he cuffed you pretty hard on your left ear, we're not sure if you've experienced any hearing damage from that, and thats not to mention what happened down there. The doctor said it was the worst damage she's seen since she started working here." Maria signed angrily.
"Is there anything to eat? I'm starving?" Tony asked feeling weak from the lack of caloric intake.
"Theres a bit of soup. I'll help you eat, but then you must sleep. Deal?"
Tony nodded. Then Merina helped him sit up a bit so that he wouldn't choke on the soup. Tony
hated how weak he felt, but he appreciated her help. Once Tony was finished he went back to sleep.

"OK, the leaders seemed to have convened early then we thought. We can get them tonight." Coulson said as he got finished looking over the latest surveillance feeds. The news brought smiles to their faces.
"When do we get these bastards?" Natasha asked.
"At 20:00 hours." Coulson said.
"Sounds like a plan." Fane added. They were going to rescue Tony, and countless others from a life of slavery. The assassins lived for moments like these.

Tony's stomach woke him up from his sleep. Sleeping really did help, plus a little emphatic draining from the people who surrounded him, they wouldn't miss the energy. Tony felt a lot better this time around. Merina was still sitting vigil with him.
"Good morning, or should I say night as it is 8pm. I suppose you're hungry?" Merina signed with a laugh. Tony nodded eagerly. Merina then helped him sit up to eat. But just before Tony got a mouthful of the soup, the door banged open and three familiar rushed towards him.

They had done it. They had taken out the eight leaders of the ring. Then they quickly freed all of the slaves. They saved Tony's room for last. When they opened up the door they saw a young woman help feed Tony some broth, then the three assassins ran over to Tony.

"Who are you guys? Leave him alone, don't you see he is injuries enough?" The woman spat out in rapid Italian, fearlessly facing the three assassins.
"Don't worry we're here to rescue you. You're free. Tony's one of us. We placed him undercover to gather information on the leaders." Natasha assured the woman.
"OK but don't make him talk. He was strangled, his larynx is swollen. Plus he might have suffered from more hearing damaged. The bastard who did this to him got him pretty hard in the ear. And be careful of his ribs." The woman said calmed. Tony had the biggest smile on his face.
"Can we get out of here now? I'm pretty sick of Italy, plus I'm starving." Tony signed.
"We've all had enough with Italy. We're never letting you out of our sights again. Now let's ditch this place." Clint signed back. Then Fane bent down and picked Tony up, being mindful of his injuries, and they left.

Went they brought Tony to the medics he was passed out, probably exhausted from all of his shield medics began to look over Tony, just to see if the doctor who had looked over tony had missed anything. The medics all took a collective gasp when they peeled off Tony's raggedy T-shirt and saw how badly the Beast had beaten Tony. Tony had probably lost a significant portion of what was left of his hearing, due to the punch that had been so hard it ruptured Tony's eardrum. Tony was also covered in molted bruises and had massive lacerations and bite marks all over his body, some were starting to get infected. When the medic finally checked out the damage the actual rape did, her face fell.
"Do you want a rape test performed?" She asked.
"No, we already have the guys name. What's the prognosis?"
"Well he has three broken ribs, a ruptured eardrum, a severe infection settling in, from the cuts and bites, a broken wrist and a sprained arm, very swollen larynx and throat, and we'll have to surgically repair his anus, due to what the bastard he's also severely malnourished, he's probably lost about 10lbs in the time he was with them" She explained, as she watched the expressions on the assassins faces drop into murderous glares, she did not envy the man who did this.
"When will he be out of surgery?" Natasha asked.
"In about 3-4 hours." The medic said. Then all three assassins ran out of the room, probably to plan the assassination of the Animal who did this to one of their own.

"Is that him?" Natasha asked.
"Yep that's the animal who did this to Tony." Clint informed her.
"Well let's take him down, in the most painful way possible." Fane said.
"Well I can shoot him in multiple area that would be extremely painful, but not fatal." Clint stated.
"And I can give him a few widow's bites to a few areas that he won't need anymore." Natasha said. Both men present did not envy the man who got in the path of the Black Widow's wrath.
"Then I'll go in and give him a death worthy of Julius Caesar*. He will regret ever setting eyes on Tony." Fane added. Then all three assassins started their hunt.

(A/N *Julius Caesar was stabbed about 60 times, none of the stabs were fatal, but he died essentially from blood loss.)

Tony could feel himself coming back to consciousness. This time Tony didn't feel the same pain as before, it was just a mild soreness. He opened his eyes to see Natasha, Clint and Fane, sitting in chairs surrounding his bed.
"How are you feeling?" Fane signed
"Sore. And absolutely starving." Tony answered.
"We got him. We got the man who did this to you." Natasha said.
"Dead or alive?"

"Dead." Clint answered, tossing a photograph to toTony. Tony say the gruesome image of the man, who had raped him, in the throes of death.
"We're never letting you out of sights again." Natasha signed.
"This wasn't supposed to happen. You were supposed to be with the children, not the adults." Fane added.
"Is everyone safe?"

"Yes, we've helped them find their families, or loved ones." Clint replied
"Why are you all signing?"

"Well we think you've another ruptured eardrum, so you might be completely deaf, or at least more deaf than you were before." Natasha signed sadly.
"Oh..."

"Now what do you need to heal with your gifts?" Asked Clint.
"Think very positive thoughts. You might get a bit tired, so sit down." Tony informed them all. Tony then went into a bit of a trance while the assassins felt a bit of their energy disappear. They watched in amazement as Tony's bruises disappeared. When he was finished only his major wounds still existed, but they resembled weeks old injuries, instead of the fresh state they had been in. Then a wave of exhaustion spread throughout the entire room, and all four occupants were peacefully asleep.

When the doctor came in half an hour later, she found the assassins huddled across Tony's bed with Natasha holding Tony's hand and resting her head on Clint's shoulder, Clint was tucked in on himself, resembling a nesting bird, and Fane was resting his head lightly on Tony's stomach. Then
she saw Tony, who looked a million times better. She knew that tony was a newly discovered mutant, his medical files said it, but she didn't know that he could heal himself that well. She quickly took his vitals and left the room as silently as she could, because every shield agent knows from experience, never wake up a sleeping assassins, especially a room full of highly trained assassins.

Tony was let out of the med bay a day later, as his healing had mended all of his injuries, well except for his hearing. It turned out that he had about 50% his hearing left in that ear, so he could hear loud noises and if someone spoke directly into his ear, but that was about it. Good thing he had hearing aids. Fane and Tony stuck around with shield for a few days before heading back to the Den. Tony would remember those next few days as a blur of mountainous amounts of food, they wanted tony to gain back the weight he lost, and massive pranks.

It turns out that Clint was an even bigger prankster than Tony, and when the two of them were together all hell broke loose. The first day after Tony had been released from the med bay, Tony and Clint decided to have an all out Nerf fight, with the bullets exploding in a burst of powder marking their shot. Tony had red, and Clint had chosen purple. Then they went full out shooting unsuspecting shield agents, causing 3/4s of the workers having either purple or red dye on them, a few having both, as tony and Clint managed to shoot them at the same time. The fight ended rather quickly when Clint accidentally shot Fury in the middle of his forehead.

The next day, since both Clint and Tony were both deaf, they 'forgot ' to put their hearing aids in. So they both went around the entire day saying 'uh huh', ' no', and 'yes' during random conversations with people, no one had a clue that the two didn't have their aids in until an ill planned briefing with Coulson and Fury got out of hand. Clint and Tony were both sitting there pretending to listen to the briefing, saying an appropriate amount of fillers, until Fury happened to ask them a question, and both didn't respond. Fury knew that something off was off with the two of them, so he asked them a really random question.

"So, Clint and Tony, do you two like cleaning bathrooms with toothbrushes?" He asked them. "Uh huh" both replied at the same time.

"Well good because you too are on bathroom duty for a week! Romanov, Fane, do you too have their aids? Because the game is up! Get out of here, and make sure you inform these two CHILDREN that they should report to the main bathroom, at 05:00 with their toothbrushes!" Fury yelled. Fane and Natasha both grabbed their respective partners and left the room as fast as possible.

When they got back to their rooms and Clint and Tony reluctantly put their hearing aids back in, all four of them burst out laughing.

"That was absolutely brilliant. I didn't even know until we were having a conversation and you said "uh, huh" four times in a row." Fane exclaimed.

"You guys both realize you're going to be cleaning the toilets for a week, right?" Natasha asked.

"Wait, what ?!" Clint and Tony asked at the same time.

"Well Fury had an inkling of what was up, so he asked if you like to clean toilets, and you both said yes." Fane explained.

"Fury is so going to get it for that!" Clint said. Then Tony's and Clint's face lit up with excitement. Both Natasha and Fane knew that look.

"Whatever you two plan on doing, keep me out of it!" Natasha screamed.

"Fury's going to kick you both off the helicarrier, while its in flight, I hope you guys realize that." Fane said.

"Well he's the one who's making us get up at 5. I wonder what we could do with all that time on our hands." Tony said. Then Tony and Clint got to work.

The next morning after they both cleaned the toilets, with Fane and Natasha's toothbrushes of course, they got to work setting up several smoke bombs all over the place in the vents. Then they
hacked into the mainframe of the helicarrier, Tony was a genius, and got all the smoke detectors to blare a continuous loop of "Barbie Girl" by Aqua, "What is Love" by Haddaway, and "Living La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin. Only Tony or Clint knew how to turn them off, but they were planning on hiding in the vents all day, so the shield agents had to find them first. So at precisely 10am, a relatively boring part of the day, all of the bombs went off and the music began playing. "I WANT THEM IN MY OFFICE NOW!" Fury was furious. He had had enough of the middle school antics of Clint and Tony. Putting those two together was one of the worst ideas ever. It seemed as though the two of them combined amplified their immaturity exponentially. Sure he got some pretty good blackmail of his agents dancing, like idiots, to the most annoying songs ever created, but enough was enough.
"Um sir, we can't find them." A junior agent said, visibly cowering.
"We are 10,000 ft in the air, what do you mean you can't find them?!" Fury said. The junior agent looked scared shitless.
"Uh well we haven't checked the vents." The junior agent admitted. Then Natasha came in dragging the two pranksters by their ears. "Tell them to turn it off!" She yelled annoyed.
"Well you heard the woman, go turn off the crazy music, BEFORE I EJECT YOU OFF THE HELICARRIER WITHOUT PARACHUTES!" Fury yelled. Tony and Clint knew that their prank had lost its spark so they left the room sulking, like puppies with their tails between their legs. Within moments the music stopped.
"Did you at least get some good pictures?" Clint asked Fury when he walked back into the room.
"Yes. I have enough blackmail on the agents to last decades. Something tells me that I may be overworking them a little." Fury said.
"A Little? We have at least 5 female agents who decided to go nuts and start taking their tops off. We have another man who decided to rip his top open like he was the hulk!" Natasha exclaimed. "Really?!" Both Tony and Clint asked.
"Yes! Now you two get back to work, I'm pretty sure I'm not paying you to play tricks." Fury declared.
"Uh actually you're not paying me at all." Tony admitted.
"I'm paying you in food!"
"Fair enough." Tony said as he and Clint got back to work. The prank war was officially over.
As with the previous chapter all italics are sign language

Tony adapts to life back with Dolofóni fairly easily. He and Fane are rarely back at the den as they are one of the more busier pairs of assassins, due to their proficiency. Tony gets the chance to team up with Shield every couple of weeks, and he even teams up with the X Men on special occasions to battle the Brotherhood. In the two years since Tony had learned that he was a mutant he had grown in more ways than one. Since he had left Charles's School, he had gained a few inches in height and now stood at about 5'10, a decent height for a martial artist, and he had gained another 40lbs in muscle mass. Tony's hair had faded back to his natural color and was loose, wild and went to his shoulders. He had the remnants of a tan and his hair was sun streaked from a prolonged mission with Shield in Colombia. Tony had also made good progress as an assassin. He had racked up over 150 kills in the past two years and had recently been promoted to Stag, a level 3 assassin. Even after Tony had lost Fane as a mentor, he still partnered up with him most of the time, because of their partnership with Shield.

In the four years that Tony had been "missing" from the limelight of the media, Howard's abusive tactics had come to the public eye of the Media, along with Maria's neglect. Tony suspected that either the family doctor or one of the maids had leaked it to the news. Howard was also now being suspected of having a role in "Tony's abduction" and was being suspected of being a War Monger, and a potential terrorist, due to his close associations with well known terrorist rings in the middle east.

Fane came running up to him.
"Tony, the council wishes to see you know!"
"What's wrong?" Tony said panicked.
"I'm not exactly sure, but it's urgent." Tony and Fane then hurried to the Council Chambers.
"You've summoned me." Tony said with a slight bow of courtesy.
"Tony we've just received a hit. Its on your father."
"My father?"
"Yes. It appears that the United States Government has deemed him a risk to national security, and is too volatile to keep alive."
"And you want me to take the hit?"
"It appears that your father has found out that you are with us. And he's taken your Mother, his household staff and a MI6 agent named Jarvis, hostage, and he's asking for you to reveal yourself."
"Jarvis?" Tony couldn't believe what he was hearing. Jarvis was a spy, and Howard knew his secret.
"Yes a Sir Edwin Jarvis. Do you know him?"
"Yes, he was my Butler and caregiver. He was the one that got me out of the house. I'll take the case."
"Ok. Do you require anything?"
"Fane. As soon as I take my father out, I plan on revealing myself to the public. I'll need Fane to rough me up a bit. I'll go along with the story that my father had arranged my kidnapping, and that once he died, the Captors released me. I'll still work with you guys, but I can't let my family's reputation go down due to my father's insanity." Tony explained.
"Tony, you've done well as an assassin, and we don't see any issues with your plan. Contact us as
soon as the deed is done. We as the council wish you luck with your hunt." The council stated. Then Tony and Fane left to get ready.

By the time they had reached the Stark Mansion, Howard had already killed three of the hostages. Tony snuck through the back of the mansion, in full battle regalia, and with the stag mask he looked positively frightening. He had located the room with the hostages fairly easily, and just when Howard had been about to kill a fourth hostage, a young maid shaking with fright, Tony had walked out of the shadows.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you!" He shouted as he withdrew one of his katana blades. "And who would you be?" Howard said as he whipped around and aimed the gun at Tony. "I am Samael, the Angel of Death. Your time in this world has come to an end." Tony said gravely. "Hahaha... Samael, some Angel of Death, you are. You brought a sword to a gunfight!" Howard said as he took a shot at Tony, who deflected the bullet with a swing of his blade.

"Do not underestimate me. I've killed bigger slimebags than you, in my sleep. Now I suggest you let these hostages go. They have done no wrong!" Tony said as he brought his blade to rest underneath his father's vulnerable throat.

"Fine, I'll let the house staff go. But my wife and ex-servant stays!" Howard yelled. "I can work with that. Now release them!" Tony yelled. And Howard got on the task of taken off the servants bonds and led them out to the back of the house. Tony made a quick signal to Fane who was lurking in the woods behind the mansion. Then Tony escorted Howard back into the house.

"Enough with the façade Tony!" Howard announced when he got back into the room where his mother and Jarvis sat. "I have no idea what you're talking about!" Tony exclaimed, trying to draw Howard away from himself.

"I know that you are my son, if I can even call you that, Tony Stark."

"When did you find out?" Tony asked as he removed his mask, his mother collapsed into her chair in a dead faint.

"I've known from the start. Who do you think told Obediah to put the hit on you?" Howard explained.

"You BASTARD! You put a hit out on your own 13 year old son?!” Jarvis exclaimed. "Shut up! You lied about you being a spy, living in my own house for 15 years!” Howard yelled at Jarvis.

"Does anyone else have some other shocking secrets they wish to get out while we're gathered here?" Maria asked as she was revived by the shouting match.

"Well I'm a mutant." Tony said.

"Well since we're all being honest here, I sent the MI6 after you two and a half years ago." Howard explained.

"You nearly killed me! Thanks to you I have a freaking battery stuck in my chest, and now I'm mostly deaf! Why did you want me in the first place?"

"I wanted to exploit your powers for my own personal gain. I wanted to make you into the world's most sought after weapon. And if I couldn't have you I wanted no one to have you, until your mutant and shield friends helped you escape." Howard explained on the verge of hysteria. "That was you?! I wondered who was behind Tony being taken in by the MI6, as my people would've never used a bloody car bomb to bring in a fourteen year old boy, no matter how trained he is!" Jarvis yelled outraged.

"Tony, my boy what did they do to you?" His mother asked.

"More than what you three ever did for me! You never even paid attention to me. Howard" Tony spat out his name " put me in the hospital more times than I can remember. And Jarvis, who was more a parent to me than either of you, lied to me from day one! The Dolofóni gave me more
attention in one week than all three of you combined gave me in 13 years. I've found my family in a group of assassins and mutants. Now Howard are you going to let my mother and Jarvis go or am I going to have to kill you?" Tony spat stepping closer to the man who spawned him.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you. See I have this place set to explode. If you step one foot closer to me, I will press this button and put all four of us will be put out of our misery." Howard explained. Tony with his superhuman speed, struck out at Howard, but one moment before Tony decapitated him he struck the struck the button. Tony knew what was about to happen, so he backed away from Howard as fast as he could, but he was too late because less than a second later his world exploded.

Fane had saw the explosion from outside where the hostages were, he immediately ran into the blazing inferno to find Tony. As soon as he got inside he could smell the burning flesh and he prayed that Tony wasn't one of the bodies. When he entered the living room he saw Tony collapsed against the wall bleeding from a nasty gash from where his head had knocked into a nearby table. Fane picked up Tony and placed his mask back on him, and brought him out of the house, there was nothing he could do for the others who were already dead. He then ran into the woods where he parked their car, laid Tony in the back seat and sped off to their motel room. Every so often he gazed back at Tony, who's breathing had taken on a rough quality and looked pale and clammy. The only thing that proved he was still alive was the sound of breath. When he got to the motel room he carried Tony inside and checked his wounds.

Luckily he only received minor burns but the force of the explosion had broken his right shoulder blade and collarbone, several ribs, and he had landed wrong on his right leg, also breaking it. One of the ribs seemed to have punctured a lung. But the injury that scared him the most was his head wound, because Tony wasn't responding to any stimuli. Fane only had one choice, he had to call for emergency help. Fane quickly removed Tony's clothing and weapons and put him in a raggedly T-shirt and pair of old sweatpants. He removed Tony's hearing aids, as they would not be on a captive, and all of his weapons. Then he called an ambulance. When the medics arrived he told the story that he and Tony had perfected over the last few hours in case something like this would have happened.

"What happened?"
"I was driving along a country road, coming back from my brothers house, and I saw a weird lump on the side of the road. So I pulled over and got out to investigate. When I got outside I realized that it was a person, so I checked him out. He was in bad shape and the road was pretty deserted, so I picked him up carefully and placed him in my backseat. I drove back to my room here, you see I'm from out of town and I'm here for a work, and called you guys. I know I should have left him there at the scene of the crime, but I didn't think you guys would have come in time, and I didn't know how much time he had left."

"And do you have an alibi to prove that you were with your brother tonight." The officer asked.
"Yes. Here's my brother number. His name is Clinton Bradshaw and he lives with his wife Natalie over off of County Highway AA." 
"And do you have his street address?"
"Oh yes its E45762 County highway AA. Its their vacation home, right on a lake." Fane said.
"Okay well we need you to come down to the station to file a report. Don't worry, what you did may have saved the boys life." The officer said.
"Will I be able to visit him, to see if he's alright?"
"I think we could arrange that."

Tony woke up to find himself in a stark white room. He looked around to see various medical equipment. He was in a hospital, Fane must have deemed his injuries too life threatening so he
must have dropped him off at a hospital. He then saw a few doctors come in. They were saying something to him, but he couldn't make out their voices. Tony did his best to look panicked, and it worked quite successfully. The doctors realized that their suspicions of Tony being deaf, were right, so one ran out to get a translator, while the others tried to calm down a seemingly frightened boy.

"It's all right no one is going to hurt you. We're trying to help." The interpreter signed "Who are you, and what am I doing here?" He signed back, one handedly.

"You're in a hospital. A man found you lying on the side of a road, and brought you here. You've been unconscious for a week. Can you tell us your name."

"I'm Tony Stark." Tony signed, all of the Doctors glanced at each other, then one ran out of the room.

"And what is your birthday, Tony?" The interpreter asked, trying to prove his identity.

"May 29, 1986." The doctors and now police officer looked at each other in shock, how was it possible that Tony Stark, who had been missing for 4 years, appeared on the side of the road, the same night his parents died?.

"Tony, do you remember what happened to you?" The interpreter asked under the guidance of the officer.

"Yes." Tony signed then he explained the tragic backstory that Tony and Fane had developed, about his past four years of misery. By the end Tony, ever the actor, had brought everyone in the room to tears as they heard about how he was tortured, injured and exploited, by the likes of his father and his fathers associates. Then when he was finished, a man that tony had grown to hate in the last four years walked through the door.

"Tony, this is Obadiah Stane, the new CEO, of your fathers company. He's also your new guardian." The interpreter said. And at that moment, Tony realized that his life was about to become a living hell.
Breaking News: Tony Stark has been found. After a long four year search for the missing heir to Stark Industries, Tony Stark has finally been found. Tony was found early this week by a good samaritan who happened to spy him on the edge of the road. Tony has been in the Hospital, due to injuries ever since. No statement has been given on his condition or how he's reacting to the news of his fathers insanity or his parents deaths. Its been confirmed that the reins of CEO, and guardianship of Tony Stark has been given to Howards long time associate Obadiah Stane, who will be giving a press conference later this week on the condition of Tony Stark and Stark Industries. All of us here at NBC News are all wishing Tony a speedy recovery."

"That's quite a story you've weaved there. Actually its quite brilliant, especially the part where your father was involved. You know its not that far from what your father had planned for you. But don't worry your secret is safe with me." Obadiah explained to Tony, once he gave Tony some SI hearing aids.
"My secret, I have no idea what you're talking about." Tony said, trying not to reveal any more information.
"Oh yes, your secret. You see I know that you are a mutant freak. I also know that you've received training as an Assassin. What? You don't think your father was alone in his wishes to exploit, let's say, your skills, did you?"
"Well if you know that much, you also know that I can kill you right now and make it look like an unfortunate accident. Actually there are probably a hundred ways I could kill you without me as much as moving from this bed." Tony snarled. " You should also know that I have friends in very high places, that are probably watching this conversation. The people I spent the last four years with will hunt you down, if anything should happen to me!"
"Don't worry, son. All I want is your cooperation in helping me take out a few of my rivals. I'll even let you continue to run around in your little cap and mask." Stane explained.
"No! I won't do it. I only kill bastards like my father. If I were to kill anyone it'll be you!" Tony growled, he was furious.
"I have ways of changing your mind. I can either make these next few years, pleasant or a living nightmare. Its up to you to decide your fate. Oh and I wouldn't pull any disappearing acts, if you ever want to get Stark Industries back."
"I will not be your personal killing machine. Give me your worst, I'm pretty sure I can handle it." " Oh you just wait and see. Now I have an important meeting to go to. You'll getting discharged tomorrow, so I'll let you think about what I've said overnight. Tomorrow the fun begins. " Obadiah said with a smirk on his face. Then he left. Tony couldn't let Stane destroy his family name, like his father did, he'll just have to live with his tactics for the next 4 years.

Later that two very familiar figures dressed in scrubs walked in, and Tony had a major déjà vu moment.
"Natasha, Clint, I haven't seen you in ages." Tony exclaimed.
"How are you feeling, младший брат ( little brother)?" Natasha asked when she saw Tony's right side of his body in casts.
"Like I was runned over by the helicarrier. But I get out of here tomorrow." He informed them.
"Do you want to use us to heal a bit?" Clint asked.
" I can't risk it. Stane, knows my little secret. And I do not want to give him any more info then I have too." Tony explained.
"But how?" Natasha asked.
"Apparently he and my father were behind my initial hit, and they were behind the car bombing."
What?!” Both shield agents asked, outraged.
"Those suspicions about my father being a terrorist, were true. My father orchestrated with a few rogue MI6 agents to "bring" me in. He wanted to exploit me for my abilities. Now Stane wants to continue with Howard's plans."
"What?!” Clint was furious.
"We can get you out of here."
"I can't leave. If I get out of Stane's grip, he will out my secret, accuse me of murdering my parents and take the company from me. If I spend the next 4 years with the bastard, he'll torture me until I become his own personal killing machine. I can't win either way! But I would rather be tortured for 4 years, and get my families company back than rot in a jail cell for the rest of my life, watching Stark Industries destroy the world." Tony said determinedly.
"Here, Fury said to give this to you."
Natasha said as she handed him a little earpiece, and mic.
"He thought something like this would happen so, he wants you to gather as much information as you can against Stane. The mic will go into your battery, and the earpiece attaches to your hearing aid." Tony removed his battery so that she could attach it to the back of it. Then she took Tony's left hearing aid and attached the ear piece. "They will also keep track of your vitals, if they get too weak, we'll send a team in right away, screw Stane. You're not alone, okay? We will be watching out for you. Once we get enough evidence, we will arrest Stane." Natasha explained.
"Thank you guys. I'm not sure when I will see you again. Can you get this note to Fane? I haven't seen him since my father tried to kill me." He said as he passed them a note he had scribbled down earlier, knowing, or at least hoping that one of them would get the chance to see one of them before Stane made him pull an unwanted disappearing act.
"Of course, Tony. Now don't give in to his tactics. We won't allow him to kill you, and if he does we will hunt him down, and kill him in the most brutal way possible." Clint assured Tony.
"быть храбрым, маленький брат.(be brave little brother.)" Natasha said.
"Don't worry, I won't become his tool." Tony exclaimed. Then Clint and Natasha hugged him.
"Now go, I don't want you to get caught. But one more thing."
"Yes?"
"Tell the Xmen, the plan. I don't want Charles to worry. I'm starting to develop some telepathy, and I don't want him to worry too much if I lose control during a 'session'."
"Of course we'll tell them. We'll see you soon." Natasha said, knowing full well what he meant by session. Then Tony saw them leave, not knowing when they would see each other again.

"Today I am reporting live from the press conference Obadiah Stane is giving on Stark Industries and the finding of Tony Stark, who is rumored to make a long awaited appearance today. "Mr. Stane, How is Tony dealing with his rescue and his parents deaths?"

"Why don't you ask him yourself? Tony come on out." A thunderous applause reigned out through the audience as they saw Tony walk out on crutches.

"I want to say thank you for all of your support during these hard times. Though I am saddened by the news of my mothers death, I can't help but think that none of this would have happened if my father would have received help with his mental illness before he became unstable. To prevent this from happening to other families, when I turn 21, and take control over Stark Industries, I will put an end to weapon development and focus on medical technology and the technology needed to save lives of those my Father put in danger. I have time now to answer some of your questions."

"Mr. Stark, what so you plan on doing in the time before you take over Stark Industries?"

"I plan on focusing my time on recovering from the injuries I received in captivity, and I plan on continuing my education in order to help the company more."
"Mr. Stark, can you elaborate on some of the injuries you received in captivity?"

"During my time in captivity, I received some heavy blows to the head, which caused me to lose most of my hearing. But thanks to a new line of state of the art hearing aids the R&D section of Stark Industries made, I can hear almost as well as before the incident. I also received substantial chest trauma, that I will receive treatment for in the next few months."

"Mr. Stark, first of all I want to say that you are a very brave young man, for going through all that you have been through, and coming out a better man." Applause reigned through the audience "what do you have to say about the allegations that your father abused you?"

"They are true. Howard Stark was a very sick man. I suffered through years of abuse, and then captivity, that he was behind, and I've got to say one thing. Never again! When I gain control over my inheritance I plan on teaming up with organizations that help prevent Child and Domestic Abuse, and organizations that help promote mental illness awareness. I suffered through things that no child should, and I plan on seeing a day where no child is abused." Tony declared to another round of applause.

"Wow! He is good! Where did he learn to milk a crowd like that?" Clint asked.
"I have no idea. I swear if he wasn't a billionaire, genius, assassin, he would make an award winning actor." Fane exclaimed.
"I just hope he lives long enough to reclaim Stark Industries." Natasha said solemnly.
"Don't worry, Romanov, we'll get him out of there. But we need to make sure we have enough evidence on Stane before we make the arrest. Plus he has contact with us, we'll be with him for every part of the way." Fury exclaimed. He had to admit, he had developed feelings for the boy over the years. He couldn't stand the fact that Tony Stark was willing to go through torture to make the world a better place. If he had the choice he would swap places with the boy in a heart beat. "Did you see the look on Stane's face, when Tony said he'll put an end to the weapons industry? It was priceless!" Clint said trying to brighten up the mood.
"Yes it was." Fane agreed with a chuckle. Then the whole room started to laugh, as if to cover up their feelings of worry, that they all felt.

When the press conference was over Obadiah led Tony into the black SUV that would take them to the discreet location.
"Put this on. I don't want you getting any ideas of escape!" Obadiah said as he handed tony a black blind fold.
"Kinda can't, you know the whole arm in a sling thing." Tony exclaimed sarcastically. Stane then tied the blindfold over Tony's eyes, rather harshly too.
"So am I getting handcuffs too? Because that will add to the whole BDSM feeling of this oh so joyous car ride." Tony added with a laugh.
"Shut up, before I have them gag you too." Obadiah yelled.
"Ohh kinky!" Tony exclaimed. Then Obadiah, having enough of Tony's additude, gagged Tony. But that didn't even seem to silence him. So Obadiah ordered on the guards to knock Tony out. Tony slumped over unconscious.
"Why do I get the feeling that it is I who is going to suffer more than him?"
"We could always cut out his tongue ?" A guard suggested.
"No that would be too messy, plus how would we explain that?" Obadiah exaggerated.
"What about drugs?"
"Now that sounds like fun! Pump him full of drugs to keep him lucid but quiet, sounds like a plan." Obadiah said thoughtfully. Oh these were going to be a fun couple of years, well at least for him.
Tony woke up to find himself in a plain white room. The room only had a table, a chair, a toilet, a sink and his bed and it reminded Tony of a jail cell. So this was where he was going to spend his next few years. There was a door, but it only opened one way and had no handle on his side. Tony was honestly expecting something way worse. In fact this was kinda luxurious compared to the places he had stayed on extended missions overseas.

"Ah...so glad to see you're awake Tony." Stane said as he walked into the room with a tray of food.

"How are you liking your accommodations?"

"This is quite pleasant. Nice and cozy. And you're going to feed me. You must have flunked Villain school, because this is the best cell I've ever been in." Tony announced with a smile on his face.

"Oh I could make this worse, but I thought I should treat you with some decency, since you are my best friend's orphan son. And this" Obadiah said as he pointed to the meal, " Is the last meal you're going to see for a while. Can't start with you hungry. So eat, relax and enjoy yourself, because the fun starts tomorrow."

" Ooh goody, I can't stand being bored." Tony said as Stane left the room.

"Eat the food Stark." A mans voice, either Clint of Fane, whispered in his ear.

" Its probably poisoned." Tony said as if he was thinking out loud.

"He doesn't want to kill you. Its probably a sedative or hallucinogen. You have to eat it, with your high metabolic rate, you would starve to death in two weeks. I want you to eat every chance you get, it will allow you to resist torture longer. If it is a hallucinogen, I will be there to help you define what's real, OK?"

" Well here goes nothing." He shifted himself up, which was extremely difficult with a broken leg, shoulder and collarbone, and limped to the table and opened up the tray. Inside was a burger, chips and a pickle. Along with a coke. Staring at the coke he realized how thirsty he was and took a big drink of the coke, so far so good. Then he started on the burger, which turned out the be a big tasteless greasy mess. The fries were soggy and cold, but he ate every bite washing it down with the soda. That was one of the worst burgers he ever had, but so far he felt okay, so he limped back to the bed. The drugs kicked in just as he was lying down. Everything seemed to be going in slow motion.

"Tony, resist it. They gave you a sedative. Stay with me Tony, focus on my voice. Tony resist it..."

The voice in his ear yelled, he couldn't resist it anymore and his world faded into black.

"Shit! They've started already!" Fane yelled in disgust.

"What happened?" Natasha asked.

"They gave him a sedative of some sort. Fast working too. I have no idea what they plan on doing to him, but it doesn't sound good. You," he pointed to a junior agent, " watch his vitals. If they get dangerously low, inform me right away!" He ordered the man.

"There's nothing we can do but wait." Natasha said.

"But why does it have to be him? Why does it always have to be him!?" Fane said.
"I don't know, but he's strong, he'll survive. At least you got him to eat. Without food I have no idea how long he would last." Natasha assured him.

"Tony...Tony, wake up!" A man's voice beckoned to him. Tony opened his eyes to find himself in a different room, handcuffed to a chair. Stane was looking down at him.
"What did you give me?" He asked, amazed at how slurred his words were.
"Oh, just a little cocktail I had the medical department at SI make up. It was deemed too powerful for the medical field, and the side effects were too many."
"Side effects?"
"Nausea, Photosensitivity, Migraines, Hallucinations and Seizures, are some of the most common effects." Stane announced gleefully. "All you have to do is agree to kill some of my rivals, and the drug will be out of your system in a few hours. If not I'll keep giving you different cocktails until either I get bored or you give up."
"I'm not going to be your tool. I do not kill people if they're innocent! I only attack bastards like yourself."
"Fine be that way. I hope you like your new accommodations."
Tony looked around his 'room'. It was certainly more like the cells he was used to. He was handcuffed to the chair, only his left hand was so at least Stane left his injured arm alone. He probably could break apart the cuff, but he didn't because A, he didn't want Stane to know about his strength, and B, he felt the beginnings of a migraine coming on. He couldn't see any cameras or mics in the room, but that didn't mean anything as Stane was CEO of one of the most advanced tech companies in the world. He didn't have a bed, or even a toilet, that was going to be fun.
"Tony! Can you hear me? What did they give you? Are you OK?" A panicked woman's voice rang through his head.
"Ugh my head is killing me!" Tony said trying to make it sound like he was talking to himself.
"Tony, your vitals are all over the place! Can you lie down?" She said quietly yelling. Tony put all of his weight into pushing the chair over. He was now on his side. Then he suddenly felt extremely nauseous and expelled the contents on his stomach, at least he was on his side, it would have been worse if he was sitting up. His headache was now getting worse. His head was swimming and he couldn't think straight.
"Tony just close your eyes and try to sleep. You'll be alright." Natasha assured Tony then started singing a soft Russian lullaby. Tony listened to the haunting melody as he drifted off to sleep.

"Stane's definitely drugging him. He just gave Tony a cocktail that causes a whole array of symptoms, including seizures. Then he left him handcuffed to a chair. I swear I want to kill him now!" Natasha screamed as soon as she was assured that Tony was either asleep or passed out.
"You should have heard him, he was literary moaning, 'My head' over and over again." She said as Clint gathered her in a hug.
"He will be alright, he always is." Clint assured her.
"But I don't know how much longer I can last. I'll go insane if I have to hear him in pain for four years!"
"We'll get him out."

The next few weeks are spent in a haze, Tony is starting to lose track of how long he's been in the room, all he knows is a constant feeling of pain, hunger and thirst. Then one glorious day he gets the message he's been waiting for.
"We've got him. We've got enough evidence to put him behind bars for a long time." Clint
"Whispered into the ear piece. "you just have to survive two more days. Then we'll get you all the pizza you can eat."

Then Stane walks in.
"How long have I been here?" Tony asked.
"You don't need to know." Stane replied
"Almost two months." Clint answered

"Are you ready to give in yet?" Stane asks Tony.
"As I've told you over and over again. No!" Tony spat out.
"Since the drugs aren't working, I think it's about time to start phase 2."
"Tony, what's phase 2? Ask him what's phase 2!"
"What's phase 2?" Tony asked.
"Oh I think you'll like what I have planned. It's absolutely electrifying. I think you'll also enjoy the specialist I brought in. If drugs won't get you to betray your honor, I'm pretty sure some blood loss and a few shocks will do it." Obadiah explained almost giddily. Both Tony and Clint's blood went cold at the sound of his voice.

"Clint what's wrong?" Fane asked, as he watches Clint become as white as a ghost.
"We don't have two days! We need to get in there now! Obadiah's about to start physically torturing Tony right now." Clint yelled in outrage. Fane's face visibly paled.
"Get Fury in here now!"

Tony was being strapped into a chair.
"Make sure he stays down! I'm going to ask you one more time, Are you going to help me eliminate my rivals?"
"No! I've told you a million times NO!"
"Demetri, start with the knives, since he likes using them so much. Give him some nice scars to accompany the nice ones on his shoulders." Tony then started panicking. "Tony, all you have to do is agree to kill a few people, just say the word and you'll be free to leave."
"Never!"
"Fine I warned you!" Then he gave the signal and Demetri's knife pierces his vulnerable skin. Tony blocks the pain from his mind. "Tony, I commend you for your bravery. Demetri, use the worst one you've got. I want to hear the brat scream."
"Tony hold on eta 30 minutes, just hold on!" Fane's voice echoed through his head. The next 30 minutes go by in a haze of agony and blood, yet Tony doesn't give them the pleasure of hearing him scream. Then he hears the tell tale sound of people storming the compound.
"I've been bugged this whole time." Tony says faintly then he sees the familiar figures of his friends come in the room and he submits to the darkness beckoning him to fade away.

Natasha enters the room first, where they heard the voice of Stane screaming. The first thing she sees is Tony's body covered in blood, on the verge of losing consciousness. Fane and Clint are taking Stane down.
"Obadiah Stane, you are hereby under arrest for the torture of Anthony Stark, and for treason against your government, along with a number of other charges!" Clint shouts.
"You can't do this to me! I want a lawyer!" Obadiah shouts.
"Actually, I can do whatever I want. You're under Shield jurisdiction!" Clint announces, then
punches Obadiah in the face.
"How is he?" Fane asks Natasha who's checking Tony's vitals.
"Not good. He needs medical attention now!" Natasha says. Fane gathers Tony in his arms, alarmed by how light Tony was. Then the three assassins and prisoner leave the room.
Obadiah was suddenly very frightened. He was surrounded by shield agents who all desired to bash his head in. Apparently they've all heard what he was doing to Tony over the past two months, and he got the feeling that he was never going to see the light of day again. Then he was in front of Director Fury, who brought up his arm and punched him in the jaw, and the next thing Obadiah knew he was on the floor and his jaw on fire.

Tony could hear the beeping of a heart monitor and the soft murmuring of voices. He opened his eyes to see three familiar faces peering down at him.
"Where am I?" Tony asked groggily.
"You're in the med-bay on the helicarrier." Fane answered.
"What happened?"
"We stormed the compound and captured Obadiah. The company is yours and once the public hears your side of the story, Stane will be locked up for a long time."
"Is there anything to eat? I'm starving, I feel like I haven't eaten in weeks."
"Because you probably haven't. We'll get someone to bring you some food." Fane said with a chuckle.
"Why do you all look like someone's died?"
"Because we almost lost you, if we would have came an hour later you would've died from blood loss." Natasha admits gravely.
"What happened to me, because honestly it all started to blur together."
"They found a large amount of dangerous cocktails in your bloodstream. The doctors said if it wasn't for your high metabolism you probably would have od'd a long time ago. You've also lost about 40lbs, they weren't feeding you. The man Demetri gave you some pretty nasty cuts, you'll get some nice scars from those. They're going to keep you in here for at least a week, because you're going to be going through withdrawals, and because you can't heal yourself."
"Why not?"
"Fury wants you to publicly testify and it would be odd if you were completely healed."
"What about the 'scars'?"
"I'm sorry the bastard cut through them, the council will understand. " Fane said sadly.
"What are you guys talking about?" Clint asked.
"In the Dolofóni, we mark our rank by scars. Because becoming a Dolofóni is permanent." Fane explained. Then he took of his top to show them.
"Its so intricate. Did they hurt?" Natasha asked as she ran her finger over one.
"No. The brand did but the scars didn't."
"So what will happen to Tony, if his scars are messed with?" Clint asked.
"Tony is a rather high ranking assassin, despite his age. The Council will understand, and might even doing something else when he moves up in rank again. We all believe he'll be the youngest master ever, and he might even become one of Council. I've seen this with others, they usually get tattoos instead." Fane explained. Then the nurse walked in with a steaming tray of food.
"Ah, you're awake Tony. When the cook heard that this was for you, he added something special." She said with a smile, "now eat up, you're too skinny."
"Don't worry I plan on eating a lot in these next few days." Tony said with a smile, before his growling stomach took over and he attacked the delicious mouth watering food.
"Slow down, Tony, you're gonna choke." Fane warned Tony, who slowed down his pace.
"How come you get the good food? Whenever I'm in the med-bay I get bland mystery meat and tasteless veggies. You get a ginormous bowl of homemade beef stew, candied yams and fresh
sweet bread and is that chocolate cake?" Clint said as he reached over to get a swipe of the frosting. Tony slapped his hand and growled. 
"Back away from the cake!" Tony growled. 
"Uh Clint I would do what he says, you should never get in the way of a half-starved assassin with cake." Fane said bursting out in laughter. 
"Did you seriously just growl?" Clint asked Tony as he retracted his hand. 
"That's nothing, you should see him at barbeque night after a day of intense workouts. He almost stabbed someone who cut ahead of him in line." Fane said between laughs. 
"OK I'm never getting in the way of Tony and his food again." Natasha said bemused. 
"Did you even taste the food?!" Fane said as he saw Tony finishing up his last bite of food. 
"Yes it will go down as one of the best meals I've ever had." Tony said as he yawned. He reclined back and promptly fell asleep. 
"Is he really that fast of a sleeper?"
"Yep, all of us are trained to fall asleep on the spot. It allows us to get as much rest as possible. You know what I'm kinda tired too." Fane said as he yawned. The tiredness was contagious because within five minutes of Tony falling asleep they were all passed out in various positions around the room.

When the nurse came back into the room, she came prepared with a camera. She knew that the assassins liked to cuddle when they were sleeping, but no one had proof, so she took the perfect picture of them all curled up together asleep. They looked like a litter of kittens all lying on top of each other in compromising positions. She chuckled silently as she left the room because finally she had the perfect blackmail.

When the assassins woke up in the morning they found the room littered with pictures. Clint bent down to pick one up. The picture was of them sleeping. Natasha was curled up on the hospital bed with Tony, one arm protecting the vulnerable boy from any assaults, Fane was curled up on a chair with his head resting on Tony's stomach and a hand in Tony's hair, and Clint was curled up nestling against Fane with Tony's hand in his hand. Tony was just lying in the middle with a peaceful look on his face. Clint secretly took the photograph, and from that day on kept it on his person at all times. Little did he know that the three other assassins did the same thing.
"Earlier this week Tony Stark was found near death in an abandoned warehouse in upstate New York. Tony had been the captive of Obadiah Stane, his guardian. Obadiah Stane is in Shield custody as he has been seen to be too dangerous and unstable to go into a federal or state prison. Obadiah is facing charges of attempted murder, kidnapping and torture of a minor, several charges of treason, and many more that we are not at liberty to say. Today Tony Stark will be inheriting Stark International, even though he is still technically a minor for a few months. We have an reporter on site of the small press conference he will be giving in a few minutes, now here's our correspondent on site.

"And here comes Tony Stark now. Such an amazing kid to have survive four years of captivity, only to live as a hostage for two months, and having your captor be someone you once trusted."

Then Tony limped onstage, looking gaunt and sickly.

"I've come before you today to inform you that though I own Stark Industries, I will be passing control to the board of directors. Over the next few months I will be learning how the company works, so that I can adjust the company to better suit, you, the public."

"Mr. Stark, why are you passing control to the board? Aren't you afraid they'll be committing the same atrocities your Father and Mr. Stane did?"

"I'm passing control into the hands of the board, because I have no idea on how to run a company as large as Stark Industries. I may be a genius, but I'm still only 17. Not to mention that I've just spent the last 4 years in captivity. And to answer your second question, I will be involved in the dealings of the board of directors, I just won't have the executive power until I'm at least 18. Anymore questions?"

"Mr. Stark, can you tell us anything about your experiences in captivity?"

"I'm sorry my lawyers have decided that no details about my imprisonment should be released until the Trial that will be taking place at the end of the month. But I can tell you that I will be conducting a major sweep of Stark Industries to ensure that no one will ever use Stark technology to harm people ever again. From this day forward Stark Industries will stop any and all work on weapons. We will instead focus on defensive technology, that will be used by the men and women overseas. This technology will not hurt people but rather protect them from life threatening injuries and attacks. I will also be devoting a large portion of Stark Industries towards medical advancement and another towards clean energy."

Here are the ages of the four main people at this point in time...

Clint-26
Natasha-25
Fane-40
Tony-17

*Fane's a bit older because it takes the average assassin 18 years to become a master, plus fane is on the council so it makes sense for him to be older
"Mr. Stark, that sounds like a huge undertaking, for someone as young as you. How do you plan on taking it on?"

"Well Rome wasn't built in a day, and Stark Industries won't be fixed in a day either. It will take time to clear up the mess my Father and Mr. Stane made. By the time I take over Stark Industries as its Full Time CEO, Stark Industries will be a new company designed to save peoples lives not take them. I have time for one more question."

"Mr. Stark, what do you plan on doing between now and your 21st birthday? Besides cleaning house."

"I plan on living the teenage experience. I plan on becoming a part time student at MIT, focusing on business and science. I also plan on seeing every movie that came out in the past four years and stuffing my face with pizza." Tony said with a smile. "Thank you all for coming." Then as Tony left the stage applause erupted through the audience. Tony gave one last award winning smile to the reporters and went backstage.

"How did I do?" Tony asked Fane as he stepped backstage.

"Wonderful, especially the part about stuffing your face with pizza." Fane replied laughing. "Oh I absolutely meant that last part. I'm starving." Tony said as his stomach growled.

"I can tell, but first there's some old friends who want to see you." Fane said with a glint in his eye. "Tony!" He heard as he saw a familiar flash of white hair come at him.

"Ororo, I haven't seen you in ages!" He said. Then Ororo embraces him in a big hug, that may have been a little too rough, for she jostled his healing wounds a bit.

"Oh, I totally forgot that you were wounded." Ororo said panicking. "Wait why haven't you healed yet?"

"Its alright Ororo, I'm fine. I can't physically heal, because Stane's trial is going to be public, and I don't want to let the mutant secret out of the bag yet. It would be pretty suspicious if I was suddenly healed."

"Oh. I'm just so happy you're okay!" Ororo said as she gave him a much softer hug.

"So where's the rest of the guys?" Tony asked as he didn't see any of the other X Men.

"Oh they're all outside, didn't think that it would be wise for us all to bombard you at once." Then she and Tony went outside, Tony couldn't help but notice the two shield agents tailing him.

"Fane, why do I have a tail?"

"They don't want you out of their sight again. Fury's turning into quite the mother hen."

"I dare you to say that to the pirates face." Tony said laughing. Fane and Ororo, both joined in. Then Tony saw the rest of the X men outside.

"You were wonderful. Where did you learn to talk like that?" Jean said.

"I've just spoke the truth, or at least a version of it." Tony admitted.

"We were so worried when Agents Barton and Romanov appeared at the door and told us what happened." Jean admitted.

"I actually wanted to dispatch the X Men on the spot." Scott admitted.

"I had no choice, but to go with him. I had to get the company back." Tony admitted sadly.

"I know, but it didn't put any of us at ease." Charles said.

"Would it make you feel better, if I told you I wasn't completely alone during those two months?"

"What do you mean?" Ororo asked.

"Well I was bugged the whole time, during the particularly rough days Fane, Clint and Natasha were in my ear." Tony said.

"So no lasting effects?"

"Well I'm going to have some pretty good sized scars, so no tank tops for me anymore, but
"Well Tony and I were planning on getting a few pizzas with Clint and Natasha, do you guys want to join us? We could probably discuss the game plan while we eat." Fane suggested.

"Of course! If Tony lost any more weight he would probably disappear." Ororo admitted.

"She's right, skinny's not a good look on you kid." Logan said gruffly.

"Ok, so where we going?" Scott asked.

"Well there's a place runned by a few retired Dolofóni, where we could go. No questions asked, plus privacy." Tony added.

"A pizza place runned by ex assassins? You guys really do have connections everywhere." Jean said bemused.

"Well once you reach a certain age, you have to retire. Plus our loyalty runs deep. Dolofóni will literally put their lives on the line for another Dolofóni, even if they've never knew us." Fane explained.

"That's a very secure network you guys have." Charles noted.

"Its why their letting Tony return to his old life, and letting him team up with you guys and shield. Tony has the potential to be a Master of Masters, and his connections will make the Dolofóni stronger." Fane explained.

"Fane I'm right here, Can't you talk about me behind my back?" Tony asked chuckling.

"Tony I have no idea how you can act so bashful around us, but you can control a crowd with a smile." Charles pointed out.

"I agree with Charles. But I have to say one thing, you literally just became the world's most eligible bachelor. You're going to have girls falling all over you." Jean said.

"Oh, don't tell me about it. I can't possibly go to college, rebuild a company, be a part time assassin for three different organizations and date." Tony said sadly. Everyone started laughing.

"But you can handle being a student/assassin/CEO, with no problem?" Scott asked.

"Sure I'd much rather face an entire army, armed only with a butter knife and a gun with only one mag, than an over obsessive girl, no offence." Tony said solemnly.

"None taken." both Ororo and Jean said laughing.

"That's quite the analogy. Don't tell me you've faced those odds before."

"I've faced worse. Trust me you don't want to know." Tony said grimly.

"Yes you really don't want to know." Fane seconded Tony.

"What happened? It can't be that bad." 

"Well we were caught in the middle of Russia in the dead of winter, by some ex-KGB agents, due to some really stupid mistake. The Russians wanted some excitement so they tossed Tony in the middle of a pit, with no weapons and a fully grown mountain bear. I seriously thought Tony was a dead man, but instead of showing fear, Tony looked the bear in the eyes and stood his ground. Then Tony literally wrestled the bear, and won. All he had received for wounds was some nasty gashes in his back from where the Bear had clawed him. Then Tony said in fluent Russian 'Вы не развлекали? Вы не развлекали? Это не то, почему вы здесь? (Are you not entertained? Are you not entertained? Is this not why you are here?).'

Well the Russians were not entertained, as that bear had cost them a great deal of money. So they shot us with some tranq darts ment for the bear, which we weren't expecting, and went down. The next morning Tony and I woke up half naked and tied to a bomb in the middle of a field. Tony broke the bonds, and as we only had 2 minutes before the bomb would explode, not enough time for us both to clear the blast radius, he decided to disarm the bond. So he got on his knees and got to work. He didn't have any tools so he took off his hearing aids and took them apart and disarmed the bomb with the cannibalized technology. I seriously thought we were going to die right then and there, but Tony managed to disarm the bomb with 15 seconds remaining on the clock. I have no idea how he did it to this day. Then with the remnants of the bomb he makes a freaking bonfire and we managed to keep from freezing to death that night.

Clint and Natasha found us huddled together, clad only in our underwear, by the fire the next morning nearly frozen to death. They asked how we got in this predicament, and after I told them
the story, they both looked at Tony like he was some sort of God. Then Natasha got out her bottle of vodka she kept on the quinjet at all times and poured Tony a shot, who shocked us all once again by drinking it as though it was water. That was also the night that we found out that Tony couldn't get drunk. Seriously Natasha, Clint and I were completely plastered, but Tony was barely even tipsy." Fane said as he finished the story. The X men looked at Tony in shock. Then Scott broke the silence,

"You just killed a bear with your bare hands and the best you could come up with was 'Are you not entertained? Are you not entertained? Is this not why you are here??" Scott said laughing. "And I thought Logan here was the only one of us who could kill a bear." Ororo said.

"You can't get drunk?! " Logan said disbelievingly.

"I say let's prove this story true. Let's have a drinking contest tonight, with Clint and Natasha. I've always wondered if I could outdrink the notorious Black Widow." Scott announced.

"I would join in, but you guys don't want to see me drunk." Charles said with a hint of a smile. "I'm out, you guys know how much of a lightweight I am. Plus someone needs to fly the Blackbird home. But I'll gladly watch you guys make fools of yourself." Jean announced. Then they walked into the pizza joint.

"What are you guys so happy about?" Natasha asked.

"We challenge you to a drinking challenge, we want proof that Tony can't get hammered." Scott announced.

"You told them the story about the Russians didn't you?" Natasha accused Fane, who smiled knowingly.

"We accept! But I must warn you Natasha forgets English when she's drunk." Clint announced as Natasha punched him in the arm.

"Don't worry Ororo slips into Swahili when she's plastered." Jean announced.

"And I happen to be fluent in both, so I will translate. But first Pizza!" Tony said as he beelined towards the table loaded with the glorious dish.
"So Tony do you ever plan on coming out?" Jean asked.
"Wait what?!" Tony said as he nearly choked on his drink.
"Oh! I meant as a mutant, not out of the closet. But if you are gay, we wouldn't mind." Jean said in a jumble of words, realizing her mistake.
"I've been thinking about it, the mutant part, and I want to do it one day, but probably not anytime soon, due to the whole Stane issue." Tony explained.
"That sounds like a good plan, but don't hold it off to long, you might receive some bad backfire." Charles explained.
"I know, I just don't want people to think less of me. Mutants have gained popularity in the past few years, but the general public still thinks we're dangerous." Tony explained solemnly. "But I will make Stark Industries a very mutant friendly company."
"Just know that we'll be there to support you when you become public." Ororo stated, then Logan, Natasha and Scott came in with an assortment of strong liquors.
"So should we start with the strong stuff, or with something weak to warm you guys up?" Clint announced, clearing the serious mood of the previous conversation.
"Let's start with the hard stuff!" Logan announced. Then Natasha started preparing some vodka shots.
"Для жизни (to life!)!" Natasha toasted as she passed out the drinks. Then they all swigged back the drink. Ororo nearly choked as she was unprepared for the high proof russian Vodka Natasha preferred. Then the contest started.

...Two hours later...
"How are you not drunk?" Scott asked Tony.
"Told you, he can't get drunk, he's an alien or something." Clint revealed obviously drunk.
"Тони может вы меня еще выпить?(tony can you get me another drink?)" Natasha said slurring her words and leaning heavily against Clint.
"I think you've had enough Tasha." Tony warned her.
"Youuurr noooo fuunnn Tony Bologna!" Fane said in a sing song voice.
"This is quite interesting." Charles observed. "Are you sure you're not feeling at least tipsy, Tony?"
"Yeah I'm as sober as you two."
"That's absolutely amazing!" Jean announced with excitement.
"At least I don't have to worry about drunken mistakes, plus I have all the blackmail material I could ever need on these guys." As he gestured around the room. Natasha and Ororo were crooning weird songs at the top of their lungs, Natasha signing in Russian and Ororo in Swahili, but neither seemed to notice. Fane and Clint were in a corner gagglng like little school girls sitting in positions that looked painful. And Scott and Logan were having some really weird contest to out man each other, and both were failing ridiculously.
"You guys brought a camera right? Because I have a feeling that a few of them might pass out soon. And playing pranks on drunk people is the best." Tony said laughing. Charles and Jean just
looked on in amusement.
"Remind me never to get drunk around you. So what do you have planned?" Jean asked cautiously.
"Well none of them are dating right?"
"Scott and I have a thing going on, why?"
"Well Scott and Logan hate each others guts right?"
"Yes, I think its because they're both so macho."
"Well what if when they pass out, we put them in a compromising position and make it look as though they slept together?"
"Hahaha, but if they find out I will put the blame on you." Jean said.
"Now what about the others?" Charles inquired.
"Well we have access to a roof so I'm thinking we lock Fane and Clint on the roof together, in a similarly compromising position."
"Um and what about Natasha and Ororo?"
"That's where it gets fun! So does Ororo forget english for a bit after a hangover such as this?"
"Yes how did you know?" Charles admitted with a laugh.
"Natasha is the same way. So I think we should lock them in a room together, take away all of the aspirin, and set up a scavenger hunt for the two. The hints would start in Russian and Swahili. But as they progress onwards the hints will feature more English. Then at the end there will be a single aspirin and a glass of water. They would have to duel it out for that magic pill."
"Tony, you are an absolute genius, evil, but a complete genius." Jean exclaimed.
"They don't call me the master of pranks for nothing. And this is payback."
"For what?" Charles inquired.
"Well a few years ago on my fifteenth birthday they decided to prank me."
"What did they do?"
"Well it was after I left the mansion. I was completely exhausted so I fell asleep without my hearing aids on in the car. I woke up tied to a metal chair and blindfolded with a massive headache. So I broke the chair and freed myself. I opened the door to the room I was in and saw those three with dopey smiles on their faces. They had tied me up in the room, plus while Clint was carrying me he knocked my head into a wall, giving me a concussion."
"They seriously did that to you?" Jean asked.
"Yep, and its as the saying goes paybacks a bitch."
"But what about the X Men?" Charles asked.
"Well I just want to see their reactions." Tony admitted deviously. Then they heard a loud rumbling noise.
"I would never have guessed that Logan would be the first one out." Jean said.
"Now the fun begins!"

...the next morning...
Logan felt an arm on his chest. Thinking it was a dream he rolled over and opened his eyes only to welcomed by Scotts sleeping face. Then he realized something, he was naked. He panicked and jumped out of the bed as if it was effected by the plague. The movement jostled Scott awake and he jumped out the bed in a similar way. Then he realized that he too was completely naked and tried to cover his manhood with a blanket.
"This never leaves this room." Logan said gruffly.
"Agreed. I'm just thankful I wasn't awaken by your claws piercing my shoulders." Scott admitted.
"I have no idea what we did last night but let's not have a repeat." Logan stated. Then both men quickly got on their clothing that was laying on the ground, as if it had been stripped off in a fit of passion.
Clint felt the warm sun hit his body. Wait what? He opened his eyes to see himself on the roof wearing only his underwear. He sat up from the spot he was laying on to see Fane sleeping next to him in a similar predicament.
"Fane wake up! Its happened again!"
"What...what's happening ...where am I ...and why is that light so bright?" Fane mumbled groggily.
"Fane we're on the roof in our boxers. That light is the sun."
"Clint we've got to stop drinking till we pass out. This is the fifth time this has happened to us. Natasha and Tony are going to suspect something."
"Why don't we just tell them? I'm sure they already suspect something." Fane admitted. Then the two came together in a hot kiss. "Now let's go find something to eat."

Natasha opened her eyes to a bright light. What in the world had she done last night. She looked down at herself to check if she was still wearing clothes. Clothing? Check. Then she heard a soft murmuring, she glanced over to her aide to see Ororo lying next to her. Well at least they were fully clothed. Natasha saw a note on her nightstand. She woke Ororo up so they could read it as it had both of their names on it. Ororo woke up but looked at his quizzingly and said something that Natasha couldn't understand. They read the letter to themselves as it was in two different languages.
'If you want relief, Go to the place where you freshen up.' The bathroom! Both women got out of bed in a hurry, despite their pounding headaches. Inside the bathroom they found a different note. The notes kept appearing, and getting more and more harder to decipher, until they spotted a single white pill and a glass of water. The two women looked at each other, just tempting each other to make a grab for the aspirin. Then Natasha made her move. Ororo zapped her a bit and the fight was on.

Tony heard the crash upstairs and knew that his prank had worked. He ran upstairs to check on the two frustrated women. He saw Natasha drinking the glass of water with a smug look on her face while Ororo was giving her hate filled glares. Both women looked quite disheveled and Tony could tell that they both fought dirty over the single aspirin. Their hair was all over the place, and Natasha sported some nice burn marks the while Ororo had claw marks from Natasha's nails, and both were sporting the beginning of impressive black eyes. Then Tony withdrew the bottle of aspirin from behind his back and tossed it to them.
"Breakfast is downstairs!" He informed them and then left the room quickly before they ran for the bottle.

To say breakfast was awkward would be an understatement. Logan and Scott wouldn't acknowledge that the other was there, and when they did happen to catch another's eye they would both redden with embarrassment. Clint and Fane were practically sitting on each others laps and couldn't be separate. And Ororo and Natasha looked as though they had just survived a battle with the hulk. Tony, Jean and Charles were just exchanging amused looks.
"So what happened last night? Cause I can't remember anything after that fifth round of vodka." Clint asked. Scott and Logan just shared embarrassed looks.
"I think you should tell them" Charles whispered in Tony's mind.
"Well you guys are quite the entertaining drunks. Natasha and Ororo, I'm surprised you guys have voices. You two spent the night singing Russian and Kenyan drinking songs on top of your lungs and offkey the entire night. Fane and Clint, you too were gagging like schoolgirls, which is really
awkward to see two fully grown assassins doing. Logan and Scott, you two were having a contest to prove your manlihood. I think you broke one of the couches during that."
"We weren't doing anything odd?" Scott inquired quietly.
"Oh no, that was a prank, that I decided to play on all of you." Tony admitted with a giant smile. Everyone except Clint and Fane were glaring at him.
"You mean that you decided to put me and Scott in a bed together naked, because you wanted to play a prank?" Logan growled.
"Yeah, you two are way too tense."
"Do you have a death wish?" Scott inquired.
"Well I thought it was bloody brilliant. I'm actually surprised that nobody's decided to prank you too until now." Charles exclaimed gleefully. Everyone just looked at Charles with utter shock, they had never heard him swear before.
"I think that might be because I shoot lasers out of my eyes, and Logan has foot long claws that come out of his knuckles. Everyone knows that to prank us would be to sign their death warrant." Scott announced.
"You guys don't frighten me." Tony admitted.
"See? The kid has absolutely no fear!" Scott yelled.
"What did you do to the others?" Logan asked curiously.
"Well I may have caused Ororo and Natasha to go on a confusing scavenger hunt, that may have ended in a massive fight to get the one aspirin that I put out as a reward." Tony said sheepishly. Then everyone glanced at the two women who were still pretty disheveled.
"Tony while that was an brilliant prank, if you EVER do that to me again, I WILL END YOU!" Natasha ended in a growl, before she went back to her donut.
"And what about Clint and Fane?"
"Well I trapped them on a roof in their underwear." Tony said blankly.
"Actually that worked out in our benefit." Fane admitted.
"Fane and I have been secretly dating for the past two months." Clint admitted.
"Well that explains a lot." Natasha admitted.
"Congrats!" Jean announced.
"Now we know not to get plastered around Tony!" Scott admitted. Then they all burst into laughter.
Midnight Secrets

Tony was sneaking into his apartment, still dressed in full battle gear. It had been a rough weekend mission, and six time zones and three hits later, he was exhausted. All he wanted to do was eat, shower and sleep. As he was creeping down the hallway he noticed something weird, the TV was on. Then he heard something he never wanted to hear in his own home.
"Freeze! I don't know who you are or what you're doing in my house but I have a gun and I'm not afraid to use it!" Oh shit. Rhodey had caught him and his game was up.
"Don't shoot, Rhodey! Its me!" Tony said as he turned around.
"How do you know my name? Who are you?" Rhodey yelled in his commanding voice, and Tony realized his mask was still on.
"Its me, Tony!" Tony said as he lifted the mask and shook his curls loose.
"Christ, Tony! What are you doing sneaking around at 1 am dressed like that?! Wait is that blood?" Rhodey asked.
"I can explain all of this, but its going to take a while, and I need food. So let me get something to eat and I'll tell you why I'm dressed like this. Can you at least put down the gun?" Tony asked as he saw Rhodey lower the gun. Tony then made a bunch of sandwiches and warmed up some leftover pasta. Then he grabbed a couple of beers. Tony walked into the living room carefully balancing all of the food. And tossed Rhodey a beer.
"Did you forget anything, such as the kitchen sink?" Rhodey asked.
"Well I need to eat about 4,000 calories a day, and all I've had for three days were a couple of MREs, I'm tired and starving, so I need to eat." Tony said between shoving mouthfuls of pasta into his mouth.
"4,000 calories?! Are you like an alien, I can barely eat 2,500 on a good day."
"Well I have a really high metabolic rate, and a training schedule that makes yours look like 5th grade P.E." 
"What?! I've never seen you work out. You're not even buff!"
"I train at night, plus I have muscles you can't even dream about."
"Prove it!"
Tony started the long process of removing his weapons.
"Are those Katana blades?" Rhodey asked.
"Yes. I'll explain in due time." Then Tony started to remove his top. Rhodey gasped when he saw the scars that crisscrossed his torso, along with a few new bruises and cuts.
"Dude what happened?" Rhodey asked.
"Well Stane, a couple of bad missions and a few training accidents."
"How are you not in pain? You have at least a couple broken ribs that look fresh."
"I've gotten used to it over the past 7 years."
"7 years? But weren't you missing then?"
"Well here comes the good part. During those four years I was being trained as an elite assassin. We only told the public that I was a captive of my father, to draw away from my secret life and to make Howard appear completely nuts."
"You're an assassin? And who's we? And tell me one reason I shouldn't kill you right now." Rhodey said reaching for a gun.
"I'm a lion of the order of Dolofóni. I work with three top secret organizations that help keep the really bad guys off the streets. And if you kill me I have three assassin buddy's who will personally track you down. Plus I have really good reflexes so I'm really hard to kill."
"What organizations?"
"What I'm about to say can not leave this room, under penalty of death. I'm an assassin with the Dolofóni, I'm also one of Shields top assassins, and an X man."
"You're a mutant?!"
"Yes and one of the most powerful at that."
"Why are you telling me this?"
"Because I have to take you to see my buddies one of these nights since you know. And I don't want you to freak."
"What are your powers?"
"I'm an empath, I have superhuman abilities, an innate ability and superhuman mentality."
"What?!"
"I can control emotion, I can lift at least 4,000lbs, run a mile in under a minute. I can also shoot a moving target at a mile and a half with deadly accuracy. The innate ability allows me to pick up something and become an expert in a matter of days instead of years. And I'm essentially a super genius. I'm not at MIT for undergraduate studies, I'm a doctoral candidate. Plus due to my superhuman mentality I'm a minor telekinetic."
"This I need to see."
"Maybe later I'm tired."
"So why'd you become an assassin?"
"Well it kinda choose me. I was running away from my father after he nearly beat me to death, and I was attacked by an assassin, who had been ordered to take me out by my father and Stane. I put up a good fight and he brought me to the den, and my life has never been the same since. Then 3 years ago my father went crazy and threaten to kill a bunch of people, I stepped in to save them, I got the house workers out, but my father managed to blow himself, my mother, and butler/spy up. I was seriously injured so my mentor took me from the scene and tried to take care of my wounds, they were too extensive so we decided I would take my old life back. Then Stane took me hostage for two months, giving me a heavy mix of drugs, starving me and then nearly killing me, all because he wanted to use my skills to his advantage and I told him no."
"How are you still alive?"
"Honestly I don't know, I guess I'm really lucky. There was one mission where I wrestled a bear to the death, and then disarmed a bomb in my underwear in the middle of winter in Russia, with nothing but my hearing aid."
"What?"
"Oh I get really talkative when I'm tired. I need to sleep and to bind my ribs. Wanna help?"
"So you're just going to bind your ribs with no medical professional?"
"I've been shot, stabbed, almost blown up and impaled, a few broken ribs aren't going to kill me."
Then he took his plates to the kitchen.
"I can bind your ribs for you, but I want a demonstration of your skills."
"Fine tomorrow." Tony answered then went to the bathroom to get cleaned up. "Let me take a shower quick."
By the time Tony was out of the shower, he was almost asleep on his feet.
"Man, are you always this tired after your missions?"
"No, this one was a long one, 3 days, 6 time zones and 3 targets is really exhausting." Tony mumbled.
"Come let's bind those ribs, you probably should have been asleep hours ago but I kept you up. You're not going to class tomorrow, I'll tell your professors you are sick, OK?"
"OK..." Tony said groggily. Rhodey wrapped Tony's ribs so that he didn't puncture a lung in his sleep. Then handed him a few pain pills and put him to bed, Tony was asleep before he hit his pillow. Rhodey watched him sleep for a few minutes wondering how many times Tony had to bandage his own wounds after wandering in at 1 in the morning.

The next morning Rhodey went in to check on Tony before he went to his morning lecture. What he found scared him. Tony was sweating profusely and delirious with a fever. Tony opened his eyes, which were glazed over, when he heard Rhodey's footsteps.
"Call Fane...tell him..I've ..poison." Tony gasped as he pointed to his phone. Before he closed his eyes and moaned in pain. Rhodey picked up his phone and looked for a Fane in the contacts. He found it and dialed.
"Tony? What's the matter?" A man's voice sounded worried on the other end.
"Um..is this Fane?" Rhodey questioned.
"Who is this where is Tony?" Fane panicked.
"Um, this is Rhodey, Tony's roommate. Uh, Tony came in night injured, and I caught him so I know his secret. When I went to check on him a few minutes ago he was sweating and in great pain. He told me to call you and tell you he think's its poison." Rhodey said nervously.
"I'm on my way. Is he conscious?"
"No, sir."
"Do you have a thermometer?"
"Yes."
"How high is the fever?"
"Let me check. Shit. 104.1°F."
"OK this is bad. Um has he vomited?"
"Yes."
"What color is it?"
"Red, oh shit hes vomiting blood, isn't he?!"
"Yes. I will be there in two minutes there will be three of us OK? In the meantime try to cool him down with some ice cubes or a washcloth OK?"
"Yes!" Then the man spoke to someone on the other side. Rhodey went into a frenzy trying to get the ice packs he kept in the freezer. Then he put them on Tony's groin and under his armpits as they taught him in that first aid class he had so long ago. He unlocked the door, then went back to Tony, and checked his pulse, which was erratic and low, not good. Then he heard footsteps in the hall.
"Rhodey?" Fane called out.
"In here!" Rhodey replied. Then three people came in dressed in black, two buff guys one taller with long brown hair speckled with grey the other shorter with close cut blonde hair, and a redhead woman with looks that could kill walked in.
"This is not good!" The blonde muttered.
"What happened last night?" The man he assumed was Fane asked as the other two checked on tony.
"Well I was watching TV, when he came in. He was dressed strangely, and then he told me everything. After that he said he had a few injuries, some broken ribs and contusions and went to take a shower. When he came out he was dead on his feet, so I wrapped his ribs for him, gave him a few pain pills and put him in bed. When I woke up he was like this."
"I need you to show me what he took, and what shower stuff is his." Fane said. Rhodey went into the bathroom and pulled out Tony's stuff and gave it to Fane.
"Is he going to be okay?" Rhodey asked softly.
"Tony's pulled through worse than this. Shield has the best doctors in the world. If they can't help him no one can." Fane admitted, as they walked back to the room.
"Not good. We pulled off some of his bandages and it looks like he was in contact with some pretty strong chemicals, most likely slow acting, the poisoned entered his bloodstream via the wounds." The blonde said.
"Shit, that means there must of been someone in the house. Someone knows Tony's identity and is trying to kill him. Rhodey, have you been gone a lot this weekend?"
"Yes, I'm ROTC, I have training every weekend."
"How long are you out of the house for?"
"From about 5:30am to 5pm."
"That's a huge time intricate. Rhodey do you have anyone you can stay with for a while?"
"No, why?"
"This place is being watched and you're not safe anymore. I'm going to take you with us. Might be a good time to get to know each other, since you now know Tony's secret. Don't worry you'll be safe. You said you're in ROTC? What branch?"

"Air Force."

"Well good. You're about to see the helicarrier."

"THE HELICARRIER?" Rhodey said unbelievably.

"I think I may like this kid" the blonde said. "Now lets get going, Tony is fading fast." Then he picked Tony up in his arms and they left the building.
Rhodey wasn't sure if he was excited or absolutely terrified. Here he was about to see the legendary Helicarrier, but his best friend was lying on a stretcher. He also happened to be in the company of three master assassins, who all looked sick with worry. When the plane, which Fane had called a quinjet, had finally docked on the helicarrier it was immediately boarded by a team of medics and Tony was whisked away. Then a tall black man dressed in leather with an eye patch came up to them.

"How did this happen? And who is this kid?" The man angrily yelled.

"This is Tony's roommate James Rhodes. I believe the house was being watched. With Tony being so busy lately, I don't think he noticed any of the signs that he was being watched. Someone snuck into the house this weekend when they were both gone and replaced his body soap with a slow acting poison. I also believed they swapped out his pain relievers with another poison."

"Why are you telling me this in front of the kid? And why is he here?" The man yelled.

"He knows." The redhead said.

"How much do you know?"

"Well that he is an assassin, and a mutant. And that he's good at what he does." Rhodey admitted.

"How long have you known?"

"Since about 1 this morning."

"And how did you find out this information?"

"Well I caught him sneaking in dressed in a weird costume with a mask, and I thought he was a burglar, so I threatened to shoot him and he revealed himself to me."

"So how do we know you won't spill his secret?" Fury questioned him.

"Well he showed me his weapons, so I think he would kill me, and if he doesn't kill me then I'm pretty sure you will."

"So do you have any questions for us?"

"Um what are your guy's names?"

"I'm Director Fury, the director of Shield."

"I'm Agent Natasha Romanov, aka the Black Widow. If you hurt Tony in any way, I will personally see that you regret the day you were born."

"I'm Agent Clint Barton, aka Hawkeye, and I'm on the same boat as Natasha, I'll put an arrow through you before you could even think about betraying Tony."

"I'm Eagle Fane, but you can call me Fane. I'm a council member of the Dolofóni. If you let any of this out, I have ways of killing you that you can't even imagine."

"Um, okay. Um I'm James Rhodes, but you can all call me Rhodey. I have absolutely no intention of harming Tony. In fact I think the whole genius/spy/mutant thing is kinda cool. Oh and I'm not a kid, I'm 21. So you guys look pretty important, is Tony something special amongst you? Because I have the feeling he only told me the bare minimum."

"Well Tony is a rarity among assassins. He is barely 20, and already he has reached the rank of Lion, one less than mine. I was advance for my age, but I didn't make Lion until I was 26. He is one of, if not, the best assassin the Dolofóni have ever spawned. He is also an extremely powerful mutant, and he still hasn't grown fully into his abilities yet."

"Oh, wow! But how does he handle it all? Isn't he still cleaning up the mess his father and Stane made, and studying extremely complex sciences? How does he have time to work with you guys and train? I can barely handle college and ROTC at the same time."

"Well he's only working with us part-time, so he only does weekend missions, with the exception of a few weeknight ones that are close by. He then studies in the mornings, does business with SI until 6ish, then he trains for the rest of the night, with either one of us, the X Men or by himself. How he manages to function I have no idea, but I imagine it has something to do with his superhuman mentality."
"So you guys really care for Tony?"
"He is like our little brother, we are his only family, well besides the x men. Now why don't we go check up on Tony?" Fane asked and they all shook their heads in agreement. Then they all left for the medical bay.
Tony looked so small lying in the hospital bed. It turned out that Tony had been poisoned twice over from his shower gel and from the pain pills that Tony had taken. Rhodey was stricken with guilt as he had given the pills to Tony. The Doctors had managed to get Tony's fever to drop a few degrees, but they wouldn't know the full extent of the damage until Tony woke up.
"Hey, its not your fault. You didn't know the pills were poisonous." Fane told him when he saw the guilt on his face.
"But I made him take the pills." Rhodey said.
"Because you wanted to be a good friend. Can you imagine what would have happened if you didn't check on him? He would be much worse off than he is now." Fane told Rhodey. "Don't worry he's been a lot worse than this before and he's managed to defy the odds."
"I told you, Fane. I'm immortal." A weak voice added. They looked down on the bed to see that Tony woken up. "What happened? Why is Rhodey here?" He mumbled, exhaustedly.
"Tony you were poisoned, and Rhodey here saved your life." Clint added.
"How'd I get poisoned?"
"Someone's been watching your apartment and they swapped out your pain relievers and shower gel with a deadly poison. If Rhodey hadn't checked on you, you could've died." Fane added.
"Any damage?"
"We don't know yet, do you feel strong enough to heal?"
"It's gonna take a bit more energy this time."
"We don't care! We can't stand to see you like this, Tony!" Clint announced.
"What are you guys talking about?" Rhodey asked in confusion.
"Tony has this ability from being an empath, where he can heal by using energy from those who are around him." Fane explained.
"And it doesn't harm anyone?"
"No it just make the people who donate the energy tired." Fane said.
"So why isn't he using his ability?"
"Because I don't want to harm you guys, I don't know how much energy I need this time." Tony said in a raspy voice.
"Tony we all want to help you, so do your mojo." Rhodey said.
"Fine, get comfortable." Tony said as he mentally prepared himself. Rhodey sat on a chair next to Natasha, and Clint and Fane sat across from them on the loveseat across from them.
"OK so I need you all to touch me, be it a leg or a arm. Okay now you guys are going to feel tired, just go with it, don't resist." Tony said as he started to focus on the energy. Rhodey had never seen anything like it, Tony was visibly looking stronger and all he felt was a bit tired. When Tony was finished he fell into a deep sleep, and everyone else soon followed him.
The group stayed asleep for almost a day, which nearly sent the doctors on staff into a panic, until they realized that their vitals were normal for people in a deep sleep. Tony had never needed to use this much energy before, which meant that the poison must have done a lot of damage to his G.I. track, along with the poison that had entered his bloodstream. Someone had wanted Tony dead, and they had nearly succeeded in their task.
Tony was released from the med-bay two days later, because the doctors had wanted to make sure that Tony had suffered no adverse effects from the poisoning. Tony and Rhodey were then moved into a Shield safe house, due to the fact that someone knew who Tony really was, and that someone also knew who Rhodey was. They were to have a plain clothed shield agent watching the house at all times. Tony thought they were overreacting a bit, but he let them do it, due to the threat of being grounded if he didn't comply. Rhodey and Tony went back to their normal lives, well as normal as you can get with your best friend being an assassin, with the excuse of their week long absence being caused by a really bad case of the flu.
Tony had always been alone when he returned from a mission, but now Rhodey stayed up to see Tony return no matter how late it was. Rhodey would also make sure that Tony had a nice hot meal waiting for him for when he returned. Rodney sometimes accompanied Tony to his training sessions, which always left Rhodey in awe no matter how many times he witnessed it. And Tony helped Rhodey become a better shot, and even started training him in martial arts. Rhodey had gotten to know Tony's assassin family better, and soon was accepted into their little family. Tony and Rhodey knew that they would stay friends for years and even when they both graduated from MIT the next spring they continued to room together until Rhodey was deployed overseas.
Tony was sitting in his office doing some last minute work before going back to his apartment. He then heard a commotion outside his office door, so he picked up one of the knives he had hidden all over his office, in case of emergencies, and went to investigate. He opened his door to find his security guard on the floor with a hand over his eyes and a pretty red head standing over him with a can of mace.

"Did you just pepper spray my security guard?" He asked shocked.

"Oh Mr. Stark! I didn't mean to...I ...uh...wanted to tell you that you...uh..made a mistake in balancing the books. And he wouldn't let me see you." The redhead said nervously.

"First of all call me Tony. I'm too young to be a Mr. Stark, secondly, what mistake?" He asked her. She pulled out a pack of paper and flipped to the page the problem was on.

"Well if you look at bracket I-7 you forgot to add the sum from bracket F-6. The mistake would have costed you over $300,000." She said. Tony looked over the papers and realized that he had in fact made a mistake, he remembered filling out the paper, it was after a particularly harrowing mission and all he had wanted to do was sleep, he must have made the mistake in his haste.

" Ah, yes I see the problem, I wasn't feeling the best that day, so I must have made it in my haste to get out of here. Thank you for spotting it. So what's your name?"

" Virginia Potts. I just wanted to show you it. Now I have to go clear my desk. Good Night Mr...er..Tony."

"Clear your desk?" He inquired.

"Yes, I spotted your mistake and my boss fired me for saying that you made an error." 

"How would you like to be my PA, Pepper?"

"Pepper?!"

"Yes you pepper sprayed my guard so it seemed like a fitting do you accept the job or not? I need someone with your guts on my team."

"OK, fine. But I've heard of your tactics, if you try to get me in your bed, I'll quit."

"I wouldn't think of it. So do we have a deal?"

"Yes. When do I show up?"

"What about tomorrow at 9?"

"Well that's kinda sudden. I guess I can do that. I'll see you at 9, then."

"See you at 9, Pepper."

And that began Peppers journey to discovering what truly lay hidden behind the mask Tony had put on for the public. As she continued to work with him she found little quirks about him. How he had amazingly fast reflexes, that she had tested by ‘dropping’ glasses and bottles during meetings, not that she would admit to it, but he would always catch them. He was portrayed as a drunken playboy by the media, but she had never seen her boss drunk, or with a woman or even a man. She would also accidentally find weapons hidden all over the place, which drew her curiosity. But the most questionable quality to her boss was that he was always eating, and when he came out of long board meetings, which could last for hours, he would seem lethargic and faint, before he shoved whatever food was lying around into his mouth like he hadn't eaten for days. Maybe he was diabetic? But none of that had appeared in his personal file, that he had given her so that she could know what his likes and dislikes were.

Tony Stark was an anomaly that she couldn't figure out, he was only 22 yet he had managed to triple the money SI made and completely rebuilt the company from the bottom up. SI was no longer the weapons factory his father built, but rather a brave pioneer in the field of Technology and Medicine that was years, if not decades, ahead of the rest. To the public Tony was a Genius, Playboy, Billionaire Philanthropist, but she saw Tony as something else. To her, and the people who actually cared about him, he was a goofy, self-sacrificing, visionary who had a heart of gold, and a bottomless pit for a stomach. Whenever he saw a cause that needed help, whether it be a
Tony stumbled through his front door and ripped off his sweaty mask. He had just come back from a solo mission after a long day of board meetings and conferences. He was exhausted, hungry, and injured. Someone actually had the guts to stab him! And Tony, ever the brilliant idiot, chose to forego proper medical attention to fix it himself, mainly because he was tired and hungry. He limped into his bathroom and set upon the task of stitching himself back together.

Pepper had been trying to contact Tony all night, because there was some paperwork he had forgotten. It was now 11pm and she was getting worried, so she went to Tony's apartment to drop off the paperwork. He was probably out on the town having fun and had forgotten his phone at home, or something like that.

When she got to the apartment and she saw that the door was unlocked. She gave her customary 3 rap knock and when she got no answer she let herself in. She was about to set the paperwork on the coffee table when she spotted what looked like a trail of blood.

"Tony?" She asked aloud. She didn't hear a reply, so she followed the trail to the bathroom where the light was on and she could hear quiet pain filled grunts.

"Tony, is everything okay?" She inquired. She only got a quiet moan for an answer.

"Tony if you don't answer me I'm going to come in." Still no verbal answer, so she braced herself and opened the door. She screamed involuntarily when she saw her boss sitting on the corner of his extremely large bathtub, biting down on a belt, with a needle in his hand, attempting to sew up a stab wound in his side and shoulder. He had a complete look of shock on his face when he saw her standing in his doorway.

"Tony! What is going on!?! Have you been stabbed?!" She screeched. He had a bemused look on his face and he pointed to the bathroom sink. There she spotted his hearing aids lying on the counter. She had forgotten he was almost completely deaf.

Tony had limped into the bathroom and took out his hearing aids, they had been damaged in the fight and weren't functioning correctly. He then got out his medical supplies and started the process of tending to his wounds. Luckily there was no internal damage to either, but he had lost a lot of blood from the combination of the two wounds, one to the shoulder and the other to the side, and was feeling a bit woozy. He went as fast as he could when he stitched the wounds up, because he definitely needed a meal and sleep. He was just about to finish stitching the one in his side when he saw the door open. In the doorway he saw Pepper standing and panicking. Well this was going to need some explaining, so before she continued on with her lengthy rant, he pointed to the sink where his hearing aids were sitting.

"If you want to continue this conversation, my spares are in my drawer by my bedstand." He informed her when he took out the belt from his mouth. She ran out of the room to get them, and he went back to stitching himself. When she got back, he was just putting the last stitch in and was about to start on the next. He motioned for her to put them in his ears, and he instantly regretted letting her.

"What happened? Should I call an ambulance? Are you okay?" She assaulted him in a high pitched voice filled with panic.

"I'm okay, the knife missed all of the important parts. I'll tell you the rest in a bit, right now I need to finish stitching this wound before I faint from blood loss, okay?" He said. He winced when he
heard the sound of his voice, laced with pain.
"Is there anything I can do? I have some first aid training." She said still panicked.
"Yeah, can you possibly put a pizza in? I'm going to have to eat after this." He asked perfectly
serious. A look of confusion sprung on her face.
"You're in your bathroom, giving yourself stitches, and you want me to make you food?!!"
"Yes. I'm pretty weak from blood loss and the food will help counteract it. You don't want me to
pass out on you, do you?" He asked her.
"Right, I guess I'll toss in a pizza, because I want to hear about this."
"You might as well make two, its going to be a long night." Then she left the room and he finished
closing the wound. When he was done he cleaned the two, bandaged them and popped some pain
killers. Then he cleaned up the mess and stumbled into the living room, using the walls for
support, as he was pretty light headed. Then he gently sat on the couch, reclined and shut his eyes
for a few minutes, in an effort to combat the woozy feeling he had. He must have passed out or
fallen asleep cause the next thing he knew Pepper was peering over him with a worried look on her
face.
"What? What happened?" He said groggily.
"Well the pizza is done and when I came in here to tell you and you were completely dead to the
world. Are you sure you're okay?" Pepper asked, feeling his forehead.
"Yeah. Could you get me a Gatorade? Its in the bottom of the fridge. I would get it myself, but I'm
feeling a bit woozy." He asked her.
"OK." She went into the kitchen to get a bottle of Gatorade, and the pizza. Then she handed it to
him and he guzzled half the bottle in half a minute.
"Thanks," He told her weakly.
"Of course. What do you think you're paying me an outrageous salary for? Now are you absolutely
sure you're okay? Because you look like death warmed over." She asked again. There was no point
in fooling her.
"No I'm not okay. I lost a lot of blood, I'm in a lot of pain and I have a pounding headache. But I'm
going to tell as much as I can because you deserve answers. But if I get any scary symptoms such
as incoherence or if I pass out and you can't rouse me, do not call 911, just go into my phone and
dial Fane, Clint or Natasha. OK? Now where do you want me to start?" He asked before he
practically shoved a whole piece of pizza in his mouth.
"Well for starters, who are you?" She asked curiously. And he told her everything. She was
surprised that he lasted half an hour before blacking out. She was even more surprised that he
answered most of her questions, despite the obvious pain he was in. When she couldn't get him to
wake back up, she grabbed his phone that he had laid on the table, and dialed Fane.
"Tony? Why didn't you check in yet?"
"Is this Fane?"
"Yes, has Tony been poisoned again?"
"Well this is his PA, I kinda walked in on him stitching himself up in the bathroom, and he told me
to call you if he became unresponsive, and well he is."
"How much do you know?"
"Well I know he's some sort of superhero assassin type of guy."
"I'll be over in a few minutes. Just put a washcloth on his neck and leave the door unlocked." Then
he hung up the phone. She did as instructed. While waiting for the mysterious man to arrive she
couldn't help but notice how vulnerable and young Tony looked when his guards were down.
When he was in the office ordering people around he looked much older than his 22 years of age,
but now that he was unconscious he looked like he was barely out of his teens, which he was. She
couldn't help but reach out a hand and stroke his wild Italian curls that none of his stylists dared
touch. She then heard footsteps in the hall.
"He's gotta stop doing this." A man with long brown hair streaked with gray said.
"Are you Fane? I'm Pepper, his PA."
"I wish we could've met in better circumstances, Pepper." Fane said as he shook her outstretched
"What do mean he's gotta stop doing this? He's done this before?"
"You know Rhodey?"
"Yes."
"Well a few years ago I got a call from a very worried Rhodey, saying that Tony had been poisoned. Nearly gave me a heart attack."
"So I assume Rhodey knows?"
"Yeah."
"Well at least he has a friend in his corner. So what's wrong with him?" She asked as Fane examined Tony.
"Well he's had some pretty heavy blood loss and despite his effort of cleaning his wounds and an infections settled in. Must have been a dirty blade. I have no idea why he didn't come in for treatment."
"Well he is stubborn."
"That he is. Well I'm going to give him some medication that will help combat both of his ailments. He's going to be out for about a day and a half, but once he's awake he's going to need a large amount of food, so can you keep an eye on him?" She nodded her answer. "Good. So any questions?"
"Yeah I have one thats been on my mind for a while. Why does he eat so much? I'm sure he could outeat an entire football team, when their carboloading."
"Well Tony has a really fast metabolism, its part of his mutant abilities. He has to eat minimum of 4,000 calories a day, or he gets really faint and lethargic, kinda like a diabetic with low blood sugar. That's the reason why his office is packed with high caloric snacks and drinks. He also can't get drunk, due to the metabolism, so if you ever find him unresponsive with no visible injuries, get him some high proof alcohol and that should help." Fane explained.
"OK. I always thought he was diabetic, because after really lengthy meetings he shoves whatever food he can find into his mouth as fast as he can."
"Yeah, he tried to bring food into the meetings but the board deemed it unbusinesslike and stopped it. Now I'm going to bring Tony to his bed, he should be alright, you can go home, I'm sure you're tired. I'll watch him tonight."
"Are you sure?"
"Yeah, I've done it before, many times."
"Do you need anything?"
"No, I've got everything I need right now, and if I need anything else, my boyfriend and his partner should be over in a few hours."
"Would that be Clint and Natasha?"
"Good he told you about them. Well we'll probably be meeting again later this week to properly introduce you to the team. I have the feeling we'll be seeing each other a lot, just keep in mind that we're very overprotective of Tony, so if you do anything to harm him or expose him, you'll find yourself being hunted by three very capable assassins, the X Men, and Shield." Fane finished in a grave tone.
"I'll remember that. Well goodnight." Pepper said as she left the house.

"Tony what am I gonna with you?" Fane muttered as he carried Tony into the bedroom. Fane had retired from the Dolofóni a year ago, and he was now working slowly with Shield. He was taking less missions with Tony, Natasha and Clint, but was still a valuable member of their 'team' as the assassins rarely went to the hospital due to their stubbornness and Fane was left to patch them up. After Fane gave Tony the medication he needed to counteract his ailments, he settled into a large comfortable chair next to the bed with a book, before the rest of their 'team' showed up to keep him company.
Tony was better in a few days and was bewildered to find that he had missed two whole days. Tony was glad that Pepper knew his secret. Pepper had been busy when he was out of commission. She went in front of the board and stated that she had just found out that Tony was a ‘diabetic’ and that he needed to be allowed to eat in board meetings or he would get sick. When the board questioned her information, she told them that Tony was a proud young man who didn't want to be looked down upon for his illness, and that if they brought it up again, she would have him fire them. Pepper had also taken to make sure that Tony's office and kitchen were jam packed with food, and she had started to check on him nightly. She didn't mind that Tony was an extremely powerful assassin and mutant, she had started to care for him and in her eyes it made sense that Tony was a powerful man both in the office and out.
"Okay the target is on the move." Clint's voice whispered in his ear.
"Okay, I have the target in my sights." Tony confirmed while looking at the target through his telescopic lenses.
"Do you have a clean shot?"
"Yes."
"Take the shot when ready," Clint's voice assured him. Tony laid on the ground make a couple of quick calculations, and took the shot.
"Is the target down?" Clint asked. Tony checked his sights.
"Hit is confirmed, perfect bullseye." Tony confirmed as he saw the flash of red on the targets forehead.
"Uh Samael, stay down, I'm detecting movement in your general area. Take Cover!" Clint yelled, right before Tony heard the whistle of a bomb and his world went black.

"Samael? SAMAEL!? Come in !" Clint yelled into his mic, but got static in return.
"What's wrong?" Natasha said worriedly.
"Shit! His mic just went dead, and I think hes been hit."
"WHAT?!"
"I detected movement in his area, after he took the shot, and then I saw a missile coming in, and now his mics dead."
"You don't think..."
"Don't even dare say what I think you're about to say! I don't believe it was a direct hit. He could just be injured with his mic down, or he could have been taken hostage. But do not even think the d word until we have proof."
"Its okay Clint. He's strong he'll survive."
"I need to tell Fane. He'll want to know."
"Yes but Fane's in the states."
"Well get him over here, we'll need him if Tony was taken hostage."

Tony felt an intense pain in his gut and legs. He opened his eyes and saw that he was in a cave. Then a man peered down at him and said something, that he couldn't hear, great they took his aids. "I can't hear you. I'm deaf!" He told the man, who had a look of pity on his face.
"Well its a good thing I know sign language. I'm Dr. Yinsen, Are you in any pain?" The man signed. It hurt too much to move so he spoke instead of signing back.
"Yeah, in my gut and left leg. What happened? Where am I? What do you want with me?" Tony questioned.
"Well you were in an explosion. It sent shrapnel through you leg and gut. Your leg was also broken severely. I have fixed you as best as I can, luckily the sharpnel didn't hit any major organs in your abdomen, and your leg is being held straight by a makeshift splint, I can't plaster it until its a bit more healed. So it would be wise not to move for a while. As for what happened, you shot a very important leader of the Ten Rings, the leader of the organization that has you hostage. You're in a cave somewhere in Afghanistan, I can't tell you more for I too am a hostage. As for what they want with you, well they know you're Tony Stark, and they know that you can build things and are now an excellent shot. So what do you think they want with you?" Dr. Yinsen signed.
"What else do they know about me besides that?" Tony asked.
"Well they know you work with Shield and they found you with a mask of an eagle. Dolofóni I
“Presume?”

"How do you know?"
"Well I have my sources. But you're a master? How are you a master assassin? You're what 24?"

"Almost 23. Let's just say I have talents that THEY don't need to know about."

"Ok, the less I know, the less they can get from me. Now I suggest you get some sleep, because I suspect you're going to need it."

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Tony obeyed and fell into a restless sleep.

"I've found him." Charles said on the other side of the phone.

"Where is he?" Fane inquired.

"He's in the Dashti Margo desert in Afghanistan." Charles informed them.

"How did that happen? We were on a mission on the outskirts of Kabul. The Dashti Margo is on the other side of the country! Do you happen to have coordinates?"

"No, I was unable to pinpoint his exact location. They must have him in a cave with heavy metal, Cerebro can't detect his powers very well, it must be a natural mask."

"Thank you for your help Charles."

"Sorry I can't do more, but I can deploy the X Men in under an hour if you require backup."

"Thanks, I hope we don't need them." Then Clint hung up the phone.

"He's in the Dashti Margo desert." Fane informed the room full of Shield operatives and Rhodey, who was now a Lieutenant Colonel, it was good to have friends in high places when it came to the military.

"The Dashti Margo?! But that's the fucking desert of death. We need to get him out of there fast." Rhodey explained.

"We don't have an exact pinpoint on his location." Fane said regretfully.

"Um sir? We're receiving a video from a desert region of Afghanistan." A junior agent stated as he ran into the room.

"Well play it already." Clint spat angrily. The agent transferred the video feed over. All the occupants in the room sat there, with their eyes glued to the screen.

Then a group of men dragged a man, who was covered in bandages and had a very broken leg, with a bag on his head.

"I am willing to offer you a trade. I want $500,000,000 dollars and a truck full of top of the line weapons. You'll have one week to give me the money I have requested or I will let the world know Tony Starks, little secret." the man said dramatically as he removed the bag from Tony's head.

"Yes I know about his particular set of abilities. I know that he is an highly sought after assassin, and I know that he is invaluable to you Shield. So I'll also give you a month to bring me my weapons, but know this, every week starting from today, until I receive those weapons I'll take something important from Tony, such as a finger, or a hand, and when that month is up, and if I haven't received the weapons I'll remove his most valuable object, his head. So to give you a little extra incentive to make sure you pay up early, I'll give you a little demonstration." The man said as he signaled to his men to secure Tony's left hand to the table. Tony seemed to know what was about to happen and started to try to get away from the men. One of the men responded by shoving his rifle butt into Tony's head, causing Tony to slump over unconscious. The man then took out a long knife and cut off Tony's hand.

"I am an honest man. Pay me early, or you will see what it is like for a sniper, such as he, to lose his right hand. Tick- Tock." Then the video zoomed in on Tony's pale unconscious face, and then faded to black.

The occupants of the room sat in silence for what seemed like forever, trying to comprehend what
had just happened, then Fury spoke up.  
"Tell me you've got the location?" He yelled.  
"Location is confirmed." A junior agent working at a table confirmed.  
"Romanov, Barton and Fane. Ready the jet, I wanted you there yesterday. Also have the X Men on standby, I don't know how many of these guys are in the compound. You might need help. Bring that man to me! I don't care what happens to the others, just get them taken care of." Fury commanded. Everyone ran off to do their tasks, leaving Rhodey behind with Fury.  
"Sir, what can I do to help? He's my best friend, I can't just stand by doing nothing."Rhodey asked.  
"I need you to get in contact with your SOs. You need to make this look like a hostage situation, make it believable. Try not to include any of us in your report." Fury ordered him.  
"I have a plan, Sir." Rhodey said with a determined look in his eye.  
"Then what are you waiting for? Go!" Fury commanded and Rhodey ran out of the room as fast as he could.

Tony woke up to someone gently nudging his shoulder. He felt sick and a dense wave of heat and pain was radiating from his leg and left arm. He opened his eyes to see Yinsen looking down at him.  
"Can you sit up? They gave me some food to give you, are you hungry?" Yinsen asked, to which Tony nodded.  
When Tony sat up he caught a glimpse of left hand, or rather what was left of it. So it wasn't a dream the bastards had really cut off his hand.  
"Don't worry, it was a clean cut. They brought you to me right after it happened, I was able to prevent an infection from forming. Once you get out of here, you should have no problem getting a decent prosthesis." Dr. Yinsen explained trying to get Tony not to panic.  
"They're asking for $500,000,000 dollars, and if they don't get it in a week, your covers blown. They also want a truck full of top of the line weapons. Every week they don't pay up, they cut something else off. If they don't get the weapons in a month, they'll kill you." Yinsen explained.  
Tony really hoped that Shield had a plan, because they was no way for him to escape without their help. Tony then finished eating the meager portion of rice, and what he would guess was lamb stew, and went back into a pain filled sleep.

"We're on location." A voice whispers into his ear.  
"On my mark go. I want this to be clean. First priority, get Tony out of there. Then focus on getting prisoners. I want this place up in flames in 15 minutes." Coulson ordered the various strike teams on location. "Now go!" On his mark the four teams infiltrated the base. Three were essentially decoys, whose sole responsibilities were to divert the captors off of the trail of the alpha team, which was composed of Clint, Natasha and Fane. The Shield agents were silent in their infiltration of the compound, the only signs of their presence was the occasional popping of their silenced rifles over the mics.  
"We've got Tony. We've also located another prisoner. We're bringing them out!" Clint's voice informed everyone over the radios. They had only been in there for 5 minutes. Coulson couldn't help but think this was going too smoothly. Then he quickly regretted his thoughts because he heard the explosion of gunfire over the mics. It was a trap.

Tony awoke to the sound of boots in the hall. His first thought was that his captors had come for round two. He could see that Yinsen was getting nervous as the footsteps came closer. Then the
door flew open and he saw three familiar figures burst in. Fane aimed his gun at Yinsen and was probably saying something along the lines of 'Hands in the air!', because Yinsen went stiff as a board and through his hands in the air.

"He's a prisoner too. Don't harm him!" Tony warned them. Clint then ran over to Tony and said something that Tony could barely make out. "They took my aids," Tony told him.

"Are you OK?" Clint signed

"Yeah besides the broken leg and you know the missing hand." Tony said sarcastically.

"Why don't we blow this place then? Don't worry we'll take the doctor with us. Think you can stand?"

"Yeah if I can use you for support." Tony said. Then Clint helped him up and they vacated the room.

The mission seemed to be going well. They had gotten in and found Tony rather easily. He should of known that something was up, no mission ever goes this easily. So when he heard the rush of boots behind him and the scream of gunfire he was prepared, for them.

"Get Tony out of here Clint!" He screamed. Clint obeyed and the two scurried down the hall as best as they could.

"We're outnumbered Fane. We're not going to make it." Natasha warned him gravely.

"Then we die fighting." He said as he prepared himself for the oncoming assault.

"You guys go ahead. I'll cause a diversion." The doctor who they had rescued said to them.

"No! Get yourself to safety. We're trained for this." Natasha said to the doctor.

"No Tony will need you too more than you think. Go! Return to your families, so I can return to mine." The doctor told them.

"Are you absolutely sure?" Fane asked him solemnly.

"Yes, I was never meant to leave this cave. Go!" The doctor told them.

"Thank you for all you've done." Natasha said as she and Fane casted one last look at the brave doctor, before they left him behind. The doctor gave them a sly smile before he openly welcomed death.

"Get out of there!" He screamed into his radio. Then he mentioned for the quinjets to go in closer to withdrawal the agents.

"Did we get Tony?" He asked cautiously into his radio, once they were all loaded up.

"Yes, but we lost the other prisoner. They were closing in on us and he gave up his life to secure our safety." Natasha said quietly.

"Any other casualties?" He asked fearing the reply.

"We lost Agents Hanley and Johnston. Agents Kincaid, Gustav and Jung have been injured but are expected to make full recoveries." Then there was silence over the radios, as they paid respect for the men they had lost.

"Well let's light them up, and get the hell out of here." Coulson said over the radio. Then he got into his quinjet and got as away from the site as he could, but not before he saw two incendiary missiles strike the compound and saw the explosion of fire in the background.

"Let's go home!" He announced and a roar of approval answered him.

"Tony, are you sure you're alright?" Natasha asked worriedly.

"Well besides the broken leg, shrapnel wounds and a missing hand, I'm fine. You guys got me out of there before they could do any real damage. " Tony explained.

"Real damage? They cut off your hand! You're an engineer and assassin, I'm pretty sure you require both hands!" Clint exclaimed.

"Well I've been working on some prototype prosthetics that hook on to your nervous system. Its
hasn't been tested yet, but now that I'm in need of a hand, I can be the first recipient of it. But in the meantime, I'm pretty sure I can adapt to being one handed for a bit."
"Tony, how are you taking this so well? What if the prosthetic doesn't work? Aren't you the least bit worried?" Fane inquired.
"What do you want me to be a sobbing hot mess? My hand is gone, nothing is going to replace it, I've chosen to accept this and move on. I'm a genius billionaire who is in charge of the world's leading company in technology, I'm pretty sure I can fix the problem." Tony said exasperatedly.
"Tony, all I can say is that you have guts. If I were in your place right now I would be shell shocked. I've seen fully grown men who've reacted more due to a simple gunshot wound, than you are now." Clint admitted.
"So could you guys sneak me one of my tablets? Cause I have a feeling I'm going to be in here for a couple days." Tony practically begged them.
"Of course, but I want to see this 'hand' you're designing. " Natasha told him.
"So what are we telling the general public? It might seem a little suspicious if I come back with a broken leg and missing hand. Wait how long was I gone for?" Tony asked realizing that no one had told him yet.
"You were gone for four days. And we have Rhodey on story detail." Fane told him.
"Four Days? And you have Rhodey on detail? Do you realize how dramatic he can get?" Tony asked shocked. Fane started laughing.
"Well I guess we're about to find out. Fury told us that you were all over the news."
"What? What did Rhodey do?"
"Well he somehow talked his SOs into saying that they had a major role in rescuing you, after you were ambushed in Afghanistan while on a business trip to Kabul. I have no idea how he did this, but I suspect Fury had a hand in it."
"Well its a good thing that Rhodey is on our side." Tony said astonished at the power Rhodey held.
Then he noticed how exhausted each of them looked. "Why don't you guys go get some sleep? I'm going to be working on this for a bit, so I'm not going to be the best of company tonight." He suggested.
"Fine, but are you sure you don't need anything?"
"Well maybe some coffee. But that's what the nurses are for." Tony said with a mischievous smile.
"Now go before you all collapse from exhaustion!" The three assassins regretfully left the room, pitying the nurses that were on call tonight, because once Tony started something, no one could stop him until he literally passed out from exhaustion.
The next morning they found Tony slumped over his tablet, sound asleep. Natasha was brave enough to pry the tablet from Tony's hands and was astonished when she saw what he was working on. She gazed at Tony with utter amazement for he managed to design something in a single night, that most engineers couldn't dream of doing in their entire lifetimes.
"Tasha? What's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost." Clint said as he saw the look of shock on his partners face.
"Take a look at this Birdbrain." She told him holding out the tablet, while he chuckled at the familiar nickname.
"Holy Shit! What is this?" He exclaimed.
"I think Tony's imagination ran a bit wild last night. Instead of designing an arm, he designed a whole exoskeleton." She said in awe.
"What's he going to call it?" Clint asked to no one in particular.
"Iron Man." Tony announced as he was woken by their voices.
Workaholic

Tony was at work on another one of his projects. He was blasting AC/DC on his speakers highest volume.
"Tony come on, you've been down there for two weeks. Natasha wants a movie night, and Fane's ordered pizza. Can you take a break for one night?" Clint practically begged.
"But I'm almost done." Tony whined.
"Seriously?"
"Yeah, I was about to have JARVIS start the fabrication process soon. I only have a few more things to fix." Tony announced, as he shut off the blaring music. "But I guess I can go upstairs. Has it really been 2 weeks?" He asked having lost track of time.
"Yeah, if it wasn't for the empty pizza boxes and blaring music we would have started to think you died down here." Clint said.
"Hahaha very funny. So what movie are we watching?"
"Well its Natasha's choice so we're going to watch Wanted."
"Is that the one with Angelina Jolie?"
"Yeah, Natasha's borderline obsessed with her." Clint said.
"Who can blame her?" Tony said, then followed Clint upstairs.

"The boy wonder finally emerges!" Fane announced dramatically.
"Hey I'm not a boy! I'm 22!"
"We're about to send in a search and rescue team down there to dig you out from under all those pizza boxes. You do realize you can't survive on only pizza and soda, right?" Natasha said.
"Hey pizza is nutritious! It has all the food groups combined on one beautiful slice of glory!" Tony announced in his defense.
"So how far along are you on your project?" Fane inquired.
"The prototype should be done by tomorrow. But I might need your help tomorrow, Tasha."
"Why?" Natasha asked worriedly, she knew that Tony's experiments didn't always work out.
"Well the suits going to require a lot of power, so I may have miniaturized the arc reactor my father made, and I plan on replacing the battery with it. I need your small hands to install it." Tony said as he saw their jaws drop systematically.
"You want to place an arc reactor in your chest?!" Clint exclaimed.
"Yeah, its perfectly safe." Tony assured then.
"You want me to put it in? You realize how close I'm going to be to your heart, RIGHT?" Natasha practically screamed.
"Yeah, the procedures elementary. I'll talk you thru it."
"Are you sure its safe? That thing must pack a lot of power." Fane asked.
"Oh yeah its powerful, it has enough power to wipe out half of Manhattan," the assassins all gasped, "but as long as someone doesn't rupture it, it should be okay. The suit requires a lot of power." He assured them.
"So you're going to be walking around with a bomb powerful enough to wipe out Manhattan, and you're acting like its no big deal?" Clint asked bewildered.
"Did I mention the suit can fly? So I'll be flying. But yeah its safe, there's less than a .00001% chance it could rupture." Tony said as he grabbed pizza and salad, that Natasha must have prepared, and sat on the giant oversized chair and propped up his leg, that was currently in a walking cast. The other three assassins were still frozen in place." So are we going to watch the movie or not, because I really want to see Angelina Jolie kick some ass."
"I'm still trying to comprehend the fact that you've managed to miniaturize the arc reactor, an
energy source that takes up have a warehouse, into something that could fit in the palm of your hand, made a prosthetic arm that can attach to your nervous system and a suit of armor that fly's in two weeks. Tony if you keep doing this you're going to win the Nobel Prize before you're 30."
Fane exclaimed, grabbing his food and sitting on the couch.
"30? I bet he'll be a Noble Laurent by 25. He discovered how to fly by oneself. A thing man has been trying to do since the beginning of time." Clint said as he sat on the couch next to Fane.
"If he doesn't end up killing himself in a flying accident or an explosion before then." Natasha said slipping into protective mode. Then Clint turned on the movie.
The next two hours were spent fangirling over Angelina's awesomeness and picking out the absurdness of curving bullets. When the movie ended none of them were surprised to find Tony fast asleep in his chair. Tony hadn't had a full night of sleep for the past two weeks, and they had planned the 'movie' night just for this end goal.
"Finally!" Natasha whispered.
"I'm going to get him upstairs." Fane whispered back.
"But he looks so peaceful, if you move him he might wake up." Clint warned.
"Fine let's watch another movie, then I'll move him upstairs." Fane suggested and each of them agreed. Fane covers Tony up with a blanket, and Natasha chose a drama that just came out, The Changeling, and they all settle down into their previous spots. By the time the movie is over they were all asleep.

Tony woke up to the smell of bacon. He opened his eyes to find himself curled up in an overstuffed chair, and momentarily panicked when he saw the late morning sun streaming into the window.
"Jarvis? What time is it?" He asked the AI he had created 6 months ago.
"It is 10:47 am, sir." The crisp british voice answered. Tony got off of his chair and went into the kitchen where the smell of bacon and eggs was intoxicating.
"About time you woke up!" Clint said in between mouthfuls of food.
"Why didn't you guys wake me earlier?" Tony asked as he sat at the table, and helped himself to breakfast.
"Well you looked like you needed the sleep, so we let you sleep in." Natasha said before eating a piece of bacon.
"When was the last time you had a decent nights sleep anyway?" Fane asked.
"Uh...I actually don't remember." Tony admitted after racking his brain for answers.
"See you needed it." Clint added.
After breakfast Tony snuck down into the lab again to finish his projects. He spent the next few hours fixing up the fine details, making sure everything was in optimal condition. Then he had Jarvis start the fabrication process, which would take the better part of the day to finish. Then he went back upstairs where everyone was watching TV.
"So the suits done." He announced as he sat on the couch next to Natasha. "Well, almost done, Jarvis is fabricating it."
"So does this mean you've come back to the land of the living?" Clint teased.
"Hahaha very funny Birdbrain. Now I have to catch up on the mountain of paperwork Pepper's most likely left in my office." Tony said regretfully.
"Are you sure you have to do that now? I've been wanting to have a James Bond marathon since Quantum of Solace is now out." Fane said eagerly.
"It wouldn't be the same without you." Clint practically begged.
"Don't you guys have work to do?" Tony asked the three lounging assassins.
"Nope, its been a pretty dull week." Natasha added.
"Fine you guys convinced me. I'm going to run upstairs, take a quick shower and get some of the paperwork, Pepper will kill me if I don't at least attempt to tackle it, then we can have a James Bond marathon. " Tony admitted to the satisfaction of the assassins.
"I'll order chinese while we wait." Fane announced as Tony crept upstairs.
"We need to get him to relax more." Clint stated as soon as Tony was out of hearing range.
"I agree he works way too much for a 22 year old." Fane said.
"Shouldn't he be going to wild parties and getting into trouble?" Natasha asked.
"Well the tabloids already peg him as a party animal, due to his frequent disappearances in college, so what harm could it do if he got a bit wild?" Clint asked.
"I got the perfect idea." Fane said, then he told them quickly before Tony returned.

Tony came into the room not five minutes later with damp hair and a huge stack of paperwork.
"I thought you were tackling a bit of the paperwork." Natasha said as she eyed the mountain of papers.
"This is a 'bit'. Trust me there is a whole lot more upstairs." Tony said dreadfully.
"What? How much paper work could you possibly have?" Clint asked
"Well I was gone for almost 3 weeks, so at the average of 100 things needing my signature or overview a day, at 6 days a week, I probably have about 2000 documents." Tony said as he guessed how much paperwork he had. The three assassins looked at him in shock. "Being CEO of a fortune 500 company, and being head of the R&D department at a leading technological company comes with a lot of work. I would have started on this ages ago, but I was short a hand, and this one," Tony said as he held up his mechanical left hand and flexed it, "took till today to fully calibrate. What do you guys think I do all day in the office?" Tony asked the three oblivious assassins.
"Order people to do things for you?" Clint offered.
"Attend boring meetings?" Offered Natasha.
"Yell at people?" Fane offered with a laugh.
"Well I do all three, plus I have to oversee all of the big projects in the R&D department, be the public figurehead of the company, talk to the partners and you know, be a boss to almost 30,000 employees. Not to mention I'm an assassin on the side." Tony said exasperatedly, while starting to tackle the paperwork.
"How are you not burned out?" Natasha asked.
"Tons of Coffee, Energy Drinks and my personal masseuse." Tony said with a smile.
"You have a personal masseuse?" Clint asked in awe.
"Yeah, one of the perks of the job. I also have a personal chef, who is beginning to get suspicious of my eating habits, an on call stylist and makeup team, and an exclusive tailor."
"Why would you need a makeup team?" Fane asked amused.
"I make biweekly press conferences, plus I have paparazzi stalking me, trust me no one looks good in the limelight. I wear makeup to cover up bruises from training and the general zombie look one acquires after several weeks of being overworked. Now are we going to have a Bond marathon or not?" Tony said as he reclined on the couch.
"Jarvis, dim the lights and play."
"Yes Master Fane." Jarvis replied while the lights faded and the movie began.
"I don't think I'm ever going to get used to Jarvis." Fane admitted.
"Hush, the movies starting!" Natasha said as she chuckled popcorn at Fane.
The rest of the night was spent imitating Sean Connery's accent, eating Chinese takeout, and pointing out where MI6 had gone wrong in a lot of the missions. Tony fell asleep halfway through Goldfinger, but none of the assassins could blame him, for the pile of paperwork looked extremely dull.

Then near the end of You Only Live Twice, after almost 10 hours of James Bond galore, Jarvis announced that the suit was finished. Tony jumped up from his slumped position on the couch and ran, as best as he could in a walking cast, downstairs like a kid on Christmas morning. Fane, Natasha and Clint followed close behind eager to get a look at Tony's creation. When the stepped
into the workshop their jaws literally dropped. There standing tall in the center of the usually cluttered workshop stood a sleek metal suit detailed in red and gold. It looked like it would fit Tony perfectly and looked capable of possessing both power and elegance at the same time.

"You've outdone yourself, Tony." Fane said in awe of the technology standing before him.

"Huh...what?" Tony muttered, while he surveyed his suit, in a similar fashion as how Michelangelo must have studied his David.

"You're a true artist, Tony. Can I touch it?" Natasha nearly begged as she regained her ability to speak after being awestruck.

"Oh Yeah, but you haven't seen anything yet. Wait till you see the arc reactor. " Tony said gleefully.

"There's more?!" Clint asked astounded.

"I need the arc reactor to fly the Mark I." He said as he walked over to the suit and detached the reactor from its chest. " This is going to be placed in my chest to replace the battery. I'm ready to implant as soon as Natasha is."

"Wait what?" Natasha asked.

"Don't worry Tasha, it will only take a few minutes." Tony assured her.

"Mark I?" Fane asked.

"Well I already have two more suits in production, and Mark I seemed the perfect thing to call it." Tony said.

"There's going to be more?!" Clint asked.

"Oh yeah, I plan on having a minor battalion on these things. I could probably find a way to outfit them for military use, for protection for the soldiers that are deployed. See I accidentally gave the suit some non-lethal weapons designed to knock attackers off their feet, instead of outright killing them." He explained.

"Accidentally?" Fane asked confused.

"Yeah it turns out the stabilizers needed for flight can pack a mean punch." Tony said.

"Tony you might be the world's only pacifistic assassin." Clint said with a laugh.

"I'm a complicated person." Tony said with a smirk.

"So when is it going to be ready for flight?" Natasha asked.

"Well I want to have a chance to adapt to the amount of energy the reactors going to give me, and I can't fly with this thing on," he said pointing to the cast. ' so I'm going to test drive him in a week. Now Natasha do you want to hook me up now or later?" He said gesturing to the reactor.

"Might as well do it now." Natasha said.

"You guys better stay. I don't know exactly how much power the suits going to take, so if I have a, well, dead 'battery' you're going to have to change it quick, I'll be leaving spares in convenient places, locked up of course." Tony said as he got sat down on a chair that had a reclining back. Once he was fully reclined he told Natasha how to do it. " You just need to disconnect the wires attached to the battery, and reconnect them to the reactor. Just don't pull and do it quick, I don't want to go into cardiac arrest on you guys." He nervously chuckled, the other three did not look amused.

Natasha then got to work, noting Tony's pale and clammy look once she took out the battery, then she replaced the battery with the reactor, and put it in place. Tony had a curious look on his face.

"What's the matter? I didn't do anything wrong did I?" She asked nervously.

"Nothings wrong, in fact it's the opposite, my heart hasn't felt this strong since the battery was placed in 8 years ago, wow I can't believe its been 8 years." Tony said.

"Well why don't we finish watching the movies? I'll make your favorite pasta, spaghetti bolognese, to celebrate you creating your masterpiece." Fane said.

" Ooh and I make my death by chocolate cake." Natasha added. Then they all made their way upstairs.
Rise of a Hero

Tony couldn't believe how fast he was going he had just passed Mach 2, twice the speed of sound, and the armor was showing no signs of slowing down. The ground, 8,000 ft below him, was a blur, and he had never felt this exhilarated in his life.

"Sir, you have an incoming call from Agent Romanov." Jarvis said drawing Tony out of his thoughts.

"Put it through Jarvis." He commanded.

"Tony, Fury has called an emergency meeting with us. It looks like something big is going down overseas, and he wants us to check it out." She informed him.

"Where is the meeting being held? The helicarrier?" Tony asked.

"Yeah we're all on the carrier. We're just waiting for you. How long is it going to take for you to arrive?"

"Well I'm testing the suit right now. Where is the carrier located right now?" He asked.

"100 miles off the coast of New York."

"Good I'll be there in 10 minutes, you better tell people that I'm in the suit. I don't want to be taken down by friendly fire. Can you send Jarvis the coordinates?"

"Yes, but why do I have the feeling you're going to be the death of me?" Natasha groaned into the phone. "I'll tell everyone that the boogey flying faster than a jet is really Tony Stark."

"Wait don't tell them I'm Tony, that'll ruin the surprise. Instead say I'm a friend." Tony said coyly.

"You do realize Shield has a history of shooting before asking, right? If you get shot down because of your surprise, then the blame is on you." Natasha said.

"I'd like to see them try. See you in 5." Tony said as he severed the connection. "Jarvis? You got those coordinate?"

"Yes sir. You should arrive at your destination in approximately 4 minutes and 39 seconds."

"Good, hang on J, I have a feeling this might get rough." Tony said as he continued towards the carrier.

"Identify yourself!" An angry voice ordered.

"I'm uhhh... Iron Man." Tony answered.

"Iron Man, you are in restricted space. Turn around now and we won't have to take drastic actions." The voice spat back.

"7777-8987-XJOA-9003." Tony listed as he remembered the access code.

"How in the world do you know that?! Give me one good reason for me to not shoot you out of the sky!" The voice yelled at him.

"I'm a friend. You can verify this with Agents Barton and Romanov. They gave me permission to land here today. Now if you don't mind I'm running late." Tony replied boldly. There was a few moments of silence as the pilot verified this.

"It looks like you check out, but I'm still escorting you in. No funny business or I will shoot you down before you can blink." The pilot said harshly.

"Sounds good." Tony replied cheekily.

Once they got in sight of the Helicarrier the jets did their landing sequences while Tony landed in a heroic pose. He was greeted by a deck of Shield agents aiming guns at him and with a scowling Director Fury heading the group.

"Give me one good reason why I shouldn't allow these agents to shoot you down right now." Fury growled.

"Well if you do that you old pirate, you'll lose one of your best assassins." Tony said dramatically.

"TONY?! Do you have a death wish?!" Fury yelled, his face was completely outraged.

"How'd you know?" Tony said as he removed his face plate.

"I want answers. Now! Or I'm going to give them," he said gesturing to the conflicted agents "The order to shoot you on the spot."
"My, my, Fury, someone's awfully grumpy today. Did you miss your nap?" Tony said sarcastically.
"Get inside! And get your helmet back on! You don't want to be outed as whatever you are, do you?!!" Fury scowled as he led Tony into the carrier, leaving a mass of confused agents in their wake.
"Holy Shit! You actually came in the suit, I thought Tahsa was joking!" Clint exclaimed as they entered the meeting room.
"You all knew?! When did you get time to make a suit of armor that has the capabilities to outfly my top of the line jets, Stark?" Fury asked, still maintaining his angry scowl.
"You know your face is going to get like that if you keep making that face, right?" Tony added.
"Answer me now!"
"Well it kinda came to me when I was designing my arm." Tony admitted sheepishly.
"You're telling me you designed a fully functioning flying suit in less than a month?!"
"Well it was more like 2 weeks."
"What?!!
"Well I had to finish my arm before I could even get started on the Mark 1 and the reactor."
"Mark 1? And what reactor?!"
"Well the suits the Mark 1, its a prototype, and I may have a miniaturized arc reactor in my chest." Tony said.
"Do I want to know how you managed to create 3 highly advanced pieces of technology in under a month?"
"Well I was bored." Tony admitted.
"You were bored?" Fury said astoundedly. The rest of the occupants were chuckling. Fury casted them a steely glance and ordered Tony to sit down.
"Now the real reason I called you guys in is because this Ten Rings organization is getting out of control. They are attacking villages in at least ten countries with locations throughout eastern Europe and the Middle East. Now I wanted for you guys to go on an Intel based mission due to Tony's and Romanov's language skills, but since Tony decided to go all big red shiny suit of armor on us, I think we might need a new plan. We can send in 'Iron Man', that's what you're calling yourself right?" Tony nodded, "To make a huge distraction, I don't care what you do as long as you don't get yourself killed, it would be a nightmare to deal with a group of grieving assassins and the press if that were to happen, while Barton and Romanov gather important information while they're not looking. Fane, you won't be accompanying them this time. I want you guys on a quinjet in 30 minutes. And don't get yourselves killed!" Fane ordered them. "The rest of the briefing will happen on flight, I'm sending Coulson with you. Now get out! And Tony put your freaking helmet back on!"
"Aye aye, Captain Fury." Tony said going back to the pirate puns.
"And enough with the pirate jokes! They got old years ago!" Fury yelled as Tony left the room, suddenly glad that his mask his the huge grin on his face.

The mission plan was surprisingly simple. The plan was to let Tony out about 10 minutes before reaching the destination, a small town near the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan where the Ten Rings had started to kick people to the streets, and have him fly in and play the hero, causing a huge distraction. Meanwhile Natasha and Clint would infiltrate the compound where the Ten Rings made their home base and gather intelligence and bug the place. Then they would all get out of there and fly home. Who would've known that there was more to the mission than anyone of them could've guessed?
As Tony flew towards the tiny town he had a sudden feeling that there was more to the mission than he was previously told. When he got towards the town he could see people massed in the streets wearing all of their clothes literally on their backs. There were bullet-ridden bodies all over
the place. The scene oddly reminded him of the holocaust pictures he saw in school where the Nazi's rounded up Jews to take them to ghettos. He couldn't let the terrorists get away with it, he knew what he had to do.

He swooped down and landed in a fighting pose between the terrorists and the displaced civilians.
"Stop! They have done nothing to harm you. If you surrender now you will not be harmed. But if you don't you give me no choice but to act!" He commanded in Pashto!
"Get out of our way!"
" You have no right to interfere with our business!"
"Yeah, you and what army?"

Then they trained their guns on him and showered him with bullets.
"You shouldn't have done that!" He yelled as he let out a huge energy pulse that knocked them all out. Once he was certain they were all down he looked back to the civilians, who greeted him with looks of amazement and fright.
"Don't worry, I just knocked them out. They will be rightfully punished for what they did to you. I mean you no harm." He assured them.

"Sir, I am detecting signatures from five incendiary devices located in various buildings." Jarvis informed him gravely.
"Is there anyone inside?" He asks the civilians on the street. Many nod, saying various family members and friends who were trying to hide. Tony needed to get them out fast before the buildings exploded. "Jarvis, I need you to scan the buildings and tell me where the most civilians are located."

"Sir, there are 15 people in the building behind you." Jarvis said in a cool voice.
"OK, Jarvis I need you to place a call to Coulson now." He ordered, the mission had just got that much more complicated.

"This is Coulson."
"Coulson, I've taken down the terrorists, but they rigged several buildings, all of which contain civilians, to blow. I don't know how much time is left, but I'm going to get as many out as I can, we might need emergency services."
"Tony! You're just supposed to cause a diversion, not play superhero!" Coulson said trying to hide the panic in his voice.
"It was worse than we thought, it was like a picture out of a Holocaust museum. I had to intervene. I've got to go, I'm coming up on a group of children hiding, I have to get them out." Tony said as he severed the line.

Once Tony see's the group of heat signatures behind the wall, which must have been false, he decides to take off his mask, he didn't wish to frighten the children more than they already were.
"It's ok, you can come out now. I'm here to save you." He said softly. He saw the heat signatures move a bit.
"It's not safe here, can you come out? So that I can take you to your families?" He asked, then he saw the wall move a bit and a older boy's head poked out.
"Are you sure it's safe?" He asked.
"Yes, your families told me where you were. The buildings not safe, so can you help me get all of you out?" He told the boy, who was not much younger than himself, and the boy nodded back. Then the boy gave the all clear sign to the rest of the children. They were all tear stricken and the majority were under 10.
"OK I'm going to need your help, OK? We have to get out of here as fast as we can." He said. The older children seemed to get the point and grasped the younger children's hands. Tony picked up a few of the youngest children and led them out of the house and into the waiting arms of the families outside. Then he went into another house to usher the people out. 5 minutes later most of the people were safe, there was just three girls left in the last house. Tony flew into the house to rescue them, knowing that the time before the bombs went off was tickling down. He spotted the girls, all sisters according to their parents outside, and was just about to get them outside as heard Jarvis utter a warning that the bombs were about to go off.
"Get down!" He yelled at the girls who were scared out of their minds, and he used his suit to create a Shield for their prone bodies. He had just managed to cover them when the explosion went off and he felt shards of debris from the blast radius pierce his armor, which was already weakened from the amount of bullets that had been shot at him. Then his world went black.

"Do you think he's OK?" A quiet voice drew him out of the inky blackness of unconsciousness. "I think he's waking up!" A slightly bolder voice beckoned. He opened his eyes to see three little girls peer down at him. He gave an involuntary groan as he realized his body was engulfed in hot pain.

"Don't move!" The eldest of the trio beckoned. "Are you all right?" He asked them, horrified at the gruffness of his voice. "Yes, you managed to take the blunt of the damage. All we got were minor cuts." The eldest stated. "How long have we been here?" He asked, noting the darkness of the room. "I don't know, but I think we're trapped." She said dreadfully. The two younger sisters had looks of panic on their faces.

"I'm going to see if there is a way out of here OK? But I need to put on my helmet to do so, so don't be scared." He told them as he pushed a button that closed his face plate.

"Welcome back Sir, I was beginning to worry. You have 15 missed calls from Agent Romanov, 20 from Agent Barton and 10 from Agent Coulson." Jarvis told him. That was not good.

"How long have I been offline, J?"

"3 hours and 27 minutes." That was even worse.

"OK, Jarvis, place a call to Agent Romanov now!" He ordered.

"Tony? Where are you?" Natasha's panicked voice answered.

"I was trapped in a house bomb, trying to rescue three little girls."

"Can you get out?"

"No I think we're trapped. I can't do anything, I've been punctured by a lot of shrapnel, and if I jar any of it I might bleed out."

"Aren't you in the suit?"

"Yeah, but the armor was compromised when the terrorists decided to use me as target practice. Are the civilians outside safe?"

"Yes, they're calling you a hero. We checked them out and detained the terrorists. We just couldn't find you."

"OK, well I'm turning on my tracking beacon."

"OK we got it online. We should have you out of there within an hour. Are you the only one who requires medical attention?" she asked grimly.

"Yeah, I managed to use my body as a shield to protect them." He said his voice tight as he was hit with a strong wave of pain.

"Tony what's wrong?" She asked.

"You might want to hurry up...I think... The reactor sustained... some... damage." He said as it was getting harder to breath.

"Дерьмо!" She swore in Russian.

"Yeah... I'm going... to hang up... I need Jarvis... To give all power... to the reactor." He said.

"We'll get you out of there!" She yelled, right before he hung up.

"Jarvis? Divert... All energy to the reactor..." He ordered between gasps. Then he retracted the helmet. "Help is on the way... don't worry if I fall asleep, OK?" He said trying to keep the girls from panicking.

"What can I do to help?" The eldest asked.

"If you see this light," he said gesturing towards the arc reactor, "Start blinking or if it goes out, I need you to hit it as hard as you can, OK?"

"Won't that hurt?"
"Yeah, but it will keep me alive." He said, as he faded into darkness once more.

"We need to get them out of there now!" Natasha yelled as Tony hanged up the phone. "Them?" Clint asked. "Yeah, he's trapped with three little girls. He was trying to save them as the bomb went off, he took the brunt of the damage as he played human shield and protected the girls." She said. "But isn't he in the suit?" Clint asked. "Well apparently his suit's integrity was damaged when he was shot with hundreds of bullets while protecting a group of innocent civilians." Natasha said surprisingly sarcastic. "How much damage did he take?"

"I don't know, all I know is that he I riddled with shrapnel and the reactor is failing."

"Oh God..." Clint said going on silent. Then they reached the shield agents, Coulson had requested when Tony first called in 4 hours ago. "Let's get a move on people! We have one of our own down there in critical condition. We needed to get him out hours ago. Go!" She ordered them after she told them where Tony was. It seemed to work because within 15 minutes the workers had cleared enough debris to gain an entrance point. She then ordered several of the stronger medics to go down with her and Clint because of the heaviness of the suit.

"I don't know what condition he is in, but let me get to him first." She told them before they went down. She held a replacement Arc Reactor in her hand, as though it was a rare diamond. "Why?" One of the newer medics, who had not heard of the fierce reputation of the black widow yet, asked. "Because if I don't replace the only thing that is keeping his heart beating, and that happens to be damaged, with a new reactor, he WILL die before we get him on the jet." She yelled. Then they all made their way to Tony and the three girls. She saw the girls surrounding the prone body of the man who she thought of as a brother.

"Are you here to help him?" The eldest asked in Pashto.

"Yes he is my friend. Are any of you injured?" Natasha asked in shaky pashto, she wasn't really fluent. "No, he saved us." The girl said in awe. "OK then can you go with this man? His name is Clint. He'll take you to your parents OK?" She told the girls, trying to gain access to Tony, who hadn't moved since they got down there. The girls reluctantly left their hero's body. And Natasha practically ran to Tony's side. He was unconscious, and his face was as white as a ghost and covered in sweat. "Tony? Tony can you hear me?" She said, and getting no response besides a weak groan, she slapped his face. His eyes fluttered open and he gazed at her with dazed eyes. "Natasha?" He said weakly.

"Tony, how do you get your chest plate off I have a new reactor." She asked. "Button under...the armpit." He told her as he started to close his eyes. "Tony stay with me!" She ordered as she located the release hatch and removed the chest plate. Then she took out the damaged reactor and gave him the new one. His reaction was almost immediate, his skin gained some color and his breathing eased. "Tony? Where are you hurt?" She asked as she saw his eyes open again. "Everywhere hurts." He groaned. Then she noticed the pool of blood that had gathered underneath the suit, and allowed the medics to do their jobs. They soon got him stabilized and onto a stretcher, they weren't even going to attempt to get him out of the armor yet, and carried him out. "Are they safe?" Tony asked as they passed her. "Yes, you saved all of them. There calling you a hero." She told him proudly as he smiled faintly, due to the exhaustion he had from the combined blood loss and almost cardiac arrest. Then she and
Clint followed the medics out of the collapsed house and onto the quinjet waiting for them.
"Is he going to be alright?" Clint asked worriedly.
"Well he's lost a lot of blood and his heart nearly stopped, but yeah I think he'll pull through. Now the real question is, is are you going to survive calling your boyfriend and telling him that we got Tony injured?" She joked, trying to ease the tension, and Clint's face paled.
"Why do I have to tell Fane?" He asked dreadfully.
"Because he is your boyfriend." Natasha, with a smile trying to hide the worry that was evident on her face. Then they walked onto the jet, where they were starting to carefully pry the armor from Tony's body. Tony's under suit was covered in shreds from the shrapnel and caked in blood. The medics had given him a sedative due to the painful nature of their examination.
"Is he going to be alright?" Natasha asked one of the medics.
"Well he's lost a lot of blood, and an infection is already setting, but most of the wounds are shallow enough not to need stitches, he does have a few that are pretty deep though. Luckily he was wearing the armor, or he probably wouldn't have survived. He should be fine with a blood transfusion and several days of rest though." The medic said and both assassins let out a breathe they didn't know they were holding.
"We have another problem, though." Coulson said as he stepped behind the pair. "Some of the civilians had cell phones and they recorded a lot of his heroics, and a few got his face. In other words by the end of day, half the world is going to know that Tony Stark is Iron Man." He informed them.
"What do we do?" Natasha and Clint said at the same time.
"We can't do anything until he wakes up. So we wait." Coulson said.
"What is the public saying about him?" Natasha asked curiously.
"They're calling him a Hero, or rather a Superhero. He's one step away from getting a comic book." Coulson admitted.
"Seriously?" Clint said baffled.
"You should see the twitter feeds. The videos are already viral." Coulson said handing Clint and Natasha his phone. The two spy's looked at it and their jaws dropped.
"We're friends with a real life superhero." Clint said in shock, almost ready to go all fanboy over Tony.
"Clint, he's no different than the boy who couldn't find his shoes this morning, maybe a bit more banged up, but still the same." Natasha assured Clint. Then sat next to him while they waited for either Tony to wake up, which he did an hour later.
"What happened?" He asked worriedly when he saw the look of shock on their faces. "Don't tell me I lost another limb." He said jokingly.
"No, you still have your three natural limbs." Clint assured him.
"Then what's the matter? Did someone die? Am I dying?" Tony asked starting to panic.
"You're a superhero." Natasha blurted out.
"I'm a what?"
"A superhero, you know the ones in comic books, who run around in tights and capes. Well you're a superhero, just minus the spandex." Clint told him.
"How did this happen?"
"While you were being heroic saving lives without your mask on some of the civilians were filming you. Right now you trending on twitter, and you're viral on YouTube." Natasha told him.
"Oh...so what are we going to do?"
"Well that's up to you. You can either come out as a superhero or we can get you a good alibi." Clint told him.
"Well, what's the verdict on my new superhero status?"
"Well the public loves you. You're more famous than Oprah."
"Well then I only have one choice. I guess I'm going to be a superhero." He said.
"Well how do you want to out yourself? Press conference?" Natasha asked.
"Well since I gained my popularity on YouTube, I guess I can come out on YouTube. Do you guys
have a video camera? And perhaps some foundation? I'm pretty sure I look like death warmed over." He asked.
"You want to do this now?" Natasha asked.
"Might as well get it over with." He said.
"Fine I'll check around to see if I can get some make up, Clint will get a camera. Do you need anything else?" Natasha said.
"My helmet." Tony said as they left the room. Natasha came back a few minutes later with three women of varying skin tones, and determined the closest match and got busy applying his makeup, to cover up his paleness from bloodloss. When she was finished Clint came in with a small handheld camera and the helmet from his suit.
"Okay I think I'm ready to come out, I just need one of you to hold the camera, make sure it makes me look good." Tony said with a smirk.
"I'll film, tell me when you're ready." Natasha said. Tony gave her the signal.
"As many of you know, I'm Tony Stark. Many of you may have seen the videos depicting a person who looks like me saving a village in the Hindu Kush from a terrorist group called the Ten Rings. Well I'm here to say that those rumors are true. I am Iron Man." Tony said as he placed the helmet on his head. Then he signaled for Natasha to stop filming.
"Well that was short." Clint's said.
"I know. I just wanted to give the public a teaser before the press conference Pepper has probably scheduled for me." Tony said, yawning. "I don't know about you guys, but this hero stuff is exhausting." He said as he stretched on the bed.
"Especially when you purposely throw yourself into the line of fire. I almost had a heart attack when we arrived at the village to find a bunch of people screaming about a 'man in a suit of iron' being in an explosion." Natasha scolded.
"What? Was I supposed to let the children die?" Tony asked.
"No, but you weren't supposed to die either, we almost lost you again." Natasha said as her voice grew softer.
"Well I'm still here. I'm tired but I'm alive. Now Clint go upload that to YouTube, ok? I'm going to sleep." Tony said as he settled in a more comfortable position.
"Do you want me to stay with you?" Natasha asked.
"Might as well, the chairs look comfy." Tony said before he closed his eyes and fell asleep. Natasha followed suit moments later when she realized how exhausted she truly was.
"So are we still up for 'Operation: Get Tony Stark to Let Loose?'" Natasha asked Clint and Fane while waiting for Tony to show up from the office.

"Yeah, I even got Coulson to go along with the fake mission portion of it." Clint said.

"So when are we going to do this?" Natasha asked.

"Tonight. What? It's a Friday night and there's this band I know Tony would love playing tonight." Fane admitted, he had obviously done his research.

"What band?"

"Korn."

"Seriously? And you managed to get tickets for four people?" Clint asked, as he had been eyeing the concert for the past few weeks.

"Three. I'm too old to fit in at rock concerts, especially with you three."

"You're not that old."

"I'm 46. I practically robbed the cradle with you Clint."

"But we're not that young either." Clint pointed out.

"Clint you just turned 32, and Natasha you're barely 31. And you both could pass for someone in their mid 20's. Plus you have to include the fact that you two and Tony are too good looking to be hanging around with me, especially at a concert." Fane admitted.

"So what are you going to do?" Natasha asked.

"Well I was planning on inviting Coulson over for a few beers and watch a game or two." Fane said.

"You watch sports?" Clint asked, never knowing that Fane was a sports fan.

"Yeah I picked it up when I retired from hunting. Apparently Coulson an avid baseball fan, too."

"Wow, I actually never knew that." Natasha said amazed that something like that could get by her for so long.

"Well we're trained in secret keeping." Fane said. Then they heard the door open, and an exhausted looking Tony walked in.

"What's going on?" Tony asked, while loosening his tie and taking off his suit jacket.

"Oh we just got a new should be over in a bit to brief us." Natasha said.

"Oh." Tony said wearily. He looked as though his day was not good.

"Something happen at work?" Clint asked.

"Yeah the stocks haven't really picked up after I announced that I was Iron Man. And we had several projects pushed up a few weeks in the R&D department. Not to mention I have a potential business trip to China next week, and the Dolofóni contacted me, apparently there's been a string of murders in Singapore and they want me to take out the culprit." He announced as he reclined on the couch and put his feet up.

"When do the Dolofóni want you?" Fane inquired.

"Next week. So the timing is good because I'll be in China at the time, so if I brought along the Mark II I should be able to get to get to Singapore within 10 minutes. But then I'll have to make up an extraordinary backstory to explain my absences. I'll probably just pay off some girls to say that I slept with them, or something." Tony said.

"So that's how all the tabloids get their stories on your drunken exploits." Fane said.

"You guys didn't know?" Tony asked confused.

"No we just thought the paparazzi made them up." Natasha admitted.

"Well I know how to act drunk. So I usually go into a club acting completely wasted and like a jerk. I only have to do it for 5 to 10 minutes, then I'm out. I do it before solo missions because it acts like a good alibi, plus it gives some popularity to the clubs I choose, so its a win win." Tony admitted. "So when's Coulson going to be over? Because I would like to take a quick shower before the killing begins."
"Well he should be here any minute now, and we're going undercover, so sorry you'll have to wait on the shower." Clint announced as the doorbell rang. And Fane went to let Coulson in.

"So what's the mission?" Tony asked Coulson as soon as he got into the living room.

"How do you like a little band named Korn?" Coulson asked


"Well you guys are going undercover to a Korn concert. It will just be a simple intelligence gathering mission, you just have to keep an eye on this girl," Coulson said pointing to the picture on the table, "And gather enough data on her habits."

"You're sending three of your best assassins on an intelligence mission. Am I missing something? Because you're lying to me." Tony said bluntly.

"Fine you caught me. There is no mission. We just wanted you to have a night of fun. You've been working too hard Tony. You're 22, and yet you're working yourself into an early grave. When was the last time you let loose?" He asked Tony.

"Uh...3 months ago on my birthday, when we invited the x-men over." Tony said sheepishly.

"Seriously?" Clint asked.

"Yeah, its kinda hard to find time to have fun when you're working 4 full time jobs." Tony admitted.

"4?" Natasha questioned.

"Well yeah. I'm a CEO and head of the R&D department, an assassin and now Iron Man. Each requires a lot of devoted attention." Tony explained.

"Well then you deserve a night off. You'll have to wear disguises but that shouldn't be so complicated. I don't care what you three do after the concert, but if you come back before 3am, I'll assign you three some pretty nasty jobs on the carrier." Coulson said. Then they left the room to get ready. They came down 15 minutes later looking like they could easily fit in the metal scene. Tony and Clint both were decked out in old band t-shirts and distressed skinny jeans, along with combat boots and leather jackets. Both were sporting fake piercings and tony even had a bit of eyeliner on. Natasha was wearing extremely holey and tight skinny jeans with fishnets underneath, along with a pair of killer stilettos and a tight tank top along with a loose leather jacket. Her hair was loose and she had dark makeup. They looked amazing and completely different from their normal put together selves.

"What's up with all the leather?" Fane asked.

"We were thinking about taking our bikes." Tony said.

"With those jeans? Hopefully you guys don't wipe out." Fane said sarcastically.

"We're fully trained assassins, I think we can handle a few bikes." Natasha said.

"You guys better get going, the concert is supposed to start in an hour." Coulson said as the trio made their way to the garage and got on their barely street legal motorcycles, that Tony had somehow managed to custom outfit, and rode to the venue where Korn was playing.

The tickets they had managed to score were excellent and they had seats right next to the stage. The concert was amazing and neither of them could remember a time where they had felt so free from the weight that all of them carried on their shoulders. In the crowd of hundreds of fellow Korn lovers they had found a place where they could truly cast away their harden masks they usually donned in public and be completely free, and they loved it.

After the concert, still riding the adrenaline high from the 2 hours of awesome music, they went to their favorite pizza joint. They ordered two large pizzas and a few beers and spent the next hour and a half eating, joking and having the best night that any of them had had in a long time. To anyone looking in to the group they would see three edgy young adults have a good time. For once in their lives they were actually normal. After they were done eating they raced each other home on their bikes, breaking at least 15 traffic laws, and decided to have a Mission Impossible marathon in the livingroom. The assassins didn't even make it through the first movie before they passed out in various positions on the living room floor.

When Fane got up the next morning he found them curled on the floor, with their hair a mess from the combination of head banging and speeding from the night before, next to a half dozen empty
containers of Ben & Jerry's and several soda cans, and slight smiles on their faces, with Mission Impossible still playing on the TV. He smiled to himself, knowing that his plan had been successful. For the true goal of the plan was to have all three of them have a night where they could truly act like normal young adults, and not stone faced assassins.
Tony was working on his latest project, a iron man suit designed with Rhodey in mind. He wanted Rhodey to be the first pilot for the prototype suit he had designed for military use. The suit had proven difficult to design because of the clashing between what he desired on the suit and what the military wanted. He had initially designed the suit to be completely defensive in its nature, armed only with non-lethal weapons, such as the ones he had incorporated into his own suits. But the military wanted it to be armed more than a tank. He had finally come up with a design that suited both of their desires and he had locked himself down in his lab for three weeks, only coming out to sleep and to take the occasional mission, in order to perfect the design of the armor. He was nearly finished when Jarvis drew him out of his thoughts.

"Sir, it is time to drink another shake." Jarvis informed him, as DUM-Y forced a obnoxiously green smoothie into his hand.

"Remind me why the smoothie has to be green?" He asked Jarvis sarcastically before he took a gulp of the potent liquid.

"You have to take it to counteract the symptoms of the palladium poisoning you are suffering from." Jarvis said as Tony chugged the smoothie down with a grimace.

"Have you found a new molecular combination that could replace the palladium yet?" Tony asked as he prepared to go back to work.

"I have tried every combination, and have found no suitable combination, Sir."

"Are the smoothies actually working, or am I just taking them for nothing, J?" He asked.

"The chlorophyll has slowed the progression of the palladium entering your bloodstream, but they are still progressing towards the inevitable end, Sir." Jarvis said almost sorrowfully.

"How long do I have?" Tony said dreadfully.

"1-2 months Sir. Don't you think its time to tell the others?"

"I'll tell them when I'm ready. But now I have to finish the suit." Tony said trying to push the thought of dying out of his head. Then he got back to work. He was only working for about an hour when Clint ran in.

"I'm almost ready to fabricate, I just need one more hour then I'll rejoin the land of the living, Clint." Tony said as he heard Clint's signature footsteps rush in.

"Well you might want to get a move on. There's a crazy man walking in front of the SI building saying that he wants to 'have a word' with you, over something your father did."

"Doesn't he know that I hate my father as much as he probably hates him?"

"I don't think he cares. Did I mention he's a raving lunatic?"

"Armed?"

"Yeah with two electrically charged chains that he's whipping about terrifying civilians. He also has a instrument hooked up to him that looks remarkably like your reactor." Clint's said, his words chilling Tony's blood.

"Name?"

"Uh Vanko something, totally Russian."

"Ivan Vanko?"

"Yes Ivan... Wait how did you know that?"

"His father used to work with my father on the original Arc Reactor. If he truly is who he says he is, we're in trouble."

"Why?"

"Because my father took all the credit for building the reactor while his father was deported to Siberia. So he might have a few reasons to hate me."

"Did your father make enemies with all of his partners?" Clint asked sarcastically.

"Probably, well except for Stane, but those two belonged in either a jail cell or a crazy house together. I guess I better go before he takes his personal vendetta off on the SI building." Tony said
as he started the process of armoring up. "See you there." He said as he flew out of the exit hole he had created in the ceiling.

"Vanko, what do you want with me." Tony said stopping the man with 10 foot long electric whip appendages in his tracks.
"Ah, Iron Man, how nice of you to show up." The man said in heavily accented English.
"Well I'm here. Now will you stop terrorizing my employees. Your strife is with me not them, so why don't you let them go." Tony said trying to negotiate with the man crazed with anger and envy. For a moment Tony thought that he was going to give up, but then he saw Vanko flick one of the whips towards the innocent bystanders and Tony ran to intercept the blow. He wasn't expecting the whip to be so powerful, he was momentarily stunned while the HUD screen flicked on and off in his helmet.
"What are those things powered with?" He inquired out loud when his systems came back online.
"You should know, you have one sitting in your chest. So any nausea? Hair loss? Because I'm surprised that your symptoms of palladium poisoning aren't severe yet."
"What are you talking about?"
"I wasn't born yesterday. You've had that metal in your chest for a year now, and now you're slowly dying."
"How did you know?"
"I've been studying the reactor for most of my life. It was never designed to be placed inside of someone. Why do think I wear mine on the outside?"
"Enough chit chat. Now one last time, let the civilians go." He warned.
"No."
"Fine, but don't say I didn't warn you." Tony said as he unleashed his repulsors at full throw up his whips just in time, creating an energy bubble that threw both of them to the ground.
"Your fame has given you delusions of grandeur, Stark. Did you seriously think you were the only one who could weaponize the Reactor?" Vanko said as he rose from his feet.
"Well, actually, yes I did. But I have something you don't, Vanko." Tony said cockily.
"What?"
"Friends in high places." Tony said literally as he gave the signal to Hawkeye, who was perched on top of a nearby building, to take the shot.
"What has that got to do with anything?" Vanko said slurring the last few words as the sedative took effect. "What...haaavveee youuu givenn mee?" He said as he slumped to the floor.
"Don't worry, its only a sedative. You'll wake up with a killer headache, though. But I did warn you to stand down." Tony said as Vanko lost his grip on consciousness. Then a few shield officers closed in trying to deal with the situation.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Natasha said worriedly as they left the scene.
"Tell you what?" Tony said trying not to reveal the truth.
"Tony, don't play dumb on us, we heard the entire conversation between you and Vanko. How long do you have?" Clint said with a stern face.
"One to two months. I wanted to tell you guys, but I didn't want to be pitied." Tony said sheepishly.
"And there's no cure?" Natasha asked sadly.
"No. I've managed to slow it down, but the end is inevitable." Tony admitted.
"Can't you just go back to the battery? " Clint asked.
"No my body's gotten too used to the reactor. The thing that's keeping me alive is also killing me." He admitted sadly.
"Do you think the doctors with shield could help?" Natasha asked hopefully.
"Honestly? No. But if it will make you guys feel better I'll have them check me out." He said to the visible relief of the assassins.
"Then let's go," Clint announced leading Tony to the area where a few medics were station in case there were any civilian injuries from Vanko.
"Now? Can't we do this on the helicarrier?" Tony asked.
"Fine, but we go now. Who knows what kinda damage the palladium has done to you." Natasha said.
"Can I at least take off the suit?" Tony begged, the suit was as comfortable as one would think.
"Fine, we'll meet you in 15 minutes with the quinjet. We might as well inform Fane on what you've been hiding from us." Natasha said, while Tony flew off towards his tower.

Tony was sitting on an examination table in one of the rooms in the helicarriers med-bay, surrounded by a team of doctors and scientists along with Clint, Natasha and Fane. He was just about to reveal the true extent of the damage caused by the palladium, and for the first time in years he felt nervous. He pushed down the second thoughts that had risen in the back of his mind and removed his shirt, revealing the inky black crossword puzzle that adored his chest. He wasn't prepared for the collective gasp of the small crowd assembled before him, or for the onslaught of questions that pursued his revelation.
"How could you let it get this bad, without telling us?" Natasha asked.
"Mr. Stark, how long has these lines of dead veins been on your chest?" Said Dr. #1. Tony was too nervous to remember his name.
"Does it hurt?" Fane wondered.
"Do you have any other symptoms?" Dr. #2 inquired.
"Why didn't you tell us?" Clint asked. The questions continued to come and Tony felt as though his head would explode.
"Enough with the questions." He yelled. "First of all, I'm sorry I didn't tell you guys, I didn't want you to worry. Secondly, the lines started showing up a year ago. I've had a few other symptoms such headaches, vomiting, aches, a few blackouts, shortness of breath and lately a few coordination problems. I've been combating this with a heavy dose of chlorophyll starting with about 50mg a day, but now I'm up to about 300mg. The necrosis doesn't really hurt much, but lately the pain has been getting higher. Does this answer your guys questions?" Tony asked exasperatedly.
"Tony how are you still able to work and fly in the suit?" Natasha wondered.
"Well, I have Jarvis on autopilot, just in case I'm incapable of fighting. And I also programmed Jarvis to immediately inform one of you if my vitals were weird, or if I became unresponsive. I've also had a year to perfect the hiding of symptoms." He explained sheepishly, to the shocked faces of his friends.
"Well, I think I may have a temporary solution to lower your blood toxicity levels, which are so high that I'm surprised that you're still functional. Its an experimental medicine called Lithium Dioxide, its not a cure, but it should bring your toxicity levels down to about 50%;"
"Down to 50%! How high are they now?!" Clint interrupted the scientist.
"About 87%, your calculations were off Mr. Stark, you only have a week to live not the month that you predicted. But the Lithium Dioxide should buy you another 6 weeks to look for a cure." The scientist informed him.
"There is no cure, I've tried every combination of metals on this planet, nothing can fuel the reactor like palladium." Tony stated.
"What if the element hasn't been found yet?" Director Fury stated as he walked into the room." What? You guys think I didn't know what was going on with our boy genius here?"
"When did you find out?" Tony asked blank faced.
"I've known for about 6 months. Ever since you first became 'clumsy', and started to refuse medical exams. I knew something was off with you." Fury admitted.
"And you didn't tell anyone?" Natasha asked.
"Stand down Agent." He warned her, "and I did tell someone. How else do you think we got the Lithium Dioxide serum? I figured it might have been safe to come up with a temporary cure to counteract the symptoms. I've also had a team of scientists look through your fathers original blueprints for the reactor, that he made before he went completely crazy. They think they may have found something, but they can't go any further, its too advanced for their methods." Fury admitted.
"But I've studied those blueprints. Sure their advanced and confusing, being completed in both Russian and English, but there's nothing hidden in there." Tony admitted.
"Well Tony, it's not in the blueprints. They found something in his model for the 1973 Stark Expo, along with a note he recorded shortly after you were born." Fury told him.
"Seriously? He put a hidden message in a model? Who does that?" Tony asked.
"Well he was brilliant before he went nuts and power hungry. He also was involved in a lot of highly classified projects, that I don't even know the full extent of." Fury stated. "Tony, your father was one of the founders of this organization, before he went crazy during the search for Captain America."
"Why did nobody tell me this?"
"Well, we didn't want you to associate Shield with Howard. We needed your skills." Fury said bluntly.
"Fine, I'll go see about this hidden message. But I want answers." Tony said, still processing the information Fury had given him.
"I'll tell you everything I knew about your father." Fury told him. "But let's get started on this cure, before you keel over on us. Dr. Finsen, give him the injection." Fury stated while Tony was injected with the lithium dioxide. Tony could feel the serum working, the overall fatigue he had felt for the past month just melted away.
"How do you feel?" The doctor asked.
"Great, that is amazing. You have got to let me get my hands on that formula." Tony said, mind reeling with the medicinal possibilities of the serum.
"Tony you're doing it again." Clint said dragging Tony back to reality.
"Mmm... What?"
"You had that distant look in your eyes that you get when you're brainstorming about the next Nobel prize winning experiment." Clint told him.
"I still can't believe you almost won last year." Natasha stated.
"I know... But the scientist who discovered that HPV led to cervical cancer won that. I was so close." Tony said in a grief filled tone.
"Are we going to get this show on the road or what? I don't pay you all to sit around telling campfire stories all day do I?"
"Well there was that one mission..." Tony said before he was cut off by a rough cuff to the ear, from Natasha.
"Remember what I said, what happened on that mission stays between you me and Clint." She reminded him, while everyone else wondered what exactly happened on that mission that took place three months ago.

"Are you sure you want to go through with this, Tony? It could bring up some bad memories." Fane asked as they started the films that could hold the secret to Tony's survival. He was sitting with Fane, Clint and Natasha in a small room with a projector, because none of the assassins wished for him to go through with them alone.
"I have to, he could've left hints on how to find the cure in the videos. Plus I have no idea on what my father was like when he was younger, I only knew an old crazy man, he was in his 60's when he had me." Tony explained, then started the films. At first they were a bunch of takes on the piece
he had completed for his first expo in '74. He was obviously drunk in half of them and Tony could see the beginnings of the insane alcoholic man he would call father in him. There were a few videos from the mid 80s where Tony as a toddler was present, desperately wanting attention but not receiving any.

"Look at that mop of curls." Natasha pointed out, noticing the mass of chocolate curls on baby Tony's head.

"Hey! I'm half Italian, you should have seen my mother's curls when she took care of her hair." Tony said defending himself.

"Are you wearing a Captain America T-Shirt?" Clint asked amused.

"Yeah my dad was obsessed, so everything I owned had captain america on it. Plus he was my hero when I was a kid, until my dad kept bringing up how I would never be a tenth of the man Captain America was." Tony added solemnly.

"Tony, you do realize that you're a superhero, right?" Clint added, noticing Tony's withdrawn look.

"Tony, you're 100x the man Captain America was. Do you realize you've survived things that would kill a normal man, yet you've come out stronger and better each time. Not many people could do what you do in a day, in their entire lifetimes." Fane said, not used to seeing Tony without his masks on.

They continued to watch the films in silence. The assassins were shocked at how no one noticed when Tony sported black eyes or bruised wrists. As the timeline progressed Howard became more and more drunk and insane while Tony sported bigger injuries when he seldom made appearances. Then they got to the final video. It just featured a surprisingly sober Howard Stark, and his model for the Stark Expo of '74.

"Tony. I know I've not been the best father, and I hope you can eventually find it in your heart to forgive me, even though God knows I don't deserve it. Tony, you will have an advantage I never had, and with the technology of the future you will surpass me with your genius. You've inherited the best qualities of both me and Maria, my genius and her kindness, until I took even that from her. Tony, you are my best creation, and I pray to God that I haven't ruined you, like I've destroyed myself. I'm sorry I couldn't raise you better, but me and Maria were frankly never made to have children and if it wasn't for my need of an heir, I probably would've never taken advantage of your mother's genius and kindness. But just remember, that I'm proud of you, and I hope you make the Stark family name 1000x better than I ever could." Howard said, then the screen went black, leaving a shocked group of assassins in its wake.

"That's it. Whatever he had hidden is on that table. I need to find that model now." Tony said as he tried to hide the emotion on his face, than he got up and ran out to find out the location of the table.

"Do you think he's alright?" Clint asked.

"Would you be if the man who abused you for 13 years, almost killed you at least twice, and shot your mother and butler in front of your eyes and then tried to blow you up, asked you for forgiveness?" Natasha asked bluntly.

"We should go check on him." Clint and Fane said at the same time.

"I can't even begin to think about what's going thru his head right now." Natasha added. Then the three assassins got up to search for the boy, now young man, that they considered to be a brother and son, in Fane's case.

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Tony had managed to find the model of the '74 Spark Expo and moved it to his personal lab in the basement of his house. Once he got it set up he had Jarvis do a holographic scan of it.

"Jarvis, highlight the buildings." Tony said as he rotated the scan to make it vertical. Then he noticed that the globe in the center of the model looked very much like an nucleus of an atom.

"Huh, Jarvis, remove all landscape, parking lots and exits. Then replace all buildings with points."
Jarvis did as he asked, then Tony moved all the points on the map into the center, and blew up the atomic nucleus now complete with neutrons and protons.

"Sir may I ask what you are doing?"

"I'm discovering, er, rediscovering a new element. Do me a favor and run a diagnostic to see if this will work as a suitable replacement of palladium." Tony asked.

"It appears to be compatible sir. But the element cannot be found naturally."

"Well then I'm going to make it." He explained simply with blueprints and ideas running through his head. "Do me a favor and cancel all appointments and make me inactive for the next few weeks. Also make sure my coffee is stocked up. I'm building a particle accelerator."

"Would you like me to inform the local fire department sir, in case you blow up anything like last time?"

"Hahaha Jarvis. You do realize that I can reprogram you to be entirely obedient, right?"

"You keep saying that, but you never fulfill your threats." Then Tony started the process of remodeling his lab to fit a miniaturized particle accelerator.

Clint, Natasha and Fane were upstairs watching one of their favorite movies, Monty Python and The Quest for the Holy Grail, when they heard a series of crashes coming from the labs.

"What was that?" Clint asked.

"Sir told me to tell you that you shouldn't worry. Sir is doing a bit of, well, remodeling." Jarvis informed them.

"Remodeling?" Fane asked curiously.

"Yes, sir has decided to build a miniature particle accelerator."

"Aren't those usually miles long and located underground?" Clint asked.

"Well yes, but Sir has discovered a way to make one smaller by accelerating the speed of the accelerator." Jarvis said.

"And how is he building this in his lab?" Natasha asked worriedly.

"Sir is expecting some extra heavy duty pipes in the mail, come to think of it I don't actually know. Sometimes Sir thinks too fast for me to process." Jarvis admitted. Then Tony emerged carrying a sledgehammer and wearing goggles and a tank top.

"Uh Tony what's with the getup?" Clint asked curiously.

"Well I've just discovered an element, and I'm going to build a particle accelerator to try and merge a high speed plasma beam with a hunk of vibranium from Captain America's shield, which I found lying in that box, I don't even want to think of how he got it, so I need to make a hole in the floor up here to connect some wires downstairs. Oh yeah can one of you call Rhodey? His suits done and the military's been on my ass for the past few weeks. I'm also kind of hungry so I'm going to make a sandwich, maybe two or five..." Tony rambled on in the way he usually did during experiments.

"I did not understand half of what you just said. But go ahead, just don't go exploding things like last time." Clint said.

"For the last time, that was an accident, I wanted to combine two very volatile chemicals and DUM-Y ran into me and I combined the chemicals too rapidly. I still have no hair on my arms, or chest yet. Thank god I grew back my eyebrows..." Tony trailed off as he eyed the spot where he would make the hole.

"Don't you need a building permit?" Natasha asked.

"I don't actually know, but I'm Tony Stark, I can practically do whatever I want, within limits of course. Don't worry I'll be done in a bit." Tony said as he continued making holes.

The next few weeks passed in a similar fashion, with the three assassins worrying about Tony's
safety and watching in amazement as Tony built something that few people could even think about. Tony continued to build until one night he was finished so he invited the team downstairs to watch the process.

They watched on in horror and amazement as the plasma bolt accelerated, and then as Tony moved a prism into position to collide into the vibranium, half destroying his lab in the process, and Tony muttered 'oops'. Then he did it. He created the element.

"What are you going to call it?" Natasha asked about the glowing blue triangle in the middle of the room.

"Starkanium."

"Seriously you're naming it after yourself?" Clint said amazed at Tony's narcissisticness.

"Yeah, you'd be amazed at how many scientific discoveries have been named after the scientist who discovered. I'm just following suit."

"Would you like me to run tests on the element, Sir?" Jarvis asked.

"Nah, I'm going to put it in now, and why don't you power up the suit, I want to fly."

"Are you sure safe?" Fane questioned.

"Eh, what's life without a little risk? I've just been relieved of a death sentence, I want to party!" Tony stated. Then he removed his reactor, placed the new element in it and placed inside his chest, and started glowing blue.

"Oh wow, that tingles. Mmm...tastes like coconuts and um...metal. Man I feel even better than I felt before the reactor got put in. Jarvis initiate suit startup. " Tony said as the blue color started to fade away, and the suit started to come together on him. "I'll be back in a bit. Jarvis let's ditch this place." He said as he flew out, yelling in excitement over getting a new chance at life.

"Do you understand what just happened?" Clint asked still shocked.

"No, I'm not even sure I'm awake right now." Natasha answered.

"I don't think we'll ever understand Tony. I don't think anyone will. I think Tony is the only person in the world who would succeed in building a particle accelerator in his basement and living to tell the tale. Are you guys hungry?" Fane asked.

"Starved." Natasha said.

"Trying to comprehend what Tony just did, has worked up my appetite. Chinese or pizza?" Clint asked.

"Chinese." Fane and Natasha said at the same time as they made it upstairs. Then Clint spotted a red, white and blue iron man suit in the corner of the lab.

"Shit! We've forgotten to call Rhodey, about the suit. The military is going to be pissed." Clint exclaimed.

Then Fane and Natasha burst out in laughter at their mistake and made their way upstairs.
He was creeping down the dark and narrow hallway as silently and precise as a cat. It had been a while since he had worn the full regalia of an Dolofóni hunter, and it brought back memories of his hunts with Fane, who had returned to the Den two years ago to help with the training of a new generation of hunters like himself. Tony had been made a Master Assassin around the same time, and now there were rumors going around saying that he would be inducted to the council soon, but Tony didn't believe in rumors, he believed in cold hard fact.

He was suddenly pulled from his thoughts when the few remaining lights in the dim hallway decided to go out, leaving him in complete darkness. Tony knew that this was a trap and readied himself for the battle that was sure to come. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the pitch black darkness, but when they did he saw the group of bodyguards, who were constantly around his target, creep towards him with night vision goggles. Tony laughed inwardly as he had no need for the goggles, thanks to his mutant gene, then he closed his eyes and released a flash grenade. He heard the five bodyguards moan in agony at the blinding white light and he took the opportunity to attack them while they were stunned. The fight was over with a few well placed kicks, and he left the five now unconscious bodyguards behind, regretting that the fight was over before he could enjoy it.

Tony continued down the hallway still enveloped in darkness and soon found a door which he cautiously opened.

"I see that my bodyguards didn't phase you." A man in a stark white suit said as he stepped into the room.

"They barely lasted a minute. They were pretty pathetic." Tony said disguising his voice.

"And I assume you're here to kill me?" His target asked.

"Yes. You'll finally be getting what you deserve."

"I've heard a lot about you Samael, that is your name right?" Tony nodded his answer. "You've killed over 500 guilty men, and there are rumors that you possess, let's say other abilities. Abilities that can make even Charles Xavier envious. Am I right? Of course I'm right. But I think I can make you an offer that will make you turn coat and become my partner. You see, I have a, well let's say, business rival, that needs to be taken care of. I'm sure you know who I'm talking about, you know Tony Stark. I have also done my research and I know that you are the best assassin out there, Samael. So what if we forget the whole killing part, and you can join me, I can grant you everything that you can hope to desire, and take off that silly mask." The man said, swirling his drink in his hand. Tony just started laughing a rather menaceful laugh he had picked up over the years on hunts.

"Why are you laughing?" The man yelled.
"Well you see I've come here to kill you and I don't plan on backing down. I'm not in this profession for the money, I do this line of work in order to take down scumbags like yourself who think that they are so much better than anyone else due to the money that lines their pockets. Especially idiotic ones like yourself, who believe that they know everything. You see your research is incomplete. Yes, I do happen to be the best assassin on the streets. I also happen to be an extremely powerful mutant, but me and Professor X go along way back, so I would never turn on him. But you left out the most important piece of the puzzle." Tony said cryptically.

"And what's that?"

"Well you didn't account for the fact that Tony Stark and I happen to be the same person." Tony said, opening his shirt to show the reactor.

"No! That can't be! It's impossible!" The man stuttered I'm shock. As Tony buttoned up his shirt.

"Well, its true." Tony stated advancing towards the quaking man.

"GUARDS!" The man yelled, as Tony advanced towards him, blade in hand.

"They can't hear you, I've taken them all out. You really shouldn't have skimped on the security, they barely put up a fight."

"But there were dozens of them!"

"Yes and I'm a very skilled man, don't worry they're still alive, or well most of them are, I don't kill innocents like you do." Tony spat as he came closer, truly a terrifying sight to behold.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't play dumb with me. All of those weapon 'trials', and the biochemical warfare experiments. You've killed hundreds of people looking to make a quick buck to feed their families with, and thats not including the innocents who died due to your weapons used overseas."

"But they were willing volunteers. And those people died because of war!" The man said trying to defend himself, and it wasn't working.

"Justin Hammer, you have been found guilty of the slaughter of innocents in the name of profit. I am here to take you to await your judgment, for I am Samael, the Angel of Death."

"Oh God, no! I'm sorry I won't do it again." Hammer said as he sank to his knees.

"Did you give those poor men and women a second chance when you took their lives from their families? Did you allow for those innocents who were killed by your weapons to plead for their lives?"

"No, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

"That's what I thought. Only God can help you know." Tony said as he sliced Hammers throat and gently pushed him down to the floor, as hammer took his last choking breaths. "Relax, it will all be over soon." He assured Hammer as he stared into his eyes as the man lost consciousness. When Tony was sure of his death, he took out a single feather, dipped it in Hammer's blood and laid it on his chest. Tony then took out the note announcing Hammer's guilt and put it in the dead mans hand. Tony took one last look at his dead rival on the floor, the vital red liquid drenching the pure white suit, creating an image almost too powerful to understand, and left the room.

"Samael, Come in!"

"I'm here Widow."

"Fury has given us a new assignment, something's happened with Hawkeye. Was the mission successful?"

"Yes, and what!?!"

"I believe Hawkeye's been compromised." She said sorrowfully, the words hitting Tony's chest like bullets.

"Where are you?" He asked panicked.

"About 10 miles from the rendezvous point."

"OK I'll meet you there in a few. Samael out." He then removed his mask, pulled up his hood, enclosing his face in darkness, and broke out into a run that would make Usain Bolt envious. He couldn't even comprehend what Natasha had just told him. He made it to the rendezvous point just as Natasha showed up in a Shield car.

"What happened?" He asked as he got in the car and withdrew his hood.
"I don't know. I was on a mission, in the middle of being 'interrogated', when Coulson calls the interrogator and asks to talk to me. Coulson told me to get out of there and put me on a quinjet to pick you up. He said he didn't want to repeat information so he's going to brief us when we get on the jet." Natasha said as she passed Tony a bottle of water. "So how'd your mission go?"
"Well I got Hammer for a target."
"Are you serious?"
"Yeah. The guy tried to persuade me to turn coat and kill Tony Stark for him."
"Hahaha, I bet he was shocked when he found out that you and Tony Stark are the same person."
"You could say that. Can you believe he cried like a baby when I cornered him?"
"Seriously?"
"Yeah full tears and possibly some snot. I never seen such a pathetic mass murderer in my life. Plus those so called guards didn't even put up a fight, I barely broke a sweat taking them down. And there were 30 of them." Both of them broke out into nervous laughter trying to cover their feelings of panic over Clint's comprimization.
"Oh I forgot to tell you, you're going to have to be on board in full costume." Natasha added.
"Why?"
"Well Steven Rogers is aboard, and Fury doesn't want to freak him out with the whole Tony Stark is a highly trained assassin thing." Natasha explained. Tony understood completely. Rogers had just recently been unfrozen, and though Tony had helped in the thawing out process and the discovery, no one wanted to see how Rogers would react to seeing Tony, who looked similar to Howard when he was younger. So Tony hadn't 'met' the guy who used to be his childhood hero face to face, as Tony Stark.
"He does know that I'm Iron Man, right?" Tony asked.
"Yeah, he also knows that Iron Man teams up with Shield on occasion." Natasha explained, while Tony wiped the gleam of sweat of his face and placed the mask back on.
"Eh Tony? You might want to clean off the blood a bit." Natasha said as she saw that the mask still had fake blood coming from its eyes.
"Don't want me to give Captain America a heart attack? He does now I'm an assassin, right?"
"Yes, but knowing and seeing are two different things. If I were to see you dressed like that, and if I didn't know you, I would be terrified too." Natasha admitted, then handed Tony a black towel. Tony removed the mask and cleaned it using the water she had given him earlier. Then he place the mask back on.
"Better?"
"Yes, much better."
"Widow? Samael? We've arrived at the Quinjet." The agent driving the car stated, using their code names. The two assassins got out of the car and walked over to the jet. Coulson met up with them halfway to the jet.
"What's going on?" Tony asked, voice strong with demanding authority.
"As you both know, Hawkeye's been compromised."
"As you both know, Hawkeye's been compromised."
"Yes but how?"
"Remember that mission a while back in New Mexico?"
"With the alien god named Thor?" Natasha asked.
"Yes. Well it appears that his brother Loki, is more powerful than we thought."
"Loki? The Norse God of Mischief?" Tony asked blankly, as they got on the jet.
"Yes. It appears that he came through a portal created by the tesseract,"
"Wait a tesseract? The Hydra weapon that Captain America took down with him in the ice? The weapon we never found?" Tony's said, voice filled with suspicion.
"Er...yes. We actually found the weapon, and were experimenting with it, and that's how the portal came to be."
"You were experimenting with an alien weapon? And no one chose to invite me to this party?" It was hard to tell if Tony was angry or being sarcastic.
"Well yes. But back to our current situation. Loki appeared through the portal and managed to
brainwash both Barton and one of the leading scientists. We think Lokis planning on taking over the world." Coulson said deadpanned.
"And how are supposed to stop a God, with a weapon that can make people slaves?" Natasha asked.
"How much do you guys know about the Avengers Initiative?" Coulson said handing them both files.
"Isn't that the thing Fury wants? A team of superheroes that Clint, Natasha and I were being looked at, for?" Tony asked.
"Along with Iron Man, Captain America and a few others."
"Wait Iron Man?" Tony asked curiously.
"Yes, well we wanted to protect your identity Tony, so we created two separate files for you, the Iron Man/Tony Stark fake file and Samaels more realistic file." Coulson admitted.
"And how is that supposed to work, I can't be two different people on the same team!"
"Well. Iron Man would be the main member with Samael stepping in for black ops missions." Coulson said.
"Oh well that works, I guess."
"So read up you two, we're going Kolkata."
"You're not serious, are you? We're getting the Hulk now!?" Natasha asked warily after hearing the last known position of Bruce Banner.
"I am perfectly serious." Coulson stated.
"We're picking Dr. Banner up ?!" Tony asked in wonder.
"Don't tell me you're a fanboy!" Coulson stated exasperatedly.
"I'm a huge fan of his work! He's one of my idols. His work in Anti-Electron Collisions is unparalleled. How long is the flight to Kolkata?" Tony asked.
"We should be there in 5 hours." Coulson stated.
"Good give me everything you have on the tesseract, and please tell me this jet has coffee?" Tony asked.
"Yes there's coffee. Why?" Coulson stated as he handed Tony a huge stack of papers.
"Because I'm going to find out everything that I can about the tesseract. There has to be a way to stop it, and I want to find out how!" Tony said after he located the coffee pot and sat at the small table in the sitting area of the jet, and started absorbing information. "You guys don't mind me playing AC/DC do you? I would put headphones in but they don't quite work with the aids." Tony asked before turning on his working playlist.
"Fine but save some coffee for me." Natasha said as she sat on a couch and started ready some of the files. "I feel like this is going to be a long night." She stated as she started with the files.
"During supernova nucleosynthesis, the r-process creates very neutron-rich heavy isotopes, which decay after the event to the first stable isotope, thereby creating the neutron-rich stable isotopes of all heavy elements." Tony blurted out sleepily before he saw the coffee and downed it.
"I didn't eat the pony!" Natasha mumbled almost incoherently as she followed suit.
Then the pair saw the sandwiches and realized that they were starving and dug in as if it was their last meal on earth. Coulson couldn't help but chuckle at the invulnerability of the two when they were in the throes of sleep. By the time the two were finished they were awake and finally noticed Coulson standing beside them.

"Thank you for the food, I didn't even realize how hungry I was." Tony said as he rose to get another cup of coffee.

"I can't believe I fell asleep!" Natasha said as she followed Tony into the kitchen to refill her cup. "Can't say I blame either of you, you just came off a week of missions just to be tossed on a plane to India. I personally would've fallen asleep before either of you two, if I were in your shoes."

"Thanks for the breakfast." Natasha said.

"I figured you both were starving, the kitchen was poorly stocked so if you guys are still hungry I'm sure you can pick up something off the streets."

"Indian street food, I can almost taste it already!" Tony said as his stomach growled.

"Do you two realize that you talk in your sleep?" Coulson asked as he remembered the weird comments they had made when they got up.

"I don't sleep talk!" They both said at the same time.

"Yes you do. Tony you blurt out physics theorems and Natasha you said something about eating a pony." Coulson said laughing at the embarrassed faces on the two.

"Ok, so how are we going to bring him in?" Natasha said trying to change topics.

"Oh you two are going to his house, if you can call it that, and talk to him. We want his brain not the hulk OK? We'll be right behind you. You can leave when you're ready, and Tony?" Coulson said. "Bring up the fact that you're a mutant. It might help." Then Tony and Natasha left, in similar black outfits that hid most of their knives, that they took with them as an extra precaution.

(Wealthy Banners POV.)

"Dr. Banner?" He heard a feminine voice say behind him.

"How did you find me?" He nearly growled as he turned around to face an extremely fit man and woman, dressed in similar tight black bodysuits. The man had a hood up, concealing his face and the woman had short curly red hair.

"Don't be afraid, Dr. Banner, we only wish to help you." The man said, concealing his voice.

"I'll give you three minutes to explain why you are here and what you want with me, before I get angry." He said, knowing full well why the pair was there.

"We need your help. We're assembling a team of highly trained people and we need your brains, especially your expertise in thermonuclear astrophysics." The man explained.

"And why should I help you?" He asked.

"Because if you don't the human race as we know it will come to an end." The woman stated.

"And what about the 'other guy'?" He asked them fearing their answer.

"Don't worry, we won't do anything to you unless you want it to be done. You have no reason to be afraid." The man in the hood stated.

"And why should I trust you?" He asked warily.

"Because I'm a mutant, and a powerful one at that. And trust me if our organization was into experimentation, I would have left ages ago." The man in the hood answered.

"Prove it."

"See, there's nothing to be afraid of. I would show you my face if it would help, but I need to conceal my identity." The man said telepathically.

"Fine, I believe you. So who do you work for?" He asked the mysterious pair.

"We work for Shield. I'm Agent Romanov and this is my partner Samael."

"Samael? Why does that name sound so familiar?"

"Because I'm an infamous assassin trained by the Dolofóni. I'm also a shield agent and I partner with the X Men sometimes."
"Aren't you a little young?"
"I've been an assassin for nearly 13 years of my life. So don't question my abilities on my age, I
started young." Samael stated.
"Fine I'll join forces with you." He admitted in defeat.
"Good. Now that that's over, do you know any places with good food? And a lot of it? I'm
starving." Samael said, earning a cuff from Romanov and they exchanged a few words in rapid fire
Russian.
" You're Russian?"
"Yes." Romanov said.
"No, I'm American, but I can speak 20 languages fluently, plus a few forms of sign language." Samael
said.
"OK then. I know a place where the food is delicious and cheap." He stated. "Just let me grab a
few things."
"Any equipment you might need will be provided for you."
"Any?"
"Yes and if it doesn't exist we know a guy who'll make it for you."
"Seriously? Who?"
"Ever hear of Tony Stark?"
"The arrogant, pacifist billionaire?"
"Yeah, he's working with us."
"Really? Well in that case, let me just pack some clothes and we can leave, it'll only take a few
minutes."
Samael and Romanov stayed off to the side quietly conversing in Russian and quietly laughing
while he went around his humble shack and started packing the few belongings he had. "OK I'm
finished. We can get going." He said as he ushered the pair out of the house. Once outside Samael
gave a quick signal and out the woodwork came a bunch of shield agents who quickly retreated to
the jet they had come on.
" So what's with all the agents?" He asked.
"Don't worry, they were there just in case you decided to go green on us." Samael stated.
"That's a nice way to put it." He stated. Then he led them towards a restaurant where both assassins
ordered an enormous amount of food while he ordered his usual, to go.
"Hungry?" He asked the pair loaded with food, as they walked towards the jet.
"Starving. I haven't had a proper meal since Tuesday." Samael stated and Romanov nodded to say
she had been in a similar predicament.
"Doesn't Shield feed their operatives?"
"Usually they do feed us pretty well, but when you're undercover for a week, your meals are few
and far between. And those meals are usually MREs. They only give you the minimal amount, so
that you can spend more time gathering intelligence." Romanov explained.
"That doesn't sound healthy." He told the pair.
"But it allows us to gather intelligence getting noticed while eating at local shops in middle of
nowhere." Samael explained as they boarded the jet, and walked towards the kitchen where
another agent, Agent Coulson, briefed him on the situation.
"Excuse me a moment. It's virtually impossible to eat with the hood, so I'm going to put on my
mask." Samael said as he went into a small adorning room.
"Why does he have to wear the mask now?" He asked.
"Well only a few people at shield know his true identity. He's a pretty famous person in real life,
and can't risk anyone finding out that he is a mutant, assassin or shield agent. It takes a while for
him to gain people's trust, he hasn't had the best of childhoods." Coulson vaguely explained.
"Oh." He said, remembering his own childhood and abusive father. Then Coulson handed him a
stack of paperwork.
"Here's info on Romanov, aka the Black Widow, Steven Rogers, aka Captain America, Tony Stark,
aka Iron Man, Samael, and Clint Barton, aka Hawkeye. Now Barton has been compromised and
has been brainwashed to join Loki, an alien from Asgard. So here's information on both Loki and his brother Thor, who we can hopefully swing to our side."
"So why no code name for Samael?" He asked curiously.
"Because Samael is his code name. His true name is highly confidential. He also goes by the Angel Of Death, but few who hear that name rarely survive. He's also not going to be a full time member of the group as he has his fingers in three different pots at the moment, the Dolofóni, X-Men and us, not to mention he a life outside the mask too." Coulson stated, as Samael came out with a fierce mask in the form of an eagle on his face.
"You're an Eagle?! But you're so young."
"How do you know what rank I am?" Samael questioned.
"I've stumbled across a few of your order in my travels, so I did my research. You can't possibly be an eagle! I heard it took two decades of service and training to achieve the rank of master!"
"Well I did it in a decade. I was inducted as a hawk when I was 14 1/2. I'm 25 now."
"But that's impossible."
"Remember I'm a mutant."
"But your power was telepathy."
"No that was a side effect of one of my powers. My true powers are listed in my file, I'm too tired and hungry to explain now." Samael explained as he dug into his food, and the others followed suit. Samael was the first to finish and he excused himself to go sleep for the rest of the journey.
"So why is he so cranky all of a sudden?" He asked Romanov when samael exited the room.
"He gets that way when he's exhausted and tired. You know about Captain Americas abilities right?" She asked. And he nodded his answer. "Well his powers are similar but different to that. Along with superhuman abilities, Samael also has a superhuman mentality and hes an empath. His telepathic power comes from years of practicing his superhuman mentality and it drains a lot of energy. So when he uses too much power he needs to eat and sleep, or else he will quite literally collapse if he let's it go too long. He needs about 4,000 calories a day and for the last week he's barely consumed half of that, so hunger combined with getting the bare minimum of sleep will cause to be cranky." She explained.
"It sounds like you care for him a lot."
"He's been mine and Hawkeye's partner for the past decade. He's like a little brother, that I've never had. And I can't lose him like I may have lost Hawkeye." She said as her mask she kept on for so long began to crack.
"Don't worry, we'll get your other partner back." He said trying to comfort the harden assassin who was on the verge of tears. Then she excused herself to go to sleep too. He noticed that she went into the same room that Samael had gone into moments earlier, but didn't say anything, as he knew that the pair had been through a lot in the past 24hrs. He was left alone with his plate of food and the load of files, wondering what he had done wrong to upset two powerful assassins.

"Don't worry its not your fault." A voice said from behind him. "I've been their, along with Clint's, handler for more than a decade. They might seem emotional now, but that's only because they're grieving over the potential loss of Hawkeye. You see those three are quite literally the only family they have left, and they've been through hell and back together. They've lived, slept and even hunted together for the better part of a decade, and this is how they deal with one of their triad being missing. They'll be better in the morning." Coulson explained.
"Let me guess they all have family issues?" He asked.
"Yes. They have family backgrounds that would drive a better man insane. Samael was nearly killed by his father, on multiple occasions. He actually ran away, just to become a target of the Dolofóni, but luckily they saw the fight in him and made him one of their own. Clint and his brother were orphans who were picked up by a circus, where you can imagine the living conditions were not the best. And Natasha, was trained to be an assassin since she was three. Good thing she defected to us in the 90's. Yet through all of their hardships they found a family that loved and
cared for them. And if you look at the other history's you'll find that Tony Stark, was kidnapped and abused by his own father for 4 years and then captured by his godfather and nearly killed, all because of his intelligence. Thor and Loki, from what we can gather have major daddy issues too. In fact the only person on the pseudo team without any instances of past abuse is Captain America, but he was frozen in ice for 70 years and who knows what type of damage that does to someone. We're putting a bunch of broken superhumans together, so this can either be a complete disaster or the starting of the worlds most dysfunctional family. So I hope you understand, Banner, that you are not alone on this team." Then Coulson walked away leaving him to decipher his chaotic thoughts by himself.
"I can't believe Fury's making me wear the full costume." Samael mumbled. As he stepped out in his full ceremonial Dolofóni outfit, complete with all of his weapons of choice and several decorations of honor. Fury had ordered him to wear it to the first official meeting of the avengers, most likely to embarrass him. He would definitely have to pay Fury back later for this.

"Well you should stop calling him pirate." Natasha said back.

"You call the Director of Shield a Pirate? And you still have a job?" Banner spat out in shock. He had heard rumors on the ruthlessness and anger issues of Director Fury and he couldn't believe that Samael had gotten away with that.

"He secretly likes it." Samael said with a smirk.

"Yeah and that's why he made you clean the deck with a toothbrush when you trapped him in his office with Pirates of the Caribbean playing nonstop." Natasha said back with a glare. Banner was just staring at them with a look of amusement and shock.

"You would think he'd be used to it by now, I've been playing pranks on him for years." Samael said fidgeting with one of his knives. Banner just noticed how armed the boy was and he knew that for every weapon that was visible he had at least another hidden.

"Samael, put the knife away, you're making Dr. Banner nervous." Natasha said eyeing Banner looking at the knife nervously.

"Sorry, its a habit of mine, like biting your nails, but, well, deadlier." Samael said sheathing the weapon.

"Just how many weapons do you have on you?" Banner asked curiously.

"Well the two katana blades, the recurve bow with some arrows, don't worry, no trick arrows, I leave those to Clint. I also have about two dozen knives of various sizes on me, along with a few grenades, just flash and blackout gas ones, a set of nunchucks and a handgun, just in case. I also sometimes incorporate a collapsible sniper rifle, but only on special missions, it gets a bit bulky after a while." Samael said casually. Banner just stared at him blankly in shock at how he had on him.

"Are you always this well armed?" He asked.

"No, I usually adjust what weapons I bring based on the type of mission I go on. But when wearing our dress uniforms we have to wear every single weapon we chose to use, excepting for the bigger guns of course." Samael said. Coulson then entered the room to tell them they still had 10 minutes before landing.

"So since you're so curious in my order, and frankly I'm bored out of my mind, do you have any other questions?" Samael asked and Banner got a look on his face similar to that of a kid in a candy store.

"Why the gloves? I've some of yours wearing gloves before, but not as long as yours." Banner asked pointing to Samael's elbow length brown gloves, which he wore to his his prosthetic.

"Well I use them to completely cover my fingerprints, and they're not normal gloves either. They double as arm guards, plus they help obscure my pulse, which is helpful in taking long range shots. I also have a variety of tools hidden in the gloves along with a few knives. Think of them as a Jedi's utility belt." Tony said taking off his right hand glove to show Banner, who examined it with a careful eye that could only belong to an artist or a scientist.

"Its heavier than I thought." Banner said. "Did you create this yourself?"

"Yeah, I have a bit of training in weapon forgery. Its nearly impossible to find some of the weapons we use, so we usually forge our own." Samael said.

"By a bit, he means that he's probably more skilled than a medieval blacksmith." Natasha added, laughing.

"Well that explains the beautiful craftsmanship. You must take pride in your weapons, their well taken care of." Bruce said as he handed back the glove.
"Well its a Dolofóni belief to become one with the weapon you use. Its one of the reasons that we train so hard and long. The weapons we use literally become an extension of our body when we use them." Samael explained. "Any more questions?"

"Why do you have such an eclectic choice of weapons? The assassins I've met before only have weapons that are closely related to each other, but you have a variety."

"Well with my mutant ability to pick up almost anything by just watching a short demonstration, I was able to pick up a variety of arts. I'm a master of about a dozen different styles of martial arts, and that allows me to blend the different styles to create a unique version of my own. I also have a really good eye and with my superhuman mentality I can calculate shots almost instantaneously, which allows me to hit the target nearly every time, and to make shots Hawkeye couldn't even dream about." Samael said with a laugh.

"Wow. I just have one more question, can I watch you train one of these times? Wow that sounded really creepy."

"Yeah, but you have to answer one question for me first. Who was she?" Samael asked with a knowing glint in his eye.

"What? How did you know?" Banner said flabbergasted.

"There's only one reason you would become so obsessed over our order. You met one of us and fell in love. So who was she, or maybe he? I might be able to give you some closure."

"Her name was Vynx. She was a wolf and I happened to stumble upon her during my travels in Africa. I was working in a small hospital set up in a town on the outskirts of the Congo. She came in bleeding heavily from a stab wound in her side, she had no place to go, I believe her target found out about her, so I let her stay with me as she healed. We were together for six weeks, not quite in love but probably close to it, before I found her mask. She explained everything to me and I accepted her. I knew for about a week before another stranger came into the village sporting a similar mask, and she was forced to go back. From that day on I searched for any information I could find on the Dolofóni. She was the first person I had cared about since I left the states to escape General Ross." Banner said nearly in tears at the memory.

"Vynx? Her name sounds familiar, can you describe her appearances?"

"She was beautiful, had a face almost too beautiful to be hidden behind a mask. Her skin was the color of milk chocolate, and she had the most striking blue eyes, a rare genetic anomaly due to her mixed heritage. She was tall with beautifully light brown curls. She also had high cheekbones that accented her eyes." Banner said as if describing a dream.

"I know her. She made eagle rank around the same time I did, about three years ago. I haven't seen her in a while, but I can tell you that she is alive and well. I could probably even pull a few strings and get her to meet up with you after this whole fiasco blows over." Samael said, remembering the strikingly beautiful woman he had encountered several times.

"You can do that? I thought you guys had no contact with the outside world. Are you even allowed to form relationships outside the order?" Banner asked.

"The lower levels are forbidden, but once you reach the level of eagle, you're allowed certain liberties. Most of us choose to settle down within the order. But a few find love on the outside. They just have to keep in mind that the Dolofóni comes first no matter what." Samael explained.

"You still have a chance."

"Thank you, you have just given me my hope at living a semi normal life back." Banner exclaimed as he embraced Samael in a hug. Samael wasn't used to this much open affection with those outside his family, so he awkwardly returned it. Then a voice came over the speakers explaining that they were beginning landing procedures.

"Well thats our cue to get ready." Natasha said trying to disguise the foreign feelings that had overcome her as she heard the tragic love story.

All three of the newly christened superheroes got up to get off the jet and enter a new reality in which the fate of humanity rested on their shoulders.

Once they got off the jet they were met by Director Fury, Agent Maria Hill and Captain America, who was staring at the trio with scrutiny as if trying to judge their characters instantaneously.
"I thought we were having a formal briefing?" Natasha asked.
"We were, but Loki's made an appearance in Stuttgart Germany and I need you, Captain Rogers and Agent Coulson to get on a plane to Germany now." Fury explained.
"Wasn't Iron Man supposed to meet us?" Rogers questioned.
"He's involved in some important meetings, but he's going to fly over to Germany as fast as he can. He should make it just it there at about the same time you three will. Now go before your plane leaves without you." Fury said. And Coulson, Natasha and Rogers went to a plane that was close by. "Dr. Banner and Samael you'll be staying behind. Samael, something's come up and we need your skills for another mission, if you would follow Agent Hill, she'll brief you on your mission.
Now Dr. Banner, we didn't recruit you for the hulk, but rather we need your help locating the tesseract, which emits a low gamma ray frequency. Its important that we find it before it activates and ends life as we know it." Fury said as he guided Banner towards a lab.
"So Tony, you've been clued in on the situation right?"
"Yes." He replied.
"OK, is there anyway you want us to treat you when you're Tony Stark, to make the charade even more believable?"
"Yeah, I want you guys to pretend that you can't stand me."
"Why?" Hill asked.
"Because it'll be the perfect cover, everyone loves Samael, but Tony Stark can be arrogant, sarcastic and annoying. I want to see their reactions, especially Captain America's, he's too stiff." Tony explained.
"So can you stop referring to yourself in the third person? Its a bit unnerving. So how are you going to cover up the arm, scars and hearing aids? Because I'm pretty sure those are going to be the sure giveaway of your identity."
"Gloves and long sleeved shirts?"
"You do realize its the middle of may? Right?"
"Oh right. Makeup?"
"That could work. We also had the R&D department work on a sleeve of synthetic flesh that you could cover your arm with."
"That'll work. You wouldn't happen to have a secondary mask would you? Something not as gaudy as this?"
"Yeah we have a flexible half mask that should be more comfortable than the eagle. OK so are you ready to suit up?"
"Yeah I just need like an hour to take the uniform off. I have no idea why Fury made me dress up in the full costume. Does he realize how long it takes to get everything perfect?" Tony asked as he start to remove his weapons and place them in the case that he had designed for them.
"Well its punishment for what you did last month."
"Last month? Oh yeah the paintball fight with Clint." He said as his face lit up in glee at the memory then fell when he remembered that Clint had been compromised.
"Hey, don't worry we'll catch Loki and make him suffer for what he did to Clint. Do you need any help?"
"Not really, its a lot easier removing the items than putting them on." He said as he removed his over tunic and gently folded it. "So what does my Tony Stark file say?" He asked suddenly curious, as he tossed on a fresh T-shirt.
"The made up story we told the press after you became public." Hill explained.
"Does it say anything about being a diabetic?"
"Why? Should it?"
"Well that's the excuse Pepper gave around SI, to explain my need to eat a lot. It might be a little strange if I were to be seen snacking every chance I get, and eating full meals without gaining weight."
"We'll update your profile to change that. So is there anything we should be worried about with your acting?"
"I'm going to behave like every bit of the Genius, Billionaire, Playboy, Philanthropist that I am to
the media, so maybe spread around the word to attractive agents, both male and female, that I
might be flirting with them. Make sure to tell them its an act and that I really mean no offense."
"Tony, are you trying to make them hate you?"
"No, I want to see what average people actually think of me. If I act this way, I would literally have
the chance to be a fly on the wall as Samael. So if you wouldn't mind turning around, I would like
to change into pants I can fly comfortably in." He said as he took off the form fitting uniform pants
and slipped on a pair of expensive sweatpants.
"OK so anything else before I fly off to Germany?" He asked as he slipped on the shoes he wore
when he donned the suit.
"Be sure to make an entrance, I want to see the stick in the mud's face when you swoop in guns
blazing and reeking with attitude." She said laughing.
"Will do." He said as he locked up the case and went down the hall to get in the suit. "Oh yeah can
you have one of the junior agents tell Pepper to drop off one of my suits. Something flashy." He
asked before he suited up.
"Yes. Now go!"

Caps POV

"You know, the last time I was in Germany and saw a man standing above everybody else, we
ended up disagreeing." He said as he walked up to the man, Loki, who was standing before a
crowd of kneeling civilians.
"I'm not the one who's out of time." He countered back, then began his attack. "Romanov, I could
use a little help down here." He asked as he grappled with the demigod.
"He's moving too fast, can't get a lock on him." She replied. Then the sound of Rock Music, that
Shield had warned him about, burst through the air.
"Uh Agent Romanov, What is that?" He asked his fellow agent sitting in the Quinjet.
"That's your backup." She replied, just as Iron Man appeared and shot down Loki with his
repulsors, knocking Loki to the ground. Stark then proceeded to lock all of his weapons on Loki.
"Your move Reindeer Games." Stark tempted. And Loki put his hands up in surrender.
"Good choice." Stark said still aiming his repulsors. "Well that was easier than I anticipated, what
about we get the evil mastermind wannabe on board and book it home? If we leave now, I can still
make that episode of Game of Thrones." Stark said sarcastically as the Captain, still slightly out of
breath, handcuffed Loki, and they boarded the jet. Then Stark removed his helmet, and both Loki
and Steve realised just how young the guy was.
"You sent a child after me?" Loki questioned offensively.
"I'm not a child, I'm 25. I also happen to be one of the richest and smartest men on this planet
you're so keen to overtake." Tony yelled, before he turned to Captain Rogers, and asked, "So you're
in pretty good shape for a man in his nineties, what's your secret Capsicle? Pilate's?"
"Er...what?"
"Oh, forgot you haven't been caught up to date yet."
"Yeah, I'm working on that." Rogers said sheepishly. Then the plane shook with a clap of thunder,
Loki looked visibly disturbed.
"What afraid of a little thunder?" Tony asked sarcastically.
"I'm not to keen on what follows." Loki said before something slammed into the jet and in a flash
of red and silver Loki disappeared.
"I thought you said Thor wasn't hostile?" Tony asked, as he put on his helmet.
"He isn't, he must want his brother back." Natasha added. Then Tony got ready to jump off the jet.
"Where are you going?" Rogers asked as he saw Tony power up.
"To save the world." Tony said before disappearing.
"You might want to sit this one out Captain." Natasha said. "These guys are considered Gods."
"Stark's just a kid, he's going to get himself killed! I have to go after him. Plus there's only one
God, and I'm sure he doesn't dress like that."
"Stark can handle himself. He's survived worse." Natasha added grimly.
"I can't leave him alone." Rogers yelled before jumping ship.
"Should we follow them?" The pilot asked.
"Yeah, but not too close, we might get zapped by Thor's lightning." Natasha warned
Tony and Thor were exchanging fire power in the middle of a large clearing.
"Why are we even fighting? You want Loki, we also want Loki. Can't we just make up and punish
Loki together?" Tony asked after delivering a repulsor shot.
"No he belongs on Asgard. Odin wishes to punish him." Thor said while slamming Tony into a
tree.
"Well Goldilocks, he killed 80 humans and compromised one of our assassins and a brilliant
physicist Dr. Selvig. We deserve to punish him too." He said just before Thor's lightning over
powered his suit momentarily stunning him.
"I'm taking my brother back to Asgard."
"I'm afraid I can't allow you to do that." Captain America said as he appeared in the field.
"Well look who decided to show up, Captain Spangles!" Tony said as he began to get up.
"And who do you think you are, to threaten a Prince of Asgard and a God?" Thor stated, angrily.
"I'm Captain America, now you can either step aside and allow us to bring Loki in, or we can do
this the hard way." He stated as he raised his shield. Thor decided to go the hard route and began
swinging his hammer.
"Eh, capsicle, you might want to watch out for the hammer." Tony said as he stood up. Then Thor
charged Rogers, who barely lifted his shield to prevent the oncoming blow, and hit the shield with
every ounce of power the hammer held, causing all three of them to go crashing to the ground, due
to the shockwave of energy.
"Well that was fun. Can we all just get back on the jet with your genocidal brother and head back
to the carrier, because unlike popular belief this suit isn't as comfortable as it looks and I would like
to take it off." Tony said as he stood up.
"Fine, but as long as you agree to let Loki be taken back to Asgard with me, for my father to give
his judgment."
"Good, let's make a plan to never fight like this again. I can't be seen killing this many trees on a
daily basis, it will ruin my reputation." Tony said as he took in the damage they had caused.
"What is he talking about?" Thor asked the Captain.
"I have no idea."
"Boy, do we have to catch you two up to modern civilization." Tony said as the two blond giants
exchanged wary looks. "Now let's get your brother and go home. Maybe we could make a pit stop
to pick up some Wiener Schnitzel, you know while we're in Germany. I'm starved." Tony said as they walked towards the jet, with Loki in tow.
"Good you guys have stopped fighting over who's prettier, now can we get this show on the road?
We do have a weapon that has the potential to destroy the world on the loose." Natasha said to
them as they got on the jet.
"So I'm guessing no pit stops for take out?" Tony said, literally pouting.
"No but I do have some ration bars you guys can eat." She said as she tossed a box of military
grade granola bars at them. Rogers and Thor questioned the bars with scrutiny, while Tony tore
into one ravishingly.
"How can you even eat this? Back on Asgard we wouldn't bestow bars of grain on our worst of
enemies." Thor said as he bit into one and grimaced.
"I'm hungry, had a day full of meetings with our foreign partners and then had to fly over to
Germany to arrest Antlers here." Tony said between mouthfuls. Then he took off his left gauntlet to
examine his hand that was strangely twitching, revealing a prosthetic. "Thor what is in that hammer
"Man of Iron, who gave you such a grievous injury?" Thor questioned when he saw the false hand. Tony looked up and saw both of them looking at him with a look of shock, intrigue, and pity. "This? Oh you really don't want to know." He said as he got back to tinkering. "We're on the same team, of course we want to know." Rogers said, and Natasha started to wonder if she should step in to avoid Tony from being forced to tell the story, when Tony spoke up. "Long story short, I was taken hostage by a team of terrorists almost four years ago, and they decided that I didn't need my left hand, so they lopped it off. This hand is much better than the old one anyways." He stated as he finished messing with the hand. He then reclined a bit against the wall of the plane and yawned. The other three occupants of the small body of the plane just stared at the casual way of his telling of the obviously tragic story. "Why are you guys all staring at me? Wait do I have any crumbs on my face?" He asked, as he sniffled another yawn. "Mr. Stark, if you're tired, then take a nap. We still have a few hours before we reach the Quinjet." Captain Rogers said to the exhausted genius sitting across from him. "It's Tony. Sorry, I'm not usually this tired after missions, it must be due to the chaotic week I've had at the office." He said, with only Natasha and him knowing that the exhaustion had come from coming off a mission where he had barely a few hours of sleep at night and was rewarded with a midnight trip to Kolkata, then having to fly for hours in the suit. Then he reclined a little more in his seat, removed his hearing aids, and fell promptly asleep. "Why do I have the feeling there's more to what he's telling us?" Captain America asked quietly once Tony was asleep. "Tony is a very private young man. I've been working with him for the past 4 years and I still don't know everything about him. You were given files for a reason, to prevent him from having to explain why he is the way that he is, and to prevent him from having to live through events that would scar others for life. So have the decency to do your homework." Natasha said, with a glint of anger in her voice. "And in case you forgot yours, here's a digital copy. You have a five hour trip ahead of you so, read up." She said as she handed both of them a stark pad. Then she sat in her spot next to a softly snoring Tony, plugged in a set of headphones and promptly fell asleep too, leaving the two bewildered blondes and an astrayed god in uncomfortable silence. It took a while for the two out of time men to figure out how exactly to work the tablets, but once they got a decent grasp on the technology they started to read the files of their new team members. They all had tragic history's that would break the most stable of men. He couldn't believe the horrors that many of his new teammates had gone through, and how they even managed to survive. Once he starts reading he doesn't stop until the pilot tells them that their landing soon. Steve goes to wake up Tony, but finds that he's too far asleep to rouse. He then tries his luck with Natasha who jumped awake. "Agent Romanov, we're about to land. I tried waking Tony but he didn't even budge." He tells her. "Did you try shaking him?" She asked. "No, I thought it wouldn't be wise, given his history." "Usually that would be a smart move, but Tony's almost completely deaf, he takes out his hearing aids when he sleeps." She said pointing to the two black earpieces sitting in a nook on the ship. "Get used to it Agent Barton is deaf too." "Really? But his speech seems alright." Steve said remembering the few people he had encountered in the 40s who were deaf. "Times have changed since the forties. He and Barton were able to maintain some hearing due to the hearing aids they wear. They're so high tech that they're not available to the public yet." Then she place her hand on Tony's shoulder and gently shook him. Tony came awake with a dopey smile on his face, and she handed him his aids, which he replaced. "We're here." She told him. "Can't wait to finally get out of this suit." He said. "And inhale a pot of coffee or two." He said dreamily about the precious nectar of the gods.
"Why can't you take off the suit?" Steve wondered.
"Because the only way this suit comes off is by the emergency release button, which essentially
breaks about the suit, leaving me to piece it together again, or by the use of my suit disassembly
unit, of which I keep a spare on the carrier."
"Oh." Steve said.
"It's the price of being able to fly." Tony said. And Thor heartily agreed that flying was the best
feeling ever.
"So when does Fury plan to brief us?" Steve asked, when they got off the plane.
"In about 30 minutes." Agent Coulson answered after he greeted them. "He wanted to have a word
with the prisoner before he met with the team."
"Is Samael going to be there?" Steve asked.
"No he's been called back to his den for an important mission. He sends his apologies." Coulson
said. Then they departed with Natasha giving Thor a quick tour, and Tony going in search of his
disassembling unit and a hot shower. When he got to the unit he was greeted by Pepper who had
two dozen of his favorite donuts, and a large coffee waiting for him, along with a fresh set of
clothes.
"I heard it was a hard mission." She said.
"Yeah. It was. All I want to do is crawl into my bed for a week, but no the worlds in danger, and I
have to go save it. He said as he bit into a doughnut, and started the disassembly process. When the
suit was finally off he stretched his overworked muscles, stiff from being crammed in a metal suit
for nearly 20 hours. Pepper came behind him and gave him a quick shoulder rub.
"Remind me to set up an appointment for my masseuse after this blows over." He said relishing in
the hands that were loosening his tight muscles. He was far too sore for a 25 year old. "Please tell
me you brought a bottle of shampoo and a razor." He asked craving a hot shower and a quick
shave.
"Yes, Tony," she said handing him his travel bag along with a set of clothes and a towel. "What
would you so without me?"
"Die, I would die without you. You are seriously the best PA ever. You know what? I'm going to
give you a raise. You deserve it." He said taking his stuff and heading into the bathroom. He
emerged 15 minutes later looking refreshed and clean, his hair was gelled back and he had on his
signature look of a tight fitting dark jean, with a black sabbath shirt, and a perfectly tailored suit
jacket. He also had on his signature sunglasses. He picked up his coffee shoved a donut in his
mouth and started walking towards the briefing room with pepper informing him of all that he
missed during the mission. He walked in the room like he owned it and placed the second thing of
donuts which brutally attacked by the team.
"When did you have time to get donuts, coffee and take a shower?" Steve wondered, somewhat
jealous.
"Its the wonders of having the worlds best PA, capsicle." He said before he shoved a donut into his
mouth. Then he went over to the control panel and started messing with things. "How exactly does
Fury see these panels?" He asked with one eye closed.
"By turning." Agent Hill said stoically.
"Must be exhausting." Then he went over to Dr. Banner and introduced himself. "I'm one of your
biggest fans, your work in radiation and chemistry is awe-inspiring. I'm also a big fan on how you
turn into a rage monster." Tony said. Banner didn't know if he should feel complimented or
offended by the statement.
"Er...thanks. You can call me Bruce, I also happen to be a fan of yours. The way you built a fully
functional particle accelerator in your basement, not to mention the advances you made in
prosthetics, especially with donating thousands to people in third world countries. I've seen your
work impact the lives of many of my patients when I was in India and the Congo."
"Are we done fanboying over here? Because I would like to start, you know, saving the world!"
Fury yelled as he saw Tony and Bruce talking about their science accomplishments in the corner.
"As you all know we got Loki in custody, and hes not going anywhere soon. But the tesseract is
still on the loose. Its imperative that we find it before its too late, and since our recently acquired
prisoner is not telling us anything about its location, I need Dr. Banner and Mr. Stark here to devise
a plan to locate it. Dr. Banner, have you made any advances in your project yet?"
"Well I've got every spectrometer i could get my hands on working on locating it. They scanning
for even the minutest of readings of Gamma radiation. I also figured out that the tesseract would
require a enormous energy ’d have to heat the cube to a hundred and twenty million Kelvin just to
break through the Coulomb barrier." Dr. Banner stated
"What if figured out how to stabilize the quantum tunnelling effect?" Tony theorized
"Since when did you become an expert in Thermonuclear Astrophysics?" Hill asked with
speculation.
"Yesterday morning, after you delivered the files." Tony stated unphased, the rest of the room
looked at him in shock.
"Well, if he could do that, he could achieve heavy ion fusion at any reactor on the planet." Bruce
stated hypothetically.
" Finally, someone who speaks English." Tony said with a smirk. Then he opened up the donuts
and passed them to Bruce. "Donut?" He asked before eating another one.
"Is that what just happened?" Steve asked bewildered by the conversation that had just taken place.
"OK since that's being taken care of, Thor do you have any idea what your brother is planning?"
Fury asked the blonde giant wearing armor.
"He has an army, called the Chitauri. They're not of Asgard or any world known. He means to lead
them against your people. They will win him the Earth. In return, I suspect, for the Tesseract." The
god said dreadfully.
"So he has an army. From outer space." Steve said deadpanned.
"That's why he took Dr. Selvig, he wanted the portal for the army." Banner stated.
"Selvig?" Thor asked.
"Yes he's an astrophysicist." Tony supplied.
"He's a friend." Thor said halfheartedly.
" Loki has him under some kind of spell. Along with one of ours." Natasha said sadly.
" I wanna know why Loki let us take him. He's not leading an army from here." Steve stated
heroically.
"I don't think we should be focusing on Loki. That guy's brain is a bag full of cats. You can smell
crazy on him." Bruce said, humorously.
" Have a care how you speak! Loki is beyond reason, but he is of Asgard and he is my brother!"
Thor said defending his kin. One could almost see the sparks flying off of him.
" He killed eighty people in two days." Natasha said.
" He's adopted." Thor quipped back.
"Ok, at least we have a game plan. Stark, Banner get on the task of finding out the location of the
Tesseract. Natasha, I want you to get as much information from Loki as you can. Rogers, Thor,
you're both on standby, I don't know what Loki has in mind, but he's up to something, and I want to
be prepared." Fury stated. "Well what are you waiting for? We've got a planet to save! And for
Gods sake, give me one of those donuts Stark!"
"So what's your secret? Tea? Meditation? Or a really big bag of weed? If its the last one, I'll be happy to join you next time." Tony asked jokingly after he poked Bruce in the ribs with a metal prod, just to see the reaction.

"What do you think you're doing Stark?" A voice rang out and he saw Captain America standing across from him infuriated. "You're endangering the lives of everyone on the ship."

"Don't worry Steve, I have it under control. Trust me I wouldn't have survived the last decade in the wild if I couldn't stand pointy things." He said trying to defend Tony, who he figured was only curious.

"Fury sent me to check if you two made any progress with the staff or with locating the tesseract. " Steve asked.

"No we haven't made any progress in locating the Tesseract, but I did find out what Fury wanted to do with the cube. I thought it was funny that he had this alien technology that could power the world, but he didn't invite me, the leader in clean energy, to play along. So I dug a little deeper and guess what I found? Blueprints for dirty bombs powered by the one and the only tesseract." Tony said pulling the blueprints up.

"What are you suggesting Stark?"

"Fury knows something he's not telling us." Tony stated, as Natasha's voice rang out over the radios they had. "Loki's planning on unleashing the hulk! Keep Banner in the lab, I'll be up there shortly."

"Well that's not good." Tony said smartly. As Fury, Natasha and Thor came in.

"You've been keeping secrets again, Haven't you Fury? Would mind explaining what this is?" Tony asked as he saw Fury pulled up a set of blueprints.

"You're supposed to be locating the Tesseract! Not hacking my system!" Fury exhorted.

"We are! The model's locked and we're sweeping for the signature now. When we get the hit, we'll have a signature within half a mile." Bruce said defending Tony.

"Yeah, you'll get your cube back, no mas, no fuss...So what is Phase 2?" Tony asked.

"Phase 2 is SHIELD uses the Cube to make weapons! Sorry, the computer was moving a little slow for me. Don't lie to me Fury, I saw the weapons." Steve stated.

"Rogers, we gathered everything related to the Tesseract, this does not mean that we..." Fury started but then was interrupted.

"I'm sorry Nick, what were you lying?" Tony said pulling up another blueprint.

"I was wrong, Director. The world hasn't changed a bit." Steve said halfheartedly.

"I'd like to know why SHIELD is using the Tesseract to build weapons of mass destruction." Bruce said

"Because of him!" Fury said pointing at Thor.

"Me?!!" Thor said infuriated.

"Last year, Earth had a visit from another planet that had a grudge match that leveled a small town. We learned that only are we not alone, but we are hopelessly, hilariously outgunned." Fury said laughing.

"My people want nothing but peace with your planet!" Thor said defending his planet.

"But you're not the only ones out there, are you? And you're not the only threat. The world is filling up with people that can't be matched, that can't be controlled!" Fury yelled.

"Like you controlled the cube?" Banner stated.

Then everyone noticed that Dr. Banner had the staff in his hands.

"You want to think about removing yourself from this environment, Doctor?" Natasha bravely asked.

"I was in Kolkata, I was pretty well removed." Bruce said laughing.

"Loki is manipulating you." She said eyeing the staff.
"And you been doing what, exactly?" He asked getting a better grip on the staff. "You didn't come here because I batted my eyelashes at you." Natasha insisted. "Yes, and I'm not leaving because suddenly you get a little twitchy."
"Leave him alone! He's got it all under control. Stop treating him like a monster!" Tony yelled defending his new found friend. "We all have issues we can't control, but you get mad because of Bruce's anger management problem."
"Stark! Is everything a joke to you?! Since the moment you stepped on this ship you haven't been serious one bit! You think just because you have money and a tragic past, the world revolves around you. Well it doesn't! Take away your suit of Armor and what are you?" Steve asked angrily.
"Genius, Billionaire, Playboy, Philanthropist." Tony stated with a smirk.
"I know men with none of that who are 10x better than you, and one of those men was your Father!" Steve said, the room silenced and Tony had a look of pain on his face, Steve had gone too far. But he didn't know where to stop. "You're supposed to be a hero. To be able to lay down on the wire and let the other guys walk over you, but you aren't, are you?"
"Personally I'll just cut the wire."
"Take off your suit of armor and let's go a few rounds!"
"Fine!" Tony said before there was an ominous groan. The ship lurched sideways. "I need to suit up!" Tony yelled, and he and Steve ran out of the lab. A few minutes later fury's voice rang out over the radio.
"Stark! We have a downed engine. I need you to fix it!"
"Got it!" Tony replied, getting on his suit. "Steve, I need you to come with me. This might be a two-person job." Tony said as he placed on his helmet.
"Look, I'm sorry for what I said before..." Steve said regretfully.
"Now is not the time. Right now we need to fix the engine, before we fall into the Atlantic." Tony said commandingly as they ran towards the engine block.
"The Hulk is out on the lower deck. Everyone evacuated decks 3b and below." A sheer voice rang through the speakers. Tony hoped that Natasha was alright, he didn't think he could survive losing yet another of his family. Then they reached the engine block.
"Jarvis, show me the damage that's been done." Jarvis brought up the diagram. "Oh that's not good. Its looks like the engines being blocked by a whole lotta debris. I'm going to have to dig it out, and jump start the engine."
"What do you need me to do?"
"I need you to get to the control panel and tell me what you see." Tony said as he flew off to start working on the engine.
"OK I'm at the panel."
"What do you see?"
"It looks like it runs on..electricity?" Steve said unsurely.
"Well, you're not wrong." Tony said sarcastically."ok, I'm going to manually jump the engine, by rotating the rotors myself until it gets up to speed."
"Won't you get shredded?" Steve asked.
"No, that's why I brought you. You're going to initiated the gravitational drag, so that I can escape." Tony said as he started the process.
"Uh, what?"
"You see the red lever? Pull the red lever when I give you the word." Tony stated.
"Sounds good." Steve replied. He suddenly heard a round of gunshots and he turned around to defend himself. He had just managed to shoot the last gunman, when the ship lurched again and he found himself slipping off the carrier. Luckily there was a cord lying an arms length away from him and just as the floor gave way he grabbed it, preventing his fatal fall to earth.
"Steve, I need you to pull the lever now!" Tony's voice rang in his ear.
"Kinda of busy at the moment!" Steve yelled back as he pulled himself up.
"Pull the lever now!... Well thats not good." He heard Stark say in his ear, before he heard the screeching of metal on metal. Steve quickened his pace and pulled the lever. Tony came flying, or
rather was sucked, out of the engine rotor and crashed onto the floor of the carrier. Steve got up and ran over to Stark, hoping he had made it in time.
"Stark! Are you alright?" He yelled, just as Tony's face plate went up.
"Ugh... Let's not do that again..." Tony groaned as he got to his feet. Then he looked down at his suit, which was in horrible condition, and a look of pain came over his face.
"What's the matter?" Steve asked fearing that Tony was injured.
"My suit is ruined! Do you know how many hours I put into this suit? I'm going to kill Loki once I get my hands on him." Tony said furiously.
"You're going to kill a man over a suit?" Steve asked bewildered as they made their way to the disassembly unit, he couldn't help but notice how Tony was limping.
"Yes and it's a multimillion dollar suit." Tony said with a pout.
"Are you sure you're alright?" Steve asked.
"Yeah, nothing a good nights sleep and a few pain pills won't heal." Tony said, as he started the disassembly process.
"Stark, Rogers, good job with the engine. Something's happened, you guys might want to make it to the briefing room." Fury said over their radios.
"Who was it?" Tony asked as he noticed the sorrowful tone in Furys voice.
"Coulson. Loki stabbed him." Fury stated. Tony's face fell. Phil couldn't be dead, not the Phil who they had pizza and beer with every Friday, or the man that they watched marathons of bad action movies with.
"He was a good man." Steve said as he noted the expression on Tony's face.
"He was ... Phil." Tony said his genius mind couldn't even come up with another way to describe the man who he had known for 12 years.
"First time losing a soldier?" Steve asked as they walked back to the briefing room.
"Soldier? We are not soldiers!" Tony spat. Steve knew there was nothing else he could tell the grieving young man, so he walked the rest of the way in silence. When they entered the room they only saw Natasha, Hill, and Fury standing around stone faced.
"Where is everyone else?" Steve asked.
"Thor and Banner locations are unknown. We can't tell you if they're even alive at this moment because frankly we don't know. Loki's escaped with the staff and we haven't the faintest idea where he's headed. Coulson tried to stop him, but he was stabbed in the process. We've been hit big time." Fury stated.
"And what about Barton?" Tony asked, not wanting to hear any more bad news.
"We got him. He's currently in the mad bay sleeping off the concussion Romanov gave him." Hill stated. Tony wanted to cry out in joy when he heard the news, but he knew that would break character, so he stayed in his seat, and said, "At least we got him back."
"What do you want us to do?" Steve asked.
"I'm not sure what you can do. You're down two of your heavy hitters and Stark's suit is damaged. We can't send you three out by yourselves, you're exhausted. Romanov nearly got smashed by the Hulk, Stark was nearly torn to pieces by the engine, and you engaged in a heavy gun fight. We don't even know where he is!"
"Actually I can help with that. Loki's a full blown diva, he wants parades, adoring fans, a crown, statues that people can see for miles around..." Tony said then he got a strange look on his face.
"My tower. First he destroyed my suit, then he killed Coulson, and now he wants MY tower. He just made this personal!" Tony yelled.
"How long is it going to take for you to get that suit of yours fixed?" Fury asked.
"I can get it operational in an hour. Then I'm going to make him regret even thinking about coming to earth." Tony said furiously.
"You don't have to do this alone. You'll have my shield." Steve said.
"And my knives." Natasha added.
"And you'll have my bow." Said a voice from behind them. They turned around to see Clint standing there.
"Legolas! About time you woke up! Now who's ready to kick some Asgardian butt?" Tony said, his face lighting up in a rare smile. Then they got to work.
Assembling of Hero's part 4

A few hours later...
"Stark we got a nuclear warhead coming in hot! You have 3 minutes before Manhattan becomes a smoldering crater."
"Seriously? You couldn't give me a warning?" Tony asked shocked at Fury's words.
"I didn't really have any warning myself, is there anything you can do to divert it?"
"Yeah I think I know exactly what to do with it." Tony stated as he saw the portal from the corner of his eye.
"I hope you know what you're doing!"
"They don't call me the smartest man in a century, for nothing." Tony stated with a grin, then he flew towards the bomb in order to divert it.
"I have a chance to close the portal, I'm going to take it." Natasha said over the radio in his ear.
"Don't, or not yet at least. I have a nuclear missile thats about to go off, and I have the perfect place to put it." Tony said.
"Tony, are you sure you want to do this?" She asked softly, knowing that the odds of surviving what he planned on doing were slim to none.
"You know this is a one way journey." Steve said, suddenly realizing how wrong he was about Tony.
"There's no other way. It was a pleasure working with you guys." Tony said, knowing full well that this was a suicide mission.
"No! You're not saying goodbye, you will survive this!" Clint yelled. Then Tony disappeared through the portal. The team fell silent in anticipation.
"I have to close the portal now! Or we're going to get the backlash of that bomb." Natasha yelled as she punctured the cube with the staff. The portal was almost closed when they saw the familiar glint of red and gold come out.
"Thank God!" Natasha muttered as she released the breath she didn't know she was holding in.
"He's not slowing down!" Thor yelled. Then they saw the Hulk reach out and snatched him out of the air. And brought him down to where Steve and Thor were standing. Thor ripped off the faceplate, and they found Tony lying there pale and unconscious. Steve bent down to see if Tony was breathing,
"Shit he's not breathing!" He exclaimed.
"The Man of Irons sacrifice was truly admirable, worthy of passage to Valhalla." Thor said remorsefully.
"Don't give up on him yet!" Steve yelled as he started performing CPR on the young hero. "Come on Tony, breathe already!" He said urgently. He was just about to start the second round of compressions when Tony's eyes suddenly open and he took in a large gasp of air.
"What...the hell! " He said faintly as his eyes took in his surroundings. "Tell me that no one kissed me." He asked, although he could already guess his answer as Steve was bent over him.
"Aye, our Captain gave you the precious breath of life!" Thor said gleefully.
"Thanks." Tony said, "Remind me not to fall a couple thousand feet in free fall again. That was an experience I hope I never go through again." Tony muttered with a groan, as Steve helped him sit up.
"Well it wasn't fun watching you free fall either." Steve said. "Are you all right?" He asked.
"Yeah, just sore, and maybe a dislocated shoulder, from the fall." Tony said as he noticed the pulsing pain coming from his left shoulder.
"Then what made you stop breathing?"
"I think my little trip to space, made the battery I have in my chest short out."
"You have a battery in your chest?" Steve asked shocked.
"Yeah I was involve in an explosion a few years ago, and I have a miniature arc reactor in my chest
that keeps my heart beating. When it shortened out I must of went into cardiac arrest, it must of started back up when you gave me CPR.” Tony said as if it was no big deal.
"You just went into cardiac arrest, and nearly died, and you're acting like nothing happened!” Steve said on the verge of screaming.
"I'm alive aren't I? I just need to replace the reactor and I'll be fine." Tony stated.
"I'd feel better if you were to have a medic check you out." Steve said.
"Tony! Thank God you're alive! Don't you ever do that again!" A feminine voice called from behind them, they turned to find Natasha and Clint just arriving on the scene.
"Now that you guys are here, do you guys want shawarma? I have no idea what it is but there's a joint down the street, and I'm suddenly starving." Tony said as he stood up.
"Do you never stop eating?" Steve asked.
"You should talk." Tony argued back.
"First I think we have something to take care of back at the tower. Loki."
Loki was lying in the middle of Starks destroyed apartment, still recovering from being beaten to a pulp by the Hulk. The avengers surrounded him, and he had a completely scared look on his face.
"Just for your information, if you ever decide to wreck havoc on this planet again, or even set one finger on a human with a harmful intention, we will hunt you down and make you wish you were never born. Whatever Odin does to you, we will return ten times more. For we are the Avengers." Steve said in his most commanding voice, while the rest of the team gave their most menacing glances.
"I think I might just take that drink now." The god was literally quaking in his boots.
The team was sitting around the table at the shawarma joint. They were all sitting around the table, half dead with exhaustion. Luckily they had only received minor injuries the most serious had been Thors and Steve's stomach wounds, which healed remarkably fast, and Tony's dislocated shoulder, which was now in a sling, and an concussion, both due to his impact from the fall. The rest of the team just received minor bruises and cuts, but they were completely exhausted from the past two days of fighting.
"You guys can crash at my place if you want. I have plenty of space, and I'm pretty sure the beds are 10x more comfortable than the ones on the helicarrier." Tony said noting the deep set exhaustion on their faces.
"You know what, I might take you up on that offer." Bruce said yawning.
"But isn't your house destroyed?" Steve asked.
"That's my tower, I own multiple properties you know. I am a billionaire." Tony said reeking with sarcasm.
"Are you sure you're alright with this?" Steve asked.
"Yeah, I just have to send a quick text to Jarvis for him to alert the housestaff that I'm going to have a team of superheros staying over."
"Shield Brother Anthony, I am grateful for your kind offer. I would be honored to stay at your home tonight." Thor said slamming his soda on the table. The rest of the team winced at the loud sound, and Thor had an apologetic look on his face.
"Count me in." Bruce said.
"You still have those Jacuzzi tubs right?" Clint asked.
"Of course I do. Nothing like a soak in a Jacuzzi after a fight." Tony said with a smile.
"Then count me in." Clint said enthusiastically.
"Me too." Natasha said tiredly.
"I'm in too." Steve said.
"OK well that settled then. I'll have Happy come pick us up then." Tony said pulling out his phone, and started rapidly texting.
"Happy?" Bruce asked.
"He's my chauffeur."
"Uh what about our clothes?" Steve asked noticing his and Thor's bigger sizes.
"I have some clothes that might fit you, I like sleeping in oversized clothes. I'll have some maids
Tony was completely exhausted, but he couldn't fall asleep as he was bombarded by the images of the last few days. He had lost Phil, his handler and most of all his friend. He nearly lost Clint, and he very nearly died. How could anyone sleep with these thoughts? He then heard a small knock at his door. He got out of bed and opened the door to find Natasha, looking equally plagued by what had happened, standing there.
"Can't sleep?" He asked.
"No, I keep seeing you falling out of the portal every time I close my eyes. I can't believe I almost lost you. I still can't believe Phil's gone either, I keep expecting him to show up." Natasha said on the verge of tears, it was unnerving to see such a strong assassin so close to tears. He then heard a set of footsteps in the hall.
"Can't sleep either Clint?" He asked. Clint shook his head looking every bit as disheveled as the other two assassins. "Well then come on." He said gesturing them into his room. They had a ritual of playing Lord of the Rings while crowded on one of their beds after particularly hard missions. They usually fell asleep before the fellowship set out upon their journey, but none of them minded as it helped prevent the nightmares that occasionally plagued their sleep. That night like many others before ended with the trio sound asleep on Tony's extra large bed, and with none of the assassins having nightmares that night. For those few hours of blissful rest they had forgotten the trials of the past few days and ended up getting one of the most restful sleeps that either of them had had in months.
Chills

Tony was in the gym, as Samael, attacking a heavy duty training dummy he created just to allow him to fight to his fullest ability, without holding back, or using up an enormous amount of training dummies. He was soon lost in the rhythm of the fight, so much so that he didn't notice the small audience he had gathered during the fight until he stopped to take a water break. When he looked up after he had taken a swig of water he was shocked to find Steve and Bruce staring at him. "What? Is something wrong? I was doing a little training session." Tony said unabashedly.
"You call that little? Do you know how long you've been down here?" Bruce said.
"Its only been..." He looked down at his watch " 4 hours. I haven't been able to train a lot lately, since being slammed with missions from the Order." He said trying to explain his long absence, but he could tell that it wasn't helping.
"You've been down here for four hours?" Bruce asked shocked, " You realize how unhealthy that is right? "
"I've trained for longer periods. With the Dolofóni I sometimes trained for 16 hours a day. I'm used to it." Tony said, sheepishly. " So why'd you guys come down here anyways?" He asked.
"Well I came down here to see if you wanted some pizza we had ordered in, Natasha told me you were down here. You must have been really zoned in on the fight, I called your name several times, but you didn't reply. So I kinda just watched, not in a creepy way. I never seen anyone move like you. I guess Steve came down to check on us, when I didn't come back upstairs."
"Where did you learn to move like that?" Bruce asked, " I've seen many different forms of martial arts, and none of them resembled anything like your moves."
"Well I combine about 10 different styles, plus I incorporate sword play and knives, so I essentially created my own style of fighting." He stated. "So you said something about pizza? Do you guys think there's any left?" Tony asked as he picked up his stuff.
"There should be."
Then the claxon calling them to assemble rang.
"Well I guess the pizza is going to have to wait." He said as they ran towards their suit up room, where the rest of the team were in various stages of preparedness. Tony was glad he was already in fighting gear, he wore a body suit similar to that that Widow wore, with the soft soled boots of his dolofóni uniform. He still wore a good assortment of knives, both Tanaka blades and his bow, along with his black flexible mask that was given to him by Shield. Once they were suited up they boarded the Quinjet that was parked on top of the tower.
"So what are we facing?" Tony asked.
"You wouldn't believe me if I told you." Clint said.
"We got reports of a giant horde of what appears to be giant gingerbread men." Natasha said.
"You're joking right?" Tony asked on the verge of laughing.
" I wish I was, but I'm not. They also appear to think humans are delicious, so we're going to have to take them out as soon as possible. They also seem to have guns that spit melted gumdrops." Natasha said.
"You Midgardians have the most unusual assortment of enemies." Thor stated thoroughly confused. Tony couldn't but agree, in the last year that they had faced creatures ranging from Unicorns to metal robots and everything in between.
"Trust me Thor, this is strange for us too." Bruce said.
"So is there a way to kill these things?" Steve asked.
"I'm not exactly sure. They don't seem to show regeneration powers, so if we break them down enough, we could most likely kill them. But they are really hard to break." Tony said with a giant grin.
Tony was in the process of fighting one of the monsters and was literally punching the gingerbread man to pieces. He was just about to walk away from the mess of crumbs and start on the next one, when he saw the crumbs from several of the giants he had destroyed start to merge together and form a monstrous creature at least three times the size of the previous cookies. Well that was just perfect, who would create giant people eating monsters that were indestructible? Then an idea popped into his head, as Clint called on the radio.

"So we need a plan B guys, crushing the cookies into pieces, was not a good move." Clint called in panicked.

"Um are they creating even bigger cookies?" Natasha asked.

"Yeah, I'm seeing this too." Cap said.

"I think I have an idea. We need to herd the cookies into the Hudson river. I'm not sure why I didn't think of this earlier, but I'm pretty sure the moisture will cause the cookies to become a giant sludge of cookie dough at the bottom of the river." Tony said.

"Good thinking Samael, but how do we get the cookies into the river?" Steve asked.

"Well we have you, the Hulk and Thor bring them together, with Widow and Hawkeye annoying them on the sidelines. Once you gather them together I'll play bait and have them all chase me to the river." Tony explained.

"Why do you have to play bait?" Natasha asked.

"Well because I'm fast and I have little annoying pointy objects that will ensure they're pursual. I'm also a pretty decent swimmer. It will be fun." Tony said with a laugh.

"You and I have a very different idea of fun, Samael." Natasha muttered, Tony could almost hear the scowl in her voice.

"Tell me when you push the gingerbread men my way." Tony said as he got in position.

"Will do, just try not to get yourself killed Samael." Steve said in his Captain America voice.

"We're starting the herding process, get ready." He added.

Tony prepared himself for the chase that was about to ensue. As soon as the giant gingerbread men came into sight, he shot them with arrows to ensure their annoyance, which worked better than he anticipated because he was soon the primary focus of the monstrous cookies.

"Samael, I would start running if I were you." He heard Clint advise on the radio.

Then he started running towards the river, shooting the gingerbread men with arrows every so often to make sure they were still following. The chase was fast, he wasn't anticipating the 20 foot tall gingerbread men having such great speed, and he was at the river bank in no time. He took one last look at the gingerbread men, who were still hot on his tail, and jumped in the river, which he was sure he was going to regret later, as the water was freezing and muddy. He heard subsequent splashes as the gingerbread landed in the water.

He surfaced in order to make sure that the cookies were still submerged, which they were, then swam towards the shore where the rest of the Avengers, who were covered in melted gumdrops, were waiting. Once he got to the shore Steve helped pull him up because he was freezing and wet and couldn't quite get a good grip on the fence that prevented people from doing what he just did.

"T-told y-you it w-oul-d w-w-work." He said when he was back on dry land, shivering as he just emerged from almost freezing water and was now exposed to air that was almost as cold. Thor handed him his cape, which Tony promptly wrapped around himself.

"Clint's getting the Quinjet. Are you alright?" Natasha asked, as Tony was still shivering and a bit pale.

"Y-y-yeah, j-j-just c-cold."

"You just took a dip in the Hudson river in the middle of March, of course you're cold. Next time, try not to give yourself hypothermia." Steve said.

Then the Quinjet landed in the park a few hundred feet from them and they quickly boarded the jet and took off towards the tower, where Banner prescribed Tony with a bed rest to warm back up, as he had mild hypothermia from his dip in the Hudson, and the rest of the team decided to hold an impromptu movie night, with Tony lying on the couch under a mound of blankets and the rest of
the team sitting on various couches and chairs, eating a giant pot of chili Bruce had cooked up and watching their favorite vampire movies.
Tony woke up to his phone ringing. 
"Hello?" He asked still half asleep. 
"Tony, the council wants you to return to the den as soon as you can." Fane said. 
"Why?"
"They've been thinking of filling the empty council seat. I think they mean to make you a council member." Tony could almost hear the grin on Fane's face.
"Are you serious?" To any asked. 
"I'm not sure, but all things point towards your promotion." Fane said. 
"OK, I'll clear my schedule."
"OK, and Tony? Their allowing you to bring one outsider." Fane said, just as the claxon began to ring. "What's that Tony?" Fane asked as he heard the bell. 
"That's the bell alerting us to assemble. I've got to go, I'll call you back when I can." Tony said as he got out of bed and pulled on some clothes. 
"Be safe, Tony." Fane advised as he hung up. 

Then he made his way down to the suit up room, running into Natasha on his way. 
"What's the threat?" Tony asked. 
"The Brotherhood are terrorizing Manhattan. The X-Men asked for our help." Natasha said. "And you look far too cheerful for 7am." She noted. 
"I just got off the phone with Fane, he thinks I'm going to be made a council member." Tony stated as he reached for his avengers uniform. 
"No you're not going as an avenger today." She said as she stopped him. " Charles requested that you put on the X-Men uniform. He wants you to fight with your fellow mutants." She added, before she broke into a smile and said, " Congratulations. When do you leave?" She asked, as she got into her uniform. 
"As soon as I can get away. Fane said I could bring an outsider with me." Tony said with a smile, as he donned the leather uniform. 
"Who are you going to bring?" She asked. 
"I don't know yet. It's going to be a tough decision though." He said as he removed his black shield mask to put on his cowl for the X-Men uniform, before the others who were still navigating their way to the room. 
"What's with the leather?" Clint asked as he saw Tony in the distinct black leather uniform accented with yellow, with a hugh X on his chest. 
"Magneto and the Brotherhood, are terrorizing Manhattan. The X-Men have called me in to help. They also called you guys in too...I would bring the plastic arrows and bow I made for the instance of this happening." He warned Clint, as he got on his set of plastic knives. 
"You're an X-Man too?" Steve said, thinking about the group of mutant warriors that he had just been briefed about several weeks before. 
"I'm confused, what is this X-Man you talk about?" Thor said, obviously not getting the same briefing Steve had received. 
"Well I'm a really powerful mutant, my skills as an assassin actually come from my mutant abilities. I belong to a team made up of mutants like myself, but I'm a Dolofóni first, an Avenger second and a X-Man third. I split my time between the three." He explained in layman's terms for the two. 
" How powerful are you?" Steve asked, slightly wary of his mysterious friend. 
"I'm a six," Tony said with a smirk, " on a scale of five. Which means that I'm one of the most powerful mutants on this planet, at least that we know about." Tony explained at the sight of Steve, Thor and Bruce's faces. 
"I knew you had some loyalty to the X-Men, but I didn't realize you were that powerful." Bruce
stated, still shocked. Then Tony gave a quick demonstration. "You see, I kept this a slight secret because I didn't wish for Shields enemies and the mutant enemies to team up to try to stop me. Didn't mean to not tell you." Tony told the three telepathically. "And that's not the only skills I have, you'll probably see the others in the fight." Tony said, almost bragging, with a smile. "Now Cap, you might not want to use your shield. This Magneto guy can control metal, so it might be compromised. If you want you can choose a plastified weapon." Tony said pointing to a cabinet that was lined with top of the line plastic weapons. "Thor I'm pretty sure you can still use your hammer, since it has otherworldly qualities that allow for only you to pick it up." Steve picked up a plastic gun for emergencies, but kept his shield.

"Oh and one more thing, try not to kill the mutants. Charles hates for any mutant blood to be spilled so just aim to incapacitate. I designed the weapons to be non-lethal." He told them.

"Sounds good." Steve said and then they boarded the jet.

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Steve's POV

"Samael!" A feminine voice cried out and a flash of white flew by and nearly tackled Samael to the ground.

"Ororo!" His teammate called back, embracing the woman in a deep hug.

"It's been too long Samael." She said in a scolding tone.

"I know, I've been swamped lately with the Dolofóni and Avengers. But I do have some good news." He said in a guilty tone.

"What is it?!" She asked with a smile.

"I might be getting put on the Council of Masters!" He said enthusiastically. Steve made a mental note that he should probably ask him about that later, and perhaps celebrate.

"At your age?!"

"Yep." He said smiling. Then he turned to his fellow teammates, "Come on, I'll introduce you to the team." He told them and gestured for them to follow him to where the rest of the X-Men were waiting, and he was greeted with a bunch of hugs and a chorus of hellos, Steve expected the kid to be popular, but not to this extent.

"OK so X-Men, meet the Avengers. This is Captain America, a supersoldier and also the leader of our team," Steve nodded his head in greeting.

"Thor, an Asgardian prince, also fond of thunder and his hammer," Who had a welcoming look on his face.

"Black Widow, super stealthy assassin could probably could kill you in a hundred ways before you even notice her move," She held a straight look on her face, which slightly scared the newer X-Men, before she broke into a soft smile.

"Hawkeye, expert marksman, who could give me a run for my money, also fond of sneaking through vents and hiding in tall places," Who nodded his greeting.

"and Dr. Banner, brilliant physicist, who happens to turn into a green rage monster when he gets angry." Dr. Banner nervously greeted the X-Men.

"Avengers meet the X-Men. This is Wolverine, his skeleton has adamantium fused to it and he has 6 metal claws, sharper than any of my blades, along with regeneration properties that rival yours Cap," he said pointing a large man who demonstrated his power by unleashing his claws and crossing them in an X across his chest.

"This is Storm, she can control the weather," he pointed to the woman with white hair, who had hugged him earlier, and she demonstrated her power by causing the sky to become darker and levitating.

"This is Rouge, she can take on the powers of others if she touched them," he said pointing to a young brunette with a white strip in her hair, who nodded her greeting.
"This is Jean, she's a telekinetic and a telepath," he said pointing towards a red headed woman, who demonstrated her power by making several objects around her float.
"This is Bobby, the Iceman. His name kinda tells you what he can do," he said as he pointed to a young man who made a floating ball of ice to show off.
"And finally Cyclops, he shoots photo optic lasers out of his eyes and is the leader of the group," he said pointing to a man with a visor over his eyes, who shot the laser towards a small pile of leaves that combusted on impact.
"So now that you guys know each other, what's the plan?" He asked.
"Well I was thinking of splitting us up. One team, the stealth team, will sneak behind the brotherhood and silently wait until the second team, the heavy hitters, draws them out to fight." Cyclops explained.
"So who are the teams?" Steve asked.
"Stealth team will have Samael, Jean, Storm, Rouge, Hawkeye and Black Widow, while the heavy hitters will have Me, The Hulk, Bobby, Captain America, Thor and Wolverine. Jean will be the leader of the Stealth team and I will lead the heavy hitters." Cyclops said.
"OK sounds like a plan, let's go."

Natasha's POV.

They were crouched behind several cars waiting for the sound of attack signaling the heavy hitters' arrival. Then they heard the roar of the hulk come closer, and prepared to fight. They split into two smaller groups, since they had two telepaths who could enable silent communication, between the teams. Jean, Hawkeye and Storm were on one team, and she, Samael and Rouge on the other. Then they split off.
"OK, so we're going to slip behind some of the brother and knock them out. Rouge, you remember that sleeper hold I taught you a few months ago?" Samael asked.
"Yes." The girl replied in a slight southern drawl.
"Well use it, we have to be as quiet as possible, I don't want to notify them of our arrival too soon. Let's go." He whispered as they made their way towards the cars. Samael crept ahead, scoping out the scene, and motioning them to follow him when the coast was clear. The process was slow, but it proved helpful as the amount of passed out mutants, who were left hogtied and gagged, increased. They were soon among the fighting mutants and superheroes.
"Well it looks like the party's begun without us." Samael said laughingly before he joined the fights. She couldn't laughing at the casualness of his statement.
"Well I guess that's the signal for us to join in." She said as she turned towards Rouge, who looked a little more than eager to join the fight, then they started attacking the closet brotherhood mutants they could find.

...15 minutes later...
"Has anyone seen Samael?" She asked the group, after they had taken down the majority of the brotherhood.
"He's missing?" Clint asked.
"Yeah we got separated, as soon as we started our side of the attack." She said starting to get worried.
"Come to think of it, Magneto disappeared early on in the fight too." Cyclops stated.
"Magneto could be trying to recruit Samael again." Jean announced.
"Again?" Steve wondered.
"Yeah Magneto's into trying to gather all of the powerful mutants onto his side. He's tried to turn us all at one point or another." Jean informed them.
"I have a bad feeling about this." Clint stated. Then the Hulk who hadn't shifted back to Banner yet got a curious look on his face. "Little mask man in trouble." The giant green monster stated in a sad tone. "Little mask man? What does he mean?" Storm wondered with a confused look on her face. "That's his nickname for Samael. Hulk, go find Samael." She stated and the Hulk ran off. And she pulled out a tracking device. "What's that for?" Rouge asked. "It's to track the Hulk. Samael and the Hulk have a sort of connection, so the Hulk will find him, and we're going to follow him.

Tony's POV

"We meet again, Samael." Magneto said. "Spare me the evil monologue." He said sarcastically, as he prepared to face Magneto. "I can't tell if you're brave or incredibly stupid. Do you honestly think I don't noticed your metal arm, and is that an arc reactor in your chest. Not many people running with those in their chests, I can only think of one." Magneto stated as he began to levitate off the ground. "Honestly, a little of both. So are we going to fight or are we going to stay here and talk about the weather?" He said pulling out a few knives, and rushed the aging villain, who in turn sent a heavy metal object on a collision course to Samael, who pushed it away at the last moment. Soon they were in the throes of battle, with each of them getting in some good hits but nothing serious yet. Then Magneto tired of toying around and bent Samael's prosthetic arm. Samael couldn't help but let a scream of agony as magneto tried to wrench the arm, which was connect to major nerve endings, from his body. Samael heard a feminine voice cry out in Russian, and he knew the avengers were watching, but he couldn't pull his arm free of the madman, so he pretended to pass out from the pain of the arm. Magneto took advantage of his prone position, and started his rant. "How many of you are eager to see the man behind the mask. Yes I know who Samael truly is, but I bet that many of you do not, so why don't I enlighten you?" Magneto stated as he pulled Samael closer to him, and lifted off the mask that he constantly wore. "You see Samael is truly Tony Stark. And it's common knowledge that Tony Stark has a piece of technology in his chest that keeps him alive. So I'll make you a deal. Return my fighters and I'll give you your precious teammate back. Or don't, and I'll remove the arc reactor from his chest." Magneto said, finishing his demandes. "Guys don't do it, I'm not worth it." Samael muttered through waves of pain. He knew that he didn't have much time left before he became completely useless due to the extreme pain going through his body, so he pulled free a knife that he had hidden on his body and threw it at magnetos chest. "So be it then." Magneto stated, oblivious to the knife headed his way, and pulled out the reactor that came out with a sickening pop, and dropped Samael, who lost consciousness before he even hit the ground with a harsh thud.

Steve's POV

They stumbled into the field where the tracker had led them. The first thing Steve saw was the man he assumed was Magnetog o drag Samael up by an unknown force, until they were both levitating 100 ft off the ground. A gut-wrenching scream pierced the air and he saw Samael's left arm twist in an ungodly shape as though it was trying to free itself from Samael. He heard Natasha scream out angry swear words in Russian. He saw a look of fury cross the faces of the X-Men and Avengers alike, as Samael had been like a brother to all who were witnessing his hideous torture. Samael screamed for what seemed like forever before he finally fell limp, having most likely passed out from the pain of his arm that was now dangling loosely from his body.
"How many of you are eager to see the man behind the mask." He heard Magneto ask. Yes Steve wanted to know the identity of the man he had grown to care about, but not in this way.
"Yes I know who Samael truly is, but I bet that many of you do not, so why don't I enlighten you?" Magneto stated as he pulled Samael closer to him, and lifted off the mask that he constantly wore. Steve couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the pain wrecked face that lay behind the mask.
"You see Samael is truly Tony Stark. And it's common knowledge that Tony Stark has a piece of technology in his chest that keeps him alive. So I'll make you a deal. Return my fighters and I'll give you your precious teammate back. Or don't, and I'll remove the arc reactor from his chest." Magneto said. Steve couldn't believe what the crazed man wanted to do the brilliant and bold hero. He had to stop it, and he was about to issue Hawkeye to shoot Magneto down when they heard a pain filled voice break the silence.
"Guys don't do it, I'm not worth it." They heard Samael mutter. Steve didn't know what to do anymore, how could he let the young man before him sacrifice himself like that, but before he could even escape from his stupor, he heard the madman mutter "So be it then." Then a sickening sound filled the air, the sound of the reactor being released, and then Samael hit the ground with a harsh thud, and Magneto followed shortly after, with a plastic knife sticking out of his gut.
The group ran toward in a crazed stupor with Cyclops issuing orders for Rouge and Clint to bring the jets. Then they finally surveyed the damage. Samael, no Tony, was lying in a broken heap, breathing faint raspy breaths.
"We need to get him an Arc Reactor, ASAP. Or he's not going to survive much longer." Jean said, then she gently examined Tony's arm, which was barely connected to his body, she could barely touch it as even the lightest touch caused Tony to moan in agony. "No one touch the arm, I have no idea what damages have been done to the stump. We need to get him to medical attention as fast as we can, I have no idea what a fall like that could've done to him." She announced gravely as she place a hand gently on his forehead.
"Magneto's fine, good thing Tony knows how to aim, he hit none of the vital organs and the wounds clean. Magneto's fall was a lot less harsh than Tony's, so I don't even think he has a broken bone." He heard a recently dehulked Banner's voice tell everyone.
"Great, so we can throw him in jail faster." Wolverines gruff voice muttered.
"We all did, well except for you, Banner and Thor." Natasha stated.
"Why didn't he tell us?" Steve asked, worried that he did something wrong.
"Because he didn't trust you, well at first, then he couldn't find the right time to reveal his secret." Natasha explained.
" I kinda thought that Tony and Samael were one and the same, they both were super smart, plus the Other Guy was really attached to both." Banner stated.
"And you Thor? Why are you so accepting of our teammate who lied to us for the past year." "Both Tony and Samael are worthy shield brothers that I am proud to fight with. Now that they are one and the same, I find him an even worthier friend, as he is now both sides of the coin that he truly is." Thor announced proudly. Steve didn't know how to react to this information. On one hand he loved the sacrificial kid to pieces but on the other he was still disappointed in Tony for not telling the truth. It was a good thing he didn't have to ponder this for long as the two jets landed, and Clint came running out with the spare arc reactor and a stretcher.
"How is he?" Clint asked after they replaced the reactor, Tony's complexion and breathing improved dramatically.
"He's got a lot of broken bones. But he's survived worse, he's strong." Natasha said, then Clint and Steve gently lifted Tony's prone body onto the stretcher, and both teams got on their respective jets, with Jean calling after them, "Call us when you know more!".
"Let's get out of here." Clint said, as they made their way to the helicarrier. He knew that none of them would receive any sleep that night.
"How is he?" Steve asked as Natasha came out of the room.
"Not good, he broke a few ribs, his left arm is a mess, they might have to remove more of his arm to account for the damage done by the forcible removal of the prosthetic, he has a severe concussion, paired with a fractured skull, his left shoulder is dislocated and his left leg is broken in multiple spots from the fall. He also has extensive bruising on the left side of his body. " She said gravelly.
"Is he going to be alright?" He asked. " Doesn't he have a healing ability?"
"He does, but he has to be fully conscious for that to work. The doctors have him in a medically induced coma to relieve the swelling of the brain from the concussion. He be slowly brought out in a few days. And his healing still takes a while due to the broken bones, but once he's awake he should be on his feet in about a week." She stated. "I'm about to go call the X-Men, a few few of his friends, and the Dolofóni to inform them on his condition. You can go in if you want, Clint, Bruce and Thor are in there already. I'll be back in about half an hour." She said as she walked away, trying to hide the tears she had been crying. Steve walked into the room where Tony lay still on the bed, his left side practically plastered and missing an arm. He looked different lying in the hospital bed, almost like he had lost ten years of his life. Steve grabbed a seat next to Thor and sat down.
"So did Tasha tell you the news?" Clint asked.
"What news? About his injuries?" Steve asked.
"No Tony's being considered for the Council of Masters." Clint said, beaming proudly.
"What's that again?" Steve asked a bit confused.
"Well the Dolofóni are ran by a Council of 12 Masters. They are the ones who decide where to place each new assassin, who the marks are, and they liaison between the Dolofóni and the governmental organizations that use their services." Bruce answered.
"It still freaks me out that you know that much about the Dolofóni." Clint said.
"Well I fell in love with one of their assassins, Vynx, and I took it upon myself to learn everything I can about their organization. Tony's actually been trying to set me and Vynx up again." Bruce said.
"Well thats nice of him, but isn't he a little young to be considered for that role?" Steve asked.
"Yes he is about 15 years younger than the average Council Master, but word is that he's being groomed to become the Master of Masters." Bruce stated.
"What's that?"
"The Master of Masters is the leader of the entire organization."
"He's that good?" Steve wondered.
"He's better than good, he's the best assassin that the order has ever had. He's had over 600 marks, each one a success. Most Dolofóni don't even reach half of that by the time they retire." Bruce stated.
"I didn't think he was that good." Steve said, slightly shocked.
"Did you not read the files ? Tony has the best attributes of every signal one of us, and even more so in some cases. He also happens to be a fairly strong empath, has superhuman mentality, he's actually developed telepathy and Gods knows what he can do with that, and an innate ability to learn practically anything he puts his hands on, he became an expert on thermonuclear astrophysics overnight for Gods sake. He even had 3 doctorates before he turned 21 and he managed to pick up four more in the past 6 years. How could you have not noticed this?" Bruce quietly yelled.
"Um...I only skimmed the bios, it didn't feel right to go snooping." Steve admitted.
"I have to agree with Bruce. Anthony has done more in the past decade and a half than any of the shield mates I fight amongst in Asgard. If brother Anthony was an Asgardian his songs of bravery and battle would be spread far and wide. I am honored to call Anthony my shield brother." Thor explained.
Then a young black man in a military uniform ran into the room.
"Oh Tony what have you done to yourself now?" The man asked, before he noticed the room full of people. His face paled and he stepped back a little." So sorry, I'll just leave now. I'll come back at a different time." He said as he turned to leave.
"Rhodey? Stop, you have every right to be here, he's your best friend." Clint said. The other three in the room looked confused. "Guys this is Lieutenant Colonel James Rhodes, aka Rhodey. He's Tony's best friend from college and he knows mostly everything. Rhodey this is Thor and Steve Rogers." Clint explained.
"I'm in a room full of avengers?" Rhodey practically squeaked. The rest of the room just smiled dumbly at him.
"So Rhodey, when did you get back to the states?" Clint asked.
"Two days ago. Tony and I were actually planning on meeting up today for a couple of beers." He said as he sat down in the chair closest to Tony.
"I'm confused, if you are Anthony's friend, why haven't we met you yet?" Thor asked.
"I'm in the Air Force, I've been deployed for the last year and a half. Tony and I keep in touch with weekly calls."
"Oh. Well that explains the reason that we haven't met you yet." Steve said.
"So what's wrong with him now? And who did this to him?" Rhodey asked.
"Well we were engaged in a fight against the Brotherhood this morning. Tony and Magneto were duking it out, we're not exactly sure what happened before we came on the scene, but by the time we got there Magneto was holding Tony about 100 ft in the air, and trying to tear Tony's metal arm off, which he preceded in doing, then he tore off Tony's mask and revealed his identity, then tore out the reactor and dropped him." Steve said.
"Is this Magneto guy dead?" Rhodey asked.
"No, but Tony did manage to stab him in the gut before he was dropped. The X-Men currently have him in custody and it doesn't seem as though he's going to see the light of day for a while." Steve answered.
"So when is he going to wake up?" Rhodey asked not used to seeing his best friend so silent and still.
"In a few days, he's in a medically induced coma, due to the doctors wanting to relieve some of the swelling from his concussion and fractured skull." Clint said.
"Has anyone told Pepper and Fane yet?" Rhodey asked, pitying the person who had to do that task.
"Natasha's on phone duty." Bruce stated.
"So how'd you all react to the big reveal? I was pretty shocked when he told me, I actually almost shot him." Rhodey said.
"You almost shot him?" Bruce asked.
"Yeah, I thought he was an intruder, so I threatened to shoot him. He had no choice but to take off his mask and tell me why he was sneaking through our apartment at 1 am and armed with a couple dozen knives."
"How'd you take it?" Steve wondered.
"Not well at first, then I saw how completely exhausted he was, and he was injured, so I couldn't just completely turn against him. I could see that Tony gave his all into his work, just as I give my all to the service. And in the morning I saw just how much danger he was in due to his line of work." Rhodey said.
"What happened?" Thor asked, intrigued.
"He nearly died from his body wash and pain relievers being poisoned. It turned out that we were being watched and they chose that weekend to attack." Rhodey said.
"Does the kid ever get a break?" Steve asked.
"I wouldn't call him a kid to his face, he is 27. But yeah, he's been through enough to kill the average man many times over." Rhodey said, a bit defensive at first. Steve just looked a bit like a kicked puppy, at the realization of how much Tony, the arrogant young billionaire, had gone thru. Then Natasha and a very worried Pepper Potts came in.
"Oh, Tony, you had to go and get injured again." Pepper said as she sat next to Rhodey, taking the only available spot in the room.

"Wait you knew too?" Steve asked, as Pepper didn't even seem to be phased by the sign of her boss lying in the hospital bed with curious injuries.

"Yes I knew, I've been his PA for the past six years, plus I kinda walked in on him trying to stitch himself up in the bathroom." Pepper stated.

"Does all of Anthony's revelations begin with him being injured?" Thor asked curiously.

"When you think about it, yes they do." Clint said after he gave Natasha a knowing glance.

"How did you two find out?" Bruce asked the two assassins who knew Tony the longest.

"Well he and his mentor, Fane, were involved in a car bomb after a meeting with us. His father was behind the hit and he was taken into MI6s custody. He received heavy chest damage, a few burns and lost most of his hearing that day. We got him back with help from the X-Men, when we found out what they planned on doing to him. We also found out his identity in the process as he was without a mask." Natasha said, giving the short version of the story.

"Let me guess that's where he got the arc reactor from." Bruce asked with a knowing tone in his voice.

"Well, yes and no. He received a battery in his chest that day. He made the arc reactor when he made the suit, about 8 years later." Clint explained.

"How young was Anthony when he received such a grievous wound?" Thor asked.

"He was 14 and a half, he had just been made a Hawk a week before the incident." Natasha said, to the shock of almost everyone in the room.

"Why would Howard do such a thing to his son?" Steve asked.

"Steve, you have to understand Howard Stark was not the same man you knew 70 years ago. He was a crazy old man, completely corrupted by his need for power. He landed Tony in the hospital at least a dozen times, before Tony ran away at 13, mostly because he wasn't you. Then when he found out how powerful Tony truly was, he wanted to use Tony as his own personal weapon. He nearly killed Tony half a dozen times, that we know of, before blowing himself, Tony's mother, and his butler up. Tony barely managed to escape with his life." Natasha explained, to the shocked faces on nearly everyone's face, as not even Pepper or Rhodey had heard that part of Tony's story before.

"So onto happier news, Pepper and Rhodey have you heard that Tony might be getting made a council member?" Clint asked desperately trying to change the subject.
He could hear the soft murmuring of people around him. He opened his eyes to see a room full of avengers.
"W-what happened?" He asked voice raspy from disuse.
"Brother Anthony, You're awake!" Thor softly bellowed.
"Do you want some water?" Bruce asked. Tony nodded his head, wincing at the massive headache he had. He accepted it and drank the water eagerly.
"So what exactly happened?" He asked, his voice much clearer now.
"Well Magneto dropped you from a height of about 100 feet. You landed pretty harshly on your left side, so you broke your left knee, ankle and tibia. You also managed to break four ribs and dislocate your shoulder. You hit your head pretty hard, and fractured your skull." Bruce said.
"How long was I out for?" Tony asked noting the worried looks on their faces.
"4 days." Steve answered.
"4 days?" Tony asked panicked
"Well you had a pretty bad concussion and you were put in a medically induced coma to relieve the brain swelling." Bruce said.
"What aren't you telling me?" Tony asked, knowing that his injuries weren't severe enough to warrant the worry on his teammates faces.
"They had to remove more of your arm. The damage caused by Magneto messed up the stump and the loose nerves." Bruce stated.
"I guess I'll just have to go to design a new one." Tony stated.
"How long is that going to take you?" Steve asked.
"Well the other one took me two weeks..." Tony stated.
"Two weeks?" Bruce asked shocked.
"Yeah I know it seems like a long time, but I also made the iron man suit and miniaturized the reactor at the same time. So the new arm will take me a few days, maybe a week at most." Tony said unfazed while everyone looked at him in awe, except for Natasha and Clint who were there to witness it.
"You're telling me you revolutionized prosthetics, made a fully functional flying suit of armor, and miniaturized a piece of equipment that could wipe out the island of Manhattan in 2 weeks with one hand?" Bruce asked completely amazed.
"Yeah, I was really bored." Tony stated sheepishly.
"You were bored? Why haven't you won the Nobel prize yet?" Bruce wondered.
"I came close when I made the arm, but a team of scientists who discovered that HPV led to cervical cancer won." Tony said. "So what aren't you telling me. I'm an empath I know you're hiding something." Tony added in a stern voice.
"Magneto somehow let loose your secret." Natasha said.
"Which one?" Tony asked knowing that this could be bad.
"He let the public know that you have a x-gene mutation. He didn't say what powers you had, but everyone knows that you're a mutant." Clint said.
"How bad is the damage?" Tony asked afraid to hear how much of a hit his company took.
"The stocks dropped 60 points. The nation is in uproar over the revelation. But the mutant community is fully supporting you." Pepper stated.
"Oh, well at least they don't know I'm a highly trained assassin. I could only imagine their reaction when they find that little bit of information out." Tony said, with a smile.
"I could just see the headlines; Tony Stark:Billionaire, Genius, Mutant, Assassin?" Clint said laughing, which turned out to contagious as the room was soon filled with laughter.
"So what do you think my plan of action should be, Pepper?" Tony asked sobering the mood.
"You should hold a press conference and come out. I think it'll improve your public opinion."
Pepper stated.  
"OK, so now that you all know that I'm a mutant, can we get on with the healing part?" Tony asked.

"What exactly does that imply?" Steve asked, suddenly unsure.

"Well you all need to hold hands kumbaya style. Don't worry it doesn't hurt, well at least I don't think it hurts. The only side effect is a loss of energy, so you might want to get into comfy positions." Tony warned with a grin.

"Why?" Steve asked.

"Because you're going to go to sleep. Don't worry with this many people and Thor's energy it should only last for an hour or so." Tony said before clasping Thor's and Rhodey's hands. The rest of the team followed suit. " Now just relax." Tony said before he fell into a trance-like state. The energy of the occupants drained and one by one they all fell asleep.

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"I'm reporting from the latest press conference hosted by the CEO of Stark Industries, Tony Stark. He will be addressing the rumors, that were brought into public eye earlier this week, about the young billionaire possibly being a mutant. And here comes Tony Stark." The reporter states as Tony Stark walks onstage with two body guards.

"I come before you to talk about the rumors that came to light a few days ago. The answer is yes, I am a mutant." The crowd goes wild with jeers and questions. " I will be accepting questions after I give my explanation on to why I haven't come out as a mutant before hand. The reason is because I didn't know I was a mutant until a few years ago, when a random genetic test found I had a X-Gene mutation. The most likely reason as to why I didn't find out until I was already an adult, is that my late father tampered with and hide the results of the few tests I had done during my childhood, for reasons only he knows. My father was a mad man in his last few years on this planet, so his reasons could've ranged from not wanting my abilities to be in the public eye to wanting my talents all to himself, as he did arrange for me to be kept as a hostage for 4 years just for him to use my intelligence for his own progress. My main reason for not coming out to you earlier is because I wished to receive some training from a personal friend, in order for me to keep my powers in check. Let me just reinforce the fact that Stark Industries is a leading front in the rally for Mutant rights, and we employ a large number of mutants in our R&D department and many others. Just because I am now a known mutant does not mean that I am a different person from who I was before this all came to light. I still plan on seeing that the wrongs my father and godfather made are corrected, and that we all deserve the peace and security that my company provides, no matter the skin color, or if one happens to be a mutant or not, and I hope that your ideas and thoughts about me have not been changed because I'm a little more different now. Now I have time for 6 questions, that I will truthfully answer to the best of my ability." He said and a number of hands shot up in the air. " Yes, you in the green shirt."

"Mr. Stark, would you mind telling us what abilities you have?" She asked.

" I am an empath, meaning I can sense and control, to an extent, feelings. I also have slightly enhanced sight, strength and speed. I also happen to have a superhuman mentality, which explains how I am years ahead of my competition and allows me to have minor telepathic abilities."

"When you say control feelings, do you mean you can control a person to make decisions against their will?" She asked.

" No. Its more like if there was a severely angry person, I could try to make them calmer by pushing calm feelings and images at that person, to prevent unnecessary harm or an possibly attack. I do not force people into making decisions that they don't want." He explained.
"OK, thank you for clearing that up."

"You're welcome, Next! Woman in the red shirt second row."

"Mr. Stark? What are your views on the MRA?"

"I thought that that would be coming up. I've always been a strong opposer of the Mutant Registration Act, even before I knew I was a mutant. I believe the MRA is a huge violation of basic human rights and should be shut down immediately. Why should we enforce those who have a minor mutation caused by nature to be segregated from the rest of so called normal humans? If the MRA were to pass, those that enforce it would be, in my eyes and many of my fellow mutants eyes, just like those in Nazi Germany, who imposed segregation upon Jews, Gypsy's, Homosexuals and the disabled. I believe that we can coexist together and that us mutants can use our mutations for the betterment of society. "A round of applause broke thru, while some reporters, mainly those with Fox, wore scowls on their faces. "OK next! Man with Blue shirt black hair."

"Mr. Stark, will you be using your mutant powers while fighting as Iron Man?"

"If the situation calls for it I will. We have often faced enemies that were essentially throwing temper tantrums, that my abilities could've helped solve, if I knew that they had existed of course. OK next! Woman from NBC 22."

" Mr. Stark, do you have any affiliations with Charles Xavier and his school of gifted children?"

"Yes, Mr. Xavier is a very close friend, and he's helped me out over the last few years. I even have a close partnership with him where I provide some of his students who are technologically advanced or have technology related abilities, with internships with my R&D department. Its like I said mutants and " normal" humans should coexist, as together we can create a future we wish to live in. Now I have time for one more question."

"Mr. Stark? What would you say to those who say that all mutants are dangerous and need to be under careful supervision?"

" First, I would say get to know some mutants or spend a day at Charles Xavier's school. Secondly, I would say that most mutants are good and behave like proper citizens, just like most non mutated humans are average law abiding citizens. There are some bad mutants out there, just as there are serial killers and murderers , but you don't see us believing that every person is a serial killer, do you? Well we shouldn't do it to mutants either. Now my time is up, so everyone thank you for coming, and I hope I changed your mind on mutants today." Tony said as he walked away from the roar of applause.

"And there we have it. Tony Stark has just confirmed that his mutant abilities are true. What this means in the long run for mutant activists, we'll just have to find out. This is Felicity Smith with CNN news signing off."

"I can't believe you just turned a press conference about the rumors into an advocacy for the mutant cause!" Bruce exclaimed as he stepped off the stage.

"I literally thought you were about to be fed to the lions Tony, yet you managed to turn the whole horde of ravenous reporters into housecats ready to eat out of your hands, in like 10 minutes. You've got to teach me that!" Clint said.

"Told you he'd make it as an actor in another life!" Natasha exclaimed.
"Anthony, you wield the smoothest tongue of anyone I've met in all of my years, even better than Loki, well when he was good." Thor bellowed.

"You did good, Tony." Steve said.

"Now that that's over with, why don't we get a bite to eat? I kinda invited the X-Men already." Tony said sheepishly.

"Are you sure that's a wise idea? Last time we met up with the X-Men after a press-conference, we ended up getting wasted and we all ended up in compromising positions." Natasha said.

"That was 10 years ago, Tasha. I've grown up since then." Tony said with a mischievous smile.

"Wasn't it last week when you and Clint had an all out prank war?" Natasha asked, as both Clint and Tony looked like kicked puppies.

"Now I wanna know what happened 10 years ago." Bruce said eagerly.

"Long story short, Tony can't get drunk, and Logan and Scott have some unresolved intimacy issues." Natasha explained.

"Not to mention Natasha and Storm will do anything for an Advil after a night of partying." Clint added and was subsequently punched in the shoulder by Natasha.

"Anthony, you can't get drunk? Obviously you haven't tried Asgardian Mead yet!" Thor bellowed.

"Don't worry Tony, I can't get drunk either, it has something to do with my metabolism being about 3x the average humans." Steve said.

"I know, same problem with me." Tony echoed.

"Does anyone else see a challenge arising here? I believe Operation: Get Tony and Steve Wasted is a go." Clint said grinning.

"I agree with brother Clinton! Tis a shame to see two youthful men to go without the pleasure of drunkenness." Thor announced.

"Why do I have a bad feeling about this?" Natasha pondered.

"But first let's meet up with the X-Men first. I just got a message from Charles stating that they're at the pizza place already." Tony stated.

"Message? But you haven't even checked your phone... Oh." Bruce stated as Tony pointed towards his head.

"And I want to take off this stupid plastic prosthetic too." Tony stated as they got in the car, well SUV. Then he rolled up his sleeve and detached the plastic arm, that was given to him just to make it look as though he had the arm still. "Thats much better." He stated as he gently massaged the stump.

"Are you sure we should be seen eating with the X-Men?" Steve wondered.

"Yeah its perfectly fine. The couple who run the place are a retired Dolofóni couple, who know that I'm Samael. They keep things hush hush and the paparazzi are kept far away." Tony said.

"There are pizza places runned by ex-assassins?" Steve asked.

"Yeah, along with inns, stores and even car dealerships. If we're in trouble we can go to any of the establishments and seek asylum. The ex-dolofóni will protect active members even to the sake of sacrificing themselves."

"Your order is made up of mighty fine warriors, young Anthony." Thor stated.

"I don't realize how extensive your order is." Bruce stated.

"Its a bit overwhelming to outsiders." Tony stated.

"How do you know who the ex Dolofóni are?" Steve asked.

"Well for one we have our markings, which is in most cases a brand of your clan in the center of your chest and two sets of identical scars on the shoulders that display rankage. Since mine are not viable anymore due to extensive scarring caused by my godfather and the reactor. I have a amulet and a set of tattoos that I can't tell you the location of, and a series of leather bracelets." Tony said pulling out the amulet, that was in the shape of a bear claw, and rolling up his sleeve to reveal the bracelets.

"Why can't you show us the tattoos?" Bruce asked.

"Well because anyone would be able to get that set of tattoos and claim their Dolofóni. The scars are a lot harder to replicate." Tony said.
"How do you tell if an establishment is run by the Dolofóni or not?" Steve asked.
"They have the clan markings in specific locations and in different colorings, very subtle designs. It takes a trained eye to see them, but Clint of course being Hawkeye spotted them right away the first time we went to a restaurant." Tony explained, "and now we're here." Tony said as he he the car stopped. Tony got out of the car and the rest of the avengers followed suit.
"Hannah! Stephan! How's the grandkids?" Tony said as he greeted the older couple who greeted them at the door.
"Good, Elisabetta has been thinking of joining the order. We heard the news about you being placed on the council." The woman, Hannah stated with a warm smile.
"Yes, I go back early next week. Things are definitely going to change." Tony said.
"Especially with the whole mutant business, I don't see why they can't leave you alone. Can't they see that you've been through enough?" Stephan stated.
"I know, I just hope that my being am out and open mutant will allow others to see that we're not dangerous." Tony stated. "So where are the X-Men sitting?" He asked.
"The usual back room, we already ordered your usual and we tripled it for the amount of people." Stephan stated.
"You might want to add another round, Thor and Steve here can eat as much as I can." Tony said with a laugh.
"Will do." The kind man said. Then they went to the back room where they could already hear the X-Men.
"Are all of you so friendly?" Steve asked once the owners were out of hearing range.
"Of course we are. But when its time to do business we sober up pretty quickly." Tony said. "Plus I've known those guys from the den, they retired shortly after I became a hawk. Stephan taught me how to ride a horse, and fight at the same time."
"Brother Anthony, I would like to see such skills. I have not seen such fighting for a long while." Thor said.
"Good, next team building exercise we're going to pay a visit to one of my stables." Tony said.
"You own stables?" Steve asked.
"Yes, I own some of the best stables around. I often let Xavier's kids take field trips to the one I have in upstate NY, but I also own a stable in California and in Tennessee. I often let organizations that help kids who grew up with abuse and other organizations that help with mutant children use them." Tony said. The group looked at him in shock. "What? I like horses. I must admit, some of those weekend business trips I go on, are complete frauds. In reality I just spend a much needed weekend with the sole purpose of disappearing on a trail with nothing but a horse and a bag of supplies." Tony said with a warm look in his eye.
"I had no idea you liked the outdoors Tony." Bruce said.
"I love the outdoors." Tony said. "Have you guys ever been mountain climbing?" Tony asked. He got mostly blank looks. "Well next weekend, while I'm in Colorado we're going on a hiking trip, and maybe we can scale some of the smaller peaks. It will probably be good training for in case we get a mission in a mountain range. You guys are pretty fit, but i'll bet my fortune that none of you have received high altitude training." Tony said, again to the negative looks on their faces. Then he was nearly tackled to the floor, this time by Jean.
"Oh, Tony! You had us all so worried. I can't believe Magneto had someone leak your abilities! " Jean said in one long stream of words.
"I'm okay Jean, I'm just short an arm for a bit. The only other thing is a residue headache and a bit of soreness in my leg and shoulder." Tony said knowing that nothing could get by her, due to her also being a telepath. She just had a sad look on her face. "At least I don't have to hide my visits with you guys anymore, or the fact that I am a mutant." Tony said trying to bring the best out of the bad situation. Then they all walked into the room and got seated around the large table that had been put together. It was weird seeing the two teams in civilian clothes sitting around the table, almost like a big family.
"So how does it feel to be out?" Ororo asked.
"Actually it feels kinda good, like I got a huge weight that's been lifted off my shoulders. I know that the company will take a hit, but once I introduce the new Stark phone I've been working on the stock should jump back up." Tony said unabashedly. Then the food came and they dug in for a night of getting to know each team better and good food.

...Several hours and 5 cases of liquor later...
"I can't believe neither of them are drunk yet." Clint said bored.
"How are they both still functioning?" Bruce asked, seeing as Steve was sketching something really complicated and Tony was solving some complex math equation.
"I have never seen anything like this in all my years of existence!" Thor exclaimed.
"Told you we wouldn't get them drunk." Natasha said.
"I have an idea!" Clint suddenly exclaimed.
"This can't be good." Natasha muttered.
"Why don't we have Tony and Bruce create some 100 proof moonshine?" Clint asked.
"They just drank 4 bottles of 80 proof vodka. I don't think the moonshine would make any difference." Natasha said mourning the loss of the expensive vodka.
"Well that's the last of the liquor. Neither of them seem drunk, so the previous ruling that Steve and Tony can't get drunk stands." Bruce stated. The team looked at the two unnaturally undrunk superheros and noted their pale complexions and sheen of sweat on their faces.
"I thought you said you guys weren't drunk." Natasha chided the two queasy superhumans.
"I don't think they're drunk, I think they're feeling the aftereffects of drinking a lot of heavy liquor." Bruce stated. "How are you guys feeling?"
"Like I just did the milk gallon challenge with alcohol." Tony said with a slight groan.
"I'm confused what is this milk gallon challenge?" Thor asked.
"It's where you chug a gallon of milk and you try to not vomit. It fails most of the time." Clint asked with a pitying glance.
"What is the point behind this challenge?" Thor asked.
"There is no point really, it's kinda for fun." Clint said.
"You Midgardians have a weird sense of fun." Thor said.
"We should probably get these two to a bucket or toilet." Bruce said, seeing how green his teammates were getting.
"I'll get some wash clothes." Natasha said.
"Let's make an agreement not to do this again." Steve mumbled.
"Oh, you boys are going to have a fun night. I do not envy you." Clint said shaking his head.
"This is all your fault birdbrain." Tony muttered as he stumbled into the bathroom.
"This is going to be a long night." Natasha mumbled as the first sounds of vomiting came out of the bathroom.
"Is the target in sight?" Widow asked over the airways.
"Yeah I see him now," Tony replied.
"Do you think you can take the shot?" She asked.
"He's moving at a decent speed, but I think I got him," Tony whispered then went silent. A few minutes later she heard the distinct snapping sound of Tonys bow. "Target is down," Tony confirmed. He could hear cheering on the other end of the line.
"Congratulations, Samael! You're now an official member of the Council of Dolofóni. Well semi official. Now let's go get that elk of yours. Did you see that rack?" Fane said happily as they climbed down from the tree stand.
"I can't believe they made me a member!" Tony said gushing.
"Well you haven't gotten your golden eagle yet. They'll officially indite you during tonight's ceremony, but the hunt was excellent. I don't even think I got an elk that big for my indictment. Its a good sign. Ready to head back to the den?" Fane asked after they tied down the huge beast on one of the four-by-four and went up to the den.
"I'm kinda nervous about being a council member, though. What if I'm not ready?" Tony asked suddenly filled with unease.
"Don't worry I was nervous too. You'll do fine, you might even bring the Dolofóni up to the 21st century, and maybe get rid of our capes." Fane said with a smile as they rode up the mountain.
"This is our last hunt together as mentor and apprentice. Tonight we will finally be equals on the council, so after the ceremony, I have something in my room that I wish to give to you, as it is customary for new council members to be bestowed with gifts from their mentors and fellow council members." Fane said with a knowing smile.
"Thank you Fane. I literally have no idea where I would be without you. You introduced me to shield and subsequently the Avengers. You also openly accepted my mutant powers without any resignation. Fane you are the father I was meant to have in the first place." Tony said as they reached the den and he threw his arms around Fane in a giant hug, which was a rarity for him as Tony had never truly gotten over being openly affectionate. The other Dolofóni members and Natasha, looked on at the pair with soft smiles, for it wasn't unusual to see mentor and apprentice to get emotional on their last hunt together as a team. "Now how about we start the celebrations for you becoming the youngest Council Member ever?" Fane asked as they pulled apart and went into the den where the celebrations were about to start.
"I'm so proud of you, котенок!" Natasha said as she ran up to them. "Nervous?" She asked seeing his face.
"A little. What if I mess up?" Tony asked.
"You went in front of a crowd of hungry journalists to proclaim you're a mutant, somehow turned most of them on your side and you're nervous over a little ceremony?" Natasha asked with an air of disbelief, and cuffed Tony on the ear. Tony just returned his huge puppy dogs eyes, and Natasha couldn't resist the urge to hug the man she thought of as a brother. "Tony you'll be fine, they're not giving you this position for nothing. There's no other Dolofóni better suited for the job than you." She said.
"You know, I'm going to be away a lot more on council business. I'm also going to be a public figure head for the Dolofóni, what if the media finds out that all of those 'business trips' I've been taking are really cover for my secret life as an assassin? You saw how well they reacted towards learning I'm a mutant. And what if I screw up a big military deal?" Tony rambled in his usual way when he was nervous.
"Tony, have I ever told you that you ramble? Its going to be fine." Natasha said as she smoothed one of his wild curls in a motherly fashion. "Now go in there and kick some Dolofóni ass." She said making Tony laugh. Fane on the other hand nervously chuckled.
"You know, funny you should say that..." Fane said off to the side.
"What aren't you telling me?" Tony asked inquisitively.
"Well, when an assassin is promoted to Council status they usually have an exhibition fight with
one or two of the standing council members, you know to prove their skill." Fane said sheepishly.
"One or two? That's child's play." Tony said with a grin.
"They actually made a special allotment for you." Fane said talking around the bush.
"How many?" Tony asked, trying to draw out an answer.
"All of them." Fane blurted. "At the same time."
"This should be good." Natasha said eyes glinting with anticipation. "I can record this right?" She
asked.
"Well you are a spy, so I can't really stop you, just don't let it leak to the public. Along with our
identity's, we have a few famous people like Tony here, so whoever you think you saw, you didn't
see." Fane said coyly. "Now let's get you ready." Fane said dragging Tony away.
"What am I supposed to do?" Natasha wondered.
"Tell the kids some story's about some of your guys missions that went wrong. We have a lot of
Avengers fans here." Fane said with a laugh.
"How much detail can I tell them?" Natasha asked with a coy smile.
"They're being trained to be assassins, what do you think?" Fane said with a huge grin, "Just leave
explicit details for the hawks." He added before he and Tony disappeared.

..."Uh Fane, what is this?" Tony said as they came into a room with Tony's weapons a simple black
mask and uniform pants were set out, along with a few bowls of paint.
"This is the stuff you'll be wearing for the ceremony." Fane said cryptically.
"I mean what's with the paint?" Tony asked about to dip a finger in the gold stuff before Fane
stopped his hand.
"Don't touch it! You're going to be painted. If you touch the paint before hand, you'll ruin the
ceremony." Fane said as he glanced around the room for something.
"Am I seriously going to be covered in paint?" Tony asked eying the paint cautiously.
"Yes. You're going to be painted gold, the red is to highlight your scars and the black is for a set of
ceremonial tattoos. So get the pants so I can call in the others for they to get started." Fane said as
he turned around to give Tony a bit of privacy.
"Others?" Tony asked, as he slipped on the pants.
"Yes, but don't worry everyone else will be painted too. I know its a bit theatrical, but its been done
for centuries, it dates back to the original order back in ancient Greece." Fane said, as he turned
around and held a wooden case in his hands.
"Fane? What is that?" Tony asked as he spotted the case.
"Tony, you have become an amazing assassin. Your skills and precision cannot even compare to
the other assassins, both your age and older. I'm proud to have been able to shape you into the man
you are today." Fane said as he set the case on the bed and revealed the carefully selected gifts
inside. "I know that the set of knives that you use holds a special meaning for you, but when I saw
these I knew they were made just for you." Fane said as he gestured towards the gorgeous set of
knives that Tony couldn't take his eyes off of. Tony then tackled Fane with a giant bone crushing
hug. "I take it you like them?"
"Where did you find them?" Tony asked picking up a scarlet and gold knife and caressed it.
"Well it took me forever to find a set that large in that color, so I commissioned Pyre, the
blacksmith, to make a special set of knives just for you. Their actually made to fit your hands
perfectly." Fane said, as he and Tony examined the blades, which were stunningly deadly.
"This must of cost you a fortune to commission." Tony said as he examined the intricately
designed handles.
"Yes, but you're worth it. It's customary for an assassins Mentor to present them with gold, before
they become a council member. I figured that you might enjoy gold detailed weapons instead of
gold jewelry." Fane said.
"Who painted them? I know Pyre is an artist at weapon forgery, but he is no painter." Tony asked as he looked at the majestic gold feathers painted on each of the blades.
"I asked Steve to do it." Fane said with a soft smile.
"Steve? As in Captain America? The guy who thinks I'm a no good spoiled brat?" Tony asked shocked.
"Well he felt really guilty after your fight with Magneto."
"Why would he feel guilty?" Tony asked interrupting Fane.
"Well he finally realized how much you actually do for the avengers, shield, the mutants and us, not to mention the fact that you're a CEO of a multi billion dollar company and one of its sole inventors. He never realized how hard of a hand life had dealt you until you were lying in that hospital bed. He felt guilty for the way he treated you. You should have seen him he looked like a kicked puppy. So I couldn't handle it anymore so I asked him to paint the knives, and he jumped on the task as if it was a mission to save the world." Fane explained.
"Oh, well they're beautiful. I'm going to have to find a way to thank him. Maybe I'll get him that charcoal set he's had his eye on forever." Tony said thinking about the high class set that Steve had set his heart on.
"Tony, has anyone ever told you that you care too much?" Fane asked laughingly. 
"Are you ready to get painted?" Fane asked.
"I guess I'm as ready as I'm going to be." Tony said as Fane called in the two others who would help with the details and got to work.

"Today, we are gathered to ease a young eagle through his final transformation." An eerie voice called out in the dark. A candle appeared in the center of the room.
"He has been chosen by the council to become part of the council." Another voice said, as another candle was lit.
"He has proven himself time and time again, and tonight he will prove himself one final time before your eyes." A third voice called out, and another candle appeared.
"He has slain over 600 monsters, more than any his age." A fourth voice was heard and another candle joined to make a cross in the center.
"He has saved millions of innocents thru his heroic actions." A fifth voice and candle joined.
"He has taken all that was taught, and has excelled in each art." A sixth voice cried as another candle appeared.
"He has suffered greatly, yet he is stronger due to his trials." A seventh voice and candle appeared.
"He has proved himself worthy of our great cause." An eight voice rang as another candle joined.
"He has become one of the best assassins in our long history." A ninth candle joined.
"He has managed to best his masters." A tenth candle came to life.
"He is our future." An eleventh voice sang.
"It is time for the ascension of my fledgling. I bring you Samael, the Angel of Death!" A final voice bellowed as his candle completed the circle and the lights were turned on, albeit dim.
Tony, her brother, was standing in a circle of kneeling cloaked figures, with his body painted gold red and black, looking like a menacing god of olde.
"I accept your challenge, and I am ready for my ascension!" Tony bellowed as he drew his Tanaka blades, which were scarlet and gold, blending with Tony. Then the figures stood and threw off their cloaks revealing ten council members who were painted black and white, a gold women, who Natasha guessed was the Master of Masters, and a scarlet painted man, who Natasha knew was Fane. Fane and the Master of Masters left the circle and the ten other assassins rounded Tony, each withdrawing a weapon of their choice.
Tony started the fight. Natasha knew that it was fake, with people going down for kill strikes, but it was as intense as any fight she had ever seen. Soon Tony was surrounded by masters playing dead and when he took down the last one he stood there panting, having just 'killed' ten highly skilled
master assassins. Then Fane and the Master of Masters started circling Tony and Tony got in a fighting stance again.

Fane initiated this round and soon all three were in the throes of battle. Natasha could hardly make out who was who as all three were essentially a flash of gold and scarlet. But soon Fane was given a kill strike, and the Master of Masters and Tony were engaged in a duel of death. Natasha couldn't believe how fast and gracefully the two were fighting. It looked as though they were engaged in a deadly tango as each twisted and turned out of potentially deadly moves. The fight seemed to last for ages as each and every member of the audience were memorized by the swift movements. But soon Tony had the Master of Masters in a chokehold of sorts as both of his blades criss crossed in front of her neck and she fell to her knees before him. Tony glanced around as though withdrawing from a trance to see all 12 masters kneel before him. Then one by one the defeated masters surrounded him and he knelt down, only to be revealed moments later kneeling with a gold eagle mask on and a gold cloak adorned with Scarlet feathers.

"I present to you, the young hunter who has proven himself worthy, the slayer of monsters and the defeater of masters: Samael, the Angel of Death! Rise, Samael of the Council!" The Master of Masters bellowed, and Tony rose regally, as the crowd stood up and thunderously applauded.

"О, маленький брат, я так горжусь тобой!(oh little brother I am so proud of you!)" Tony heard a feminine voice call out from behind him before he was nearly tackled.

"Natasha! So how'd you enjoy the den when we were getting ready?" He asked returning the hug.

"I love it! You have got to bring me back here more often, though I must admit you have a flair for the dramatics." She said as she touched one of the intricate black designs on his arm. Tony just laughed. Then she noticed the new weapons Tony wore.

"Do you like them? Fane had them made for me for this occasion. " He said withdrawing a knife.

"They're gorgeous! They suit you so well, but why the feathers?"

"Well my calling sign is a blood dipped feather, plus I'm called the angel of death so these kinda count as my wings!" Tony said.

"So is that why your cloak is covered in scarlet feathers?" She asked as she touched one of the feathers.

"Yes. I get to personalize my uniforms a bit more now, especially since I will be a very public figure now." Tony said.

"How public?"

"Well I guess my new duties have me acting as a liaison between our order and the governmental organizations that hire us. I guess my first thing to do is to officially meet with the WSC and Director Fury, as Samael. But first I'm keeping up with my promise of taking you guys mountain climbing this weekend."

"So when do you leave the den?"

"Not for another few days, the celebrations and ceremonies have barely started yet." Tony said.

"But wasn't the fight the ceremony? " She asked, remembering the amazing fight she had witnessed.

"No that was me proving myself worthy. For the next few days there will be more ceremonies, both private and public, cementing my place as an elder. Each elder goes through different tests, so I'm not exactly sure what they'll entail, but it should be quite the celebration. One thing about the Dolofóni is that we never fail to impress." Tony stated with a grin.

"You got that right." Natasha added as Fane, still painted scarlet walked up to them.

"Tony its time for your test of endurance." Fane said as he stepped up to them.

"Endurance?" Natasha wondered.

"Yes, its a test to see how far Tony can push his body past his limits, it usually only lasts for a day, but the council has deemed it necessary for tony to do his for the next two days, due to his special abilities. Its usually a private ceremony, but the council has deemed that you are to be allowed to
join us." Fane said.
"Two days?" She asked a bit shocked at the length.
"Yes, don't worry Tasha, its just going to be a series of tasks that he has to complete. Usually the initiate fasts during that time period, but considering Tony's unique metabolism, his caloric intake will only be reduced to about 1,000 calories, as some of the tasks are physically demanding. You followed my instructions on not eating or sleeping right, Tony?" Fane asked, and Tony nodded his head. "OK then the council is ready to begin." Fane said as the three assassins made their way thru the maze-like den.

Natasha had never seen Tony so still and focused before. He had been in a headstand for the past hour, in a meditative state that he had been in for the past day, only emerging to eat some of the bread and broth he had been allotted to eat. Fane had explained to her that the initiates spent the first half of their endurance trial in a meditative state, in order to focus their minds. He also explained that they were put through complicated yoga poses to push their muscles past their limits to test how they would do after a long and tiring mission in the field. Natasha could almost feel the fatigue settling in Tony's muscles as she saw him go through pose after pose that would make even a master Guru envious. A simple bell rang, which Natasha found out signaled the position change, and Tony eased his way out of the headstand and laid flat on his back stretching his sore muscles.

"And now after he rests for a bit, he'll begin the second half of the endurance." Fane whispered as they were supposed to be extremely quiet as not to disturb Tony.

"What does that entail?" She whispered back.
"Well he's going to shoot some targets, spar with a few elders, play a game of strategy and then we have a game called the Hunt, that I'm sure you're familiar with." Fane said as Natasha remembered the game she had seen the pair play when Tony was just a babyhawk more than a decade ago.
"That sounds surprisingly simple." Natasha remarked.
"Its not, imagine your hardest training session, multiply its intensity by ten and prolong it by about 20 hours. Its not fun but we need to see how far and how long he can push himself, because as a council member you have to be the cream of the crop, and we can't have ourselves becoming lazy." Natasha remarked.
"That sounds a bit intense." Natasha remarked.
"Don't worry after this is all done he'll be allowed to get some sleep and then we feast, before the final ceremony." Fane said. "And I think it's about to get started." Fane said with a grin as an elder went to help Tony up from his position on the ground.
"He can barely move!" Natasha whispered urgently.
"Its just lactic acid build up, it'll wear off in a bit. They're going to have him shoot targets first, as a bit of a cool down." Fane said as he and Natasha left their seats to follow them into the range, they couldn't have direct contact with Tony as he needed to focus everything he had on the tasks before him, but they were allowed to watch.

Natasha watched in shock as Tony perform as accurately as he did in the field, perhaps even better, the day of meditation must have actually worked.

Finally, after two days of seemingly endless tasks, the council was finished with his exhaustive testing, there was not a single person present who wasn't practically asleep on their feet, she was actually surprised Tony was still standing after all he had been put through.
"Samael, you have performed well beyond our expectations, which were high to begin with. You have earned your place among us. Now you can relax and rest, as I'm sure you are beyond exhausted. Tonight there will be a great feast, of which you can invite the rest of your teammates if you choose, because I'm sure they are curious about us and they have proven their trust. You'll receive your first assignment as an elder, after the feast. Now go rest." The Master of Masters said with a smile and practically shooed him off. Then Tony tiredly got to his feet and walked over to where Fane and Natasha were standing.

"That was amazing Antonshoka! Why don't you fight like that on missions?" Natasha asked in a
jokingly manner. Tony acknowledged her with a weary smile. "Because its exhausting, Tasha." He replied with a big yawn. "Well then its a good thing there's a warm bed and a hot bath waiting for you in your room." Fane said, then Tony's stomach gave a large growl. " and a warm meal too." He adds and they all break into laughter. "I'm so hungry I could probably eat that entire elk, that I hunted earlier, without any regrets." Tony admitted. "I wouldn't doubt it. Remember that time when you ate two 24" pizzas, with all the works, by yourself?" Fane asked, as Tony's mouth salivated at the memory of the delicious pizzas. "Don't mention food right now, at least wait till there's a giant heaping plate of food in front of me. Because right now I'm so hungry that cannibalism is looking like a pretty good idea." Tony said adding a growl for effect. Natasha couldn't help but laugh at Tony's serious tone, and Fane grinned madly. "Well since I don't want to be a victim of cannibalism tonight, I say let's get Tony to his room before he bites us." Fane said. And the three of them went down the hall laughing. When they finally neared the room, Tony could smell the heavenly aromas and his stomach growled ravenously. Tony nearly ran the last few hundred feet and was sitting down at the table scarfing down food, so fast one might think he hadn't seen food in a month, before He Fane or Natasha even crossed. "Tony slow down you're going to make yourself sick!" Fane scolded with a grin on his face. Even though Tony was 27, Fane still could make Tony feel like a teenager again with the right, or rather wrong, tone of voice. "Sorry...can't help it...this is the longest... I've ever gone ...without food!" Tony said between mouth fulls of delicious pasta. " What about that time in Colombia?" Natasha asked reminding him of the time a few years ago when she, Clint and him were captured by guerrilla forces. They couldn't escape for a weeks due to the drugged stupor all three were in. "Don't remind me. Plus I believe we were unconscious half the time, and the other half we were so drugged up we couldn't even remember our names. And don't you remember how I practically ate out an entire restaurant once we got to Bogota?" Tony said slowing down on his eating a bit. "Colombia? What happened in Colombia?" Fane asked suddenly curious. "Its a long story." Natasha said. "We've got time." Fane said starting on his own plate. "Long story short, we were on a shield mission to hunt down one of the big players in the Colombian drug cartel. We're closing the distance when we got an urgent call from shield, right when a scouting team was near our position. They shot us with tranq guns, but when the drugs didn't affect me, due to my high metabolism, so while Clint and Tasha crashed to the forest floor, they shot me in the leg and shoulder, causing me to eventually pass out from blood loss and pain." Tony said still eating the glorious pasta. "Clint and I woke up in a dirty hovel chained to a post in the wall, about 3 days later. Tony was lying next to us, feverish, because even though they had cauterized his wounds we were still in a nasty hovel in the middle of a rainforest, and dead to the world. Our captors kept coming in every day to give us some new type of drug, to keep us in a constant state of delirium. A few days later Tony finally wakes up and sets about the task of breaking us out, as he had his mechanical arm full of tricks at that point. So we escaped, stealing some clothes off of the guards and some food and medical supplies we had managed to find and went into the rainforest. Tony surprisingly made it about a mile before his adrenaline ran out, and we realized the seriousness of his wounds, which were pretty infected. Clint and I were forced to take turns partially healing his wounds, as we couldn't take a chance to fall into that deep of a sleep in the middle of a rainforest with guerrilla forces on our tail. That trek was one of the longest and hardest journeys that we had every been on. We hiked about 200 miles in that week. Good thing both Tony and Clint were brilliant marksmen, or it would have taken us longer than that due to starvation. It was a miracle that Tony had his arm
in which he had purification tablets, so that we did not die from dehydration, or contracted parasites. When we got to Bogota, reeking and exhausted, we contacted Shield, rented a room and ate to our hearts content. We had all lost a good 10 lbs, Tony closer to 25 lbs, due to our unplanned adventure, plus we contacted a few nasty parasites from eating whatever Tony and Clint had managed to hunt. We probably scared the hotel owners with wild looks, not to mention Tony was covered in blood with a mechanical arm and on the verge of collapse due to his injuries combined with a nasty infection, barely enough calories to function and exhaustion. We were holed up that tiny 1 bed room for three days before shield could extract us. Tony spent the better portion of a week in the helicarriers med bay, due to his condition." Natasha finished, when a soft snoring sound filled the silence. Natasha and Fane looked up to see Tony passed out with his head resting on his mostly empty plate, obviously having fallen asleep during the story. Tasha and Fane laughed quietly at the sight of the highly trained assassin with pasta sauce smeared on his forehead "Well I guess the food made him slip into a minor food coma. Help me get him to bed?" Fane asked.

"Yeah, just let me take take a quick picture, this is great blackmail material." Natasha said pulling out a phone from God knows where, and taking a few shots. Then she stood up, tousled Tony's hair and softly said "Wake up, Спящий медведь (sleeping bear). You'll sleep better in a bed." To which Tony replied sleepily, "3.141592653589793238462643383279502884197." "Did he just recite digits of pi?" Fane said on the verge of laughing. "Yeah he does that when he's exhausted." Natasha said with a smile, before pinching the one spot on the side of Tony's neck she knew would wake him up. "Huh?" Tony said as he came awake. "You fell asleep in your food, come on let's get you to bed." Natasha said, as she helped pull Tony up, who groaned at the sudden movement. "I think I'd rather stay here." Tony said sleepily. "Tony its just a few feet, I know you're tired and sore, but you'll feel better sleeping in a bed." Natasha said as she and Fane guided Tony to the large overstuffed bed in the middle of the room. They could almost feel the burn of lactic acid buildup and the pain of sore overused muscles Tony had by just looking at the face he made every time he made the minutest of movements. Once they got to the bed Tony promptly collapsed into the mattress and fell fast asleep. Natasha and Fane removed his boots the few knives he had on his body at all times, and got him into a soft pair of sleep pants. "So do you guys have any ancient remedies to help overworked muscles, cause if he stays like he is, he isn't going to be able to move when he wakes up." "Yeah, we use a special type of massage oil and a type of aromatherapy, to help relax the muscles, along with ice and heat." Fane said before he left the room to find the items. He came back a few minutes later arms heavy with objects and proceeded to help Natasha remove Tony's top that way she could massage his back. They spent the next hour and a half massaging vital blood flow back into the exhausted muscles. Natasha knew that the massage worked as Tony's face became more peaceful in his sleep. "Well that should help with the soreness. He's still going to be sore in the morning, or rather evening, but it should be manageable. Now why don't you get some sleep too? I know I am, I'll just be in my room, give me a call if you need anything." Fane said before leaving the room to get some much needed rest. Natasha then pulled up a large comfy looking oversized chair up to the bedside, curled up in it and promptly fell asleep.
Tony could hear voices murmuring around him, as he gradually woke up. He opened his eyes to see his entire team peering down at him.

"Er...what?" Tony asked, his voice still muddled with sleep.

"Friend Anthony, Natasha has sent us to wake you up!" Thor bellowed, causing Tony to wince a bit.

"How long was I asleep for?" He asked as he started to get out of bed.

"About 12 hours, but from what Fane and Natasha told us about what you've been through in the past three, well now four, days, you needed the rest." Bruce stated, as Tony stood up and stretched his still sore muscles.

"Yeah, I'm going to be feeling those trials for the next week." Tony said, then he noticed that the team, besides for Clint, were staring at him. He then realized he was topless and all of his scars were being showcased. He also realizes that none of them excepting for Clint had fully seen his scars before.

"Anthon aye, who gave you such grievous battle scars?" Thor said as electricity started to sizzle around him, appalled at the site of his teammates body pot marked with scars from knives, burns and gunshot wounds, and some he couldn't even guess the origin of.

"Um I've kinda collected them over the years. It comes with the territory of being a powerful mutant assassin and part time superhero." Tony said sheepishly.

"Why does this one look like you were mauled by a bear?" Bruce asked, pointing towards a particularly gnarly wound on his shoulder and upper back.

"Well I kinda was mauled by a bear." Tony said with a nervous laugh. "It happened about a decade ago. Long story short Fane and I were captured by some Russians about 12 years ago. It was the middle of winter and the Russians were bored, so they put me in a makeshift arena with a fully grown brown bear, with no weapons." Tony explained before he was interrupted by Steve, "How did you survive?"

"Well I killed the bear with my bare hands, but obviously not before it clawed up my shoulder." Tony finished.

"Which did not make the Russians happy because the bear had apparently cost them a lot of money, so they loaded Tony and Fane up with bear tranquilizers, and left them in the middle of a field tied to a bomb in nothing but their underwear. According to Fane, Tony went all McGiver and dismantled one of his hearing aids and disarmed the bomb. He then built a fire using the hearing aid, and they spent a very cold night in the Russian wilderness until Tasha and I came to their rescue." Clint adds.

"Brother Anthony, your stories would rival any Asgardian warriors songs!" Thor said with a look of amazement.

"How are you not dead?" Steve asked.

"I've questioned that myself, I must be extremely lucky or rather unlucky." Tony said.

"So how many times have you been shot?" Bruce asked, noting the numerous gunshot wounds on Tony's torso, know that he probably had more on his legs.

"Last time I checked, about 27 times." Tony said unfazed. The rest of the team just had looks of shock on their faces. "Well I'm going to take a quick shower, you guys make yourself at home, I'll be out in a few." Tony said as he disappeared into the bathroom.

"Did any of you expect his scars to be so drastic?" Bruce asked blank faced.

"Yeah, but if it wasn't for the fact that we had been through hell and back together, and captured more times than I can count, I would not know the full scale of his wounds. Tony doesn't like to show any weaknesses, he literally has to be on the verge of collapse to admit he is injured or hurt." Clint said as he climbed onto a large chair.

"Anthony is truly a man of iron. I have seen comrades retire from the battlefield with one-tenth of
the wounds he has received, yet he still remains light of heart and fights by our sides." Thor said as he sank into a couch.

"How is he not plagued by the memories of his battles?" Steve asked no one in particular, as he remembered the screams of men in his barracks haunted with memories of the battles they had been involved in.

"He is, he just doesn't show it. Remember he's been in the assassin business for half of his life. You don't even want to begin to think about a quarter of the missions Tasha, he, and I, have been on. They're are good nights and bad nights, but we deal with them." Clint explained.

"How?" Bruce asked curiously, as he noticed that there were nights when Tony, Clint and Natasha would disappear from the avengers communal floor.

"Don't tell either of them this, our secret is that we have, well sleepovers, where we all crawl into Tony's bed and fall asleep to Lord of the Rings or Star Wars. We have a kinda sixth sense about when a night will be bad or not. We've been doing it for years." Clint said.

"Well that explains why you all disappear at times." Steve said.

"Your fraternal closeness with one another, reminds me of the Warriors Three back on Asgard. Never has there been a fiercer group of friends, but I believe you three are a close second." Thor announced thoughtfully as Tony emerged from the bathroom in a pair of his what could only be called red leather jerkins, and a towel wrapped around his head.

"Have you guys been talking about me? Cause my ear's been ringing off the hook." Tony said with a grin as he walked towards a table where his uniform was lying. Then the rest of the team saw the colorful marks that ran up Tony's spine.

"Are those your rank marks?" Bruce asked.

"Yeah, I guess I can't hide them from you guys anymore." Tony said as he turned around and walked back towards the group. "Do you guys to see them?" He asked. The looks on their faces said yes, so he turned his back towards them. The tattoos were of the various animal rankings each getting progressively bigger as they increased in rank. From a distance they looked like regular animal tattoos but once they got a good look at them up close they could see the intricate designs that made up the animals.

"There's a lot of detail. It must have been painful getting them done." Bruce said taking in the precise designs of the tattoos.

"A lot less painful than being stabbed, or shot." Tony said. "The detail is for the tattoos not to be replicated easily." Tony explained.

"Who tattoo's you?" Steve asked, wanting to know the artist responsible for the work.

"The Master of Masters. I'm not the only one with the tattoos, there's quite a few of us. She tattoos us with a mixture of ancient designs that have been passed down for millennia, and new techniques of tattooing." Tony explained before walking back to the table.

"That's an interesting choice in pants." Clint blurted coyly, as Tony made his way back.

"They come with the uniform, which is a bit more personalized now." Tony said as he took off the towel and shook his head before tossing on a blood red shirt, with a grimace on his face. "Hey, Clint, can you come help me out? I'm still a bit stiff from having to hold some really extreme yoga poses for hours during the trials." Tony asked as he rubbed a shoulder.

"Sure." Clint said as he went over to Tony to help place on the two overcoats, the middle one being golden red and the outer being pure gold. Then helped place the weapons Tony carried on him. Tony then went into the bathroom with a small box he had picked up from the table, and came out 10 minutes later with his eyes heavily lined in kohl, with red and gold accents, and with his cheekbones more prominent than ever, obviously from the aid of well placed bronzer and highlighter.

"You wear make-up, Stark?" Steve asked a bit confused, when he saw his teammate with makeup on.

"Yeah it helps with the effect of the whole outfit. Plus it helps disguise the features of my face. Just think of it as stage makeup. I'm not the only one who does it." Tony said as he ran his hands thru his semi dry hair and carefully put on an elegant, yet terrifying, gold mask. He then stepped
towards a mirror and placed a few scarlet feathers in well thought out places in his hair. Finally he went back to the table and placed on his golden cape, with seen in red feathers, and pulled up the hood. When he faced his team, in full regalia, he was a beautifully terrifying sight to behold. 

"So what do you guys think?" He asked, as none of them, besides Clint, had actually seen him when he dressed for a hunt.

"I can see why you strike fear into the hearts of many. You are more frightful than the sight of a Valkyrie carrying the body of a fallen warrior to Valhalla." Thor said in obvious awe at the transformation of his brethren.

"They call me the angel of death for a reason." Tony said with a grin that somehow made the costume even more frightening.

"Why the feathers?" Bruce asked.

"They're my calling sign, and they double as my wings as I am an Angel." Tony said sheepishly. 

"You guys really take symbolism to an extreme here." Steve said.

"Well the order, or well a form of the order, has been around since the Archaic period of Greece, maybe even longer than that. Everything we do stems from tradition that our founders started. It is the reason why we form our own weapons, receive our scars, wear the masks, and even the clothing we wear stem from tradition. Our name actually means Assassins in Greek." Tony stated.

"What is this Archaic period?" Thor asked bewildered by the way humans measure their time.

"Its a time period of Ancient Greece, one of our greatest civilizations, that dates back to 750 BC, or nearly 3,000 years ago. Its where we get our idea of democracy from." Bruce explained for the benefit of Thor, Steve and Clint.

"So when did you guys arrive?" Tony asked.

"About an hour before you woke up." Clint said.

"Did anyone give you a tour yet?" Tony said with a mischievous face.

"No." Steve said.

"Then come on, its only 6, we still have an hour before the feast starts." Tony said.

"Feast?" Thor said with glee.

"Yeah. I shot down a 900lb elk bull four days ago for my final hunt with Fane. Tonight we will feast until our hearts give out, and trust me when you have 200 hungry assassins, there will be plenty to stuff ourselves with. Then there is one more ceremony where I will receive my final marking, unless I become the Master of m, Masters, which is a really high probability. This one is a public ceremony, so I'll be the entertainment of the evening. Then to close off the ceremonies we have a huge bonfire outside, which only full fledged assassins are able to go to where we drink, dance, sing and be merry. Something you're probably used to Thor." Tony said with a smile.

"Aye , just like the times before battles where we would stand around campfires telling great stories and singing songs of the mighty heroes of olde, to bring up the spirits of the warriors." Thor said remembering the great times. "Your order is much like the band of warriors I have fought with on Asgard, except more shadowy and less loud and proud as we were." Thor added gleefully.

"Yes as I said our traditions are nearly 3000 years old. Now come on let's go. I can show you the best places to hide, and where we forge our weapons and where we train for up to 16 hours a day. Plus I may have told some of the cubs that I'll introduce you to them, they're huge admirers of ours." Tony said as he gestured them to follow him.

His teammates couldn't believe how popular Tony was among the Dolofóni. They were stopped at least two dozen times as Tony ran into old friends, which consisted of most of the assassins, who congratulated him. Tony was also nearly tackled by several groups of teenagers who were practically swooning as they saw the legendary avengers. But the most profound reactor was when Tony was embraced by a group of 5 men about Tony's aged donned in a mixture of lion and eagle masks.

"Guys this is my clan, Aiden," A man with wild red hair wearing a lions mask nodded his greeting, 

"Duncan," A young man with close cropped brown hair who towered over Steve and had enough muscle definition to rival Thor, and wearing a eagle mask, said his greetings, 

"Maahas," a slim man with olive skin and black curly hair wearing a lions mask, said his greetings with a lit of a
middle eastern accent, "Veto," A slightly muscular man with long dark waves, tan skin and intelligent eyes, who wore an lion's mask, nodded, "and finally Koen," A tall muscular blond, who carried authority wearing a eagle, said his greetings, " these are my clan mates." Then he addressed the group of young men, "Now I'm pretty sure you guys know who the avengers are." Tony said with a grin.
"Yeah, how could we not have? And since when did you become a superhero Samael?" Aiden asked laughingly.
"Umm, about four years ago, unless you count the time I spent with the X-Men, then about 13 years ago." Tony said with a grin.
"I still can't believe you're becoming a council member, Samael. I just got my eagle mask a month ago!" Duncan said with a deep cheerful voice.
"I can't believe it myself." Tony said, " if it wasn't for my sore muscles, I would think this was a dream." Tony said with a smile.
"Are the trials really that bad?" Veto said with a Spanish accent.
"Well probably not for one of you guys, but they doubled my time. 48 hours with no sleep, barely no food and being forced to do seemingly impossible tasks is no picnic." Tony said sarcastically.
"So does this mean you're going to be around more often? Because without your constant joking, its pretty dead around here. Fane's trying but its not the same without you." Maahas asked.
"Well not for a while, the council wants me to play friendly with the military leaders and other top officials to gain more support. Word is they want me to meet both the president and the Queen. I'm going to be gone for a bit." Tony said sadly, as he missed the men he called brother.
"They want you to meet the President?" Steve asked shocked.
"Oh right forgot to tell you guys, about that." Tony said sheepishly, before turning back to his clan, "Now I have to go show my team around a bit, let's do the first dance tonight. Me against all of you." Tony said.
"We stand no chance, especially with the way you took down the council members and the Master of Masters in the initiation ceremony." Koen said grimly before the group broke into loud laughter. And they went their separate ways.
"Should I be offended that you had a team before us?" Clint asked jokingly.
"They're my clan. They were the ones who were there since I woke up with the Dolofóni. But you guys are my family, we have literally fought and bled together." Tony said.
"You seem to attract the mightiness of warriors young Anthony." Thor said.
"I have to agree with Thor. You have a whole order of assassins, a group of the most powerful mutants on this planet, and a group of superheroes, who will quite literally kill anyone who lays a harmful finger on you Tony. You are either the most protected person on this planet or the most dangerous, I can't seem to decide which one yet." Bruce stated.
"Hopefully he never goes full supervillain on us, if he does, we're all screwed. I swear he has connections that we don't even have enough clearance to know about." Clint said.
"You have to admit I would be one good looking supervillain." Tony said seriously, before breaking off in a menacing super-villainous cackle. The rest of the avengers just shuddered at the picture of Tony half-crazed with an insatiable thirst for world domination.
"Well good thing shield has a contingency plan for that." Steve stated, with Bruce and Thor agreeing, Clint just had a confused look on his face, while Tony had a mixed look of awe and shock.
"They actually have one? Oh man that is awesome." Tony said with the biggest grin he could manage.
"Wait? What contingency plan?" Clint asked, Steve, Bruce and Thor exchanged knowing looks.
"Shit! I'm the bait aren't I?!" Clint said as it dawned on him.
"I can neither agree or disagree with you." Steve said coyly. While Tony kept trying out different cackles.
"Tony stop it. You're making Steve uneasy." Bruce advised. Then they all started laughing. They continued on their tour as tony showed them the place where he essentially became the man
he was that day. The rest of the team couldn't believe the size of the place, as they were brought in blindfolded for the last thirty minutes of their trip to the secluded place. Tony noticed their looks of awe at the size of the building.

"Its a labyrinth. Thats why there's so many long curving hallways. Its designed to throw of the any intruders who somehow bypass the security systems. It looks a lot bigger than it truly is." Tony said.

"How do you guys not get lost?" Steve asked.

"Well thats why we have clans for one, a lot harder for a group of six kids to get lost than a kid by his lonesome. Plus there are hidden shortcuts that we learn about as time goes on. There's so many hidden passages between different parts of this building, that I don't even know about the vast majority of them. I doubt even Fane knows about all of them." Tony said.

"How does no one never find out about this place?" Steve asked.

"We have security measures in place. The place has its own type of natural camouflage plus there's really heavy tree coverage. Not to mention we have patrols who make sure no one gets in, and its private property and air space so no one can fly over us unless its a commercial flight." Tony said.

"Im pretty sure we even have conspiracy theories about us. I like to think of the den as the Area 51 of the Rockies." Tony said with a smile causing both Clint and Bruce to start laughing and leaving Thor and Steve confused.

"What is this Area 51 you speak of?" Thor asked.

"Its a highly classified air force base in New Mexico where they test highly secretive aircraft. The General American public believes that there are aliens there and that the aircraft are UFOs." Bruce stated but his explanation still left the two warriors who were out of time blank faced. "Oh right, Roswell happened after you went under Steve. I guess we'll have a conspiracy theory night to catch Thor and Steve up." Bruce added.

"You know I've actually been to Area 51. I'm still not sure what the hype is about, there technology is decades behind what I can do. That Aurora jet that the air force is wetting its pants about, because it can hit Mach 6? Piece of junk. I'm working on a suit right now that can go in excess of Mach 8, I have the speed down, I just need a way to muffle the G-force. And by the way not a single alien in sight, flying saucers you wish. I told them to invest in repulsor tech, but they completely turned down my ideas. See if I ever help them again." Tony said leaving Bruce and Clint looking at him in awe.

"You've been to Area 51? When?" Clint asked.

"You know that business trip I went on about two months ago, yeah I wasn't in china, I was at Area 51." Tony stated unfazed.

"You're like the only person in the country who can go to Area 51 and act like it was a trip to a grocery store!" Bruce said.

"Trust me I was excited when I found out I'll be going to Area 51, but I was highly disappointed when I got their. Plus I was talked down to by nearly all of the top brass, they apparently thought I was an arrogant, self-centered brat. I have no idea why they wanted me in the first place either, they shot down all of my ideas and advice. Never going back there again." Tony said as he led them towards the corridor.

"I can see why you don't like the military." Steve said with a grin.

"I like some of them, like Rhodey, and a few of his air force buddies. I just hate the officers who think they're all that and don't even consider listening to a younger and under ranked person just because they lack so-called experience. I especially hate the ones that believe that all pacifists are unpatriotic, you wouldn't believe the backlash Stark Industries got when I stopped supplying them with actual weapons and started developing technology that would protect soldiers rather than supplying them with bombs that destroy countless innocent lives of civilians." Tony said as he led them through some of the corridors that connected various parts of the building.

"I'm confused you're a pacifistic assassin?" Steve questioned.

"The people I hunt are some of the lowest examples of human filth. I hunt the men and women who decide to abuse, kill and exploit innocents. I don't just kill random people that I get assigned
to, I kill the ones who escape the law even though their guilt is as clear as day. See, I can justify going to war to wipe out an evil, such as what you did in WWII, Cap. But I can't support a war like the one we're fighting now." Tony explained. And the rest of the team contemplated Tony's statement, as they had never seen him without his many masks up before. Then Tony opened another door which led to a large dining hall of sorts, and they're stomachs growled simultaneously at the smell of the roasted meat.

"You weren't lying about the feast." Clint said in awe at the feast that was set up, and the rest of the avengers stared at the feast in wonderment.

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"Have you guys seen Tony?" Steve asked after the assassin started to gather around a large bon fire after their feast.

"No, how could he have disappeared so quickly? I swear he was with us when we left the feast." Bruce answered.

"You guys realize that he is an assassin,right? He's trained to be sneaky. He's probably talking with one of his clanmates, he does have a life, well actually more like 3 lives, outside the Avengers." Natasha added.

"Don't worry about where he is, you'll soon find out. You haven't witnessed a bonfire until you've been to one of ours." Fane said cryptically before he too disappeared.

"I still find it creepy how well they can slip away." Clint said as he glanced around trying to find his ex.

"Its like they are shadows. Haven't you noticed how none of these great warriors make sound when they walk?" Thor asked the rest of the team.

"Try living in a house with two Dolofóni and Tasha for the better part of a decade. I swear one of these days I'm going to buy them bells." Clint muttered.

"You guys lived with Fane?" Steve asked a bit confused.

"Yeah, we lived together for almost 10 years, before Fane retired from the hunt and returned to the den to train young cubs. Fane and Clint actually dated for a few of those years." Natasha said coyly.

"Well that explains how you guys act around each other." Bruce said. Then they all sat down on a couple of tree stumps that circled around the bonfire, and the crowd began to hush.

"What's going on?" Steve asked quietly.

"I think this is what Fane was talking about earlier." Natasha whispered as the noise deadened.

Then their eyes focused on a figure standing next to the fire with a white hood on. Then 5 more figures, dressed in black, walked out of the crowd and stood at various places around the fire. Then they all stomped a foot on the ground and threw off their cloaks and got into a fighting stance, each armed with a thin flexible staff. They all donned masks that were reminiscent of the masks of the muses of ancient Greece. A drum beat started up and the five in black started moving in closer to the solitary white figure, and it wasn't long before they heard the clashing of the staffs echoing thru the clearing. Soon the 6 fighters, or were they dancers, were lost in the movement of the fight. Their movements were so fluid and precise that it made the avengers wonder if the fight had been choreographed. The assassins surrounding them started to clap their hands to the drum beat and the tempo of the fight increased. It was starting to get hard to tell the fighters in black from each other as the single white dancer started to increase the complexity of his movements adding impossible flips and twists into his fight. A few minutes, or was it hours, later the first fighter in black was struck down, and the tempo increased once more. The fighters in black kept succumbing to the white fighters attacks and soon there were just two fighters dancing to an impossible speed, so fast that they essentially became a blur of black and white, the only sounds from them being the quick rap of the wooden staffs. Finally, after what seemed to be an eternity the final black dancer was struck to the floor and the white dancer fell to his knees panting from
exertion. He then tore off his mask and revealed his identity to be Samael, or Tony to those who truly knew him. The crowd erupted in cheers as he rose to his feet with a wicked grin on his face and started to reveal his foes, starting with the one who lasted the longest to the one who went out first. The first one he revealed was the tall blonde, Koen, who the avengers minus Natasha had met earlier that day. Tony then pulled him up and they embraced in what could only be deemed a bro hug. Tony then pulled the rest of his foes up and revealed them to be the boys, or rather men, who had made up his clan. Then they bowed and walked back into the crowd to find their seats, as the rest of the assassins kept applauding and calling out cheers.

"Holy shit! What was that?!" Clint yelled excitedly as Tony came into view.

"That was a ceremonial fight. We always have one to mark the beginning of a bonfire. It's been done for millennia." Tony said as he sat on an empty stump.

"That's only the beginning?" Bruce asked enthralled by the celebrations.

"Oh yeah, this usually lasts till the early hours of the morning. You haven't seen nothing yet." Tony said with a glint of excitement in his eyes."Just wait until you hear Tadgh tell one of his stories, he's like our own personal Homer. Fane will also probably share a few of our most intense and embarrassing hunting stories. I also hope you guys brought your voices, we will probably sing a whole bunch of our songs about some of our greatest heroes. Then on top of it we have barrels upon barrels of wine and beer, we might even have some mead for you Point-Break." Tony said with a grin.

"That sounds really complex." Steve said.

"How often do you guys do this sort of thing?" Bruce asked eyes glinting with curiosity.

"We do this for council promotions, weddings within the order, funerals and sometimes births, but usually that is a bit on the low key of celebrations as babies don't tend to like noises much." Tony said.

"Funerals?" Natasha asked intrigued.

"Our funerals are complex here. We hold a celebration for the fallen assassin as we burn their body on a pyre. We essentially tell the story's and songs of their accomplishments and drink until morning. Then the person who the dead assassin appointed, or if the death was sudden, the closest person to him, will stand a silent vigil for the assassin for a week, while abstaining from sleep and speech and only eating at sundown and sunrise. After the ceremony is over, that same person will go on a solo mission to hunt down the person responsible for their death, if it was foul play, and kill them in the same manner. We then take a vow of not mentioning the name of the dead for a year, to persevere their memory." Tony said sobering.

"That is really beautiful." Natasha said with her voice cracking a bit, though if you'd ask any of them she didn't. Then a really upbeat song started and Tony began to sing and he pulled Natasha up.

"Come on, dance with me, no one else can dance until I start." Tony said as he pulled her through the crowd and started showing her the moves of the dance. The rest of the team watched but soon they were all pulled into the dance by a couple of lovely assassins. The rest of the night was passed in a blur of excitement high spirits as the team and the rest of the avengers forgot about the outside world and let loose the tension that came with carrying the world on your shoulders.
"Remind me not to drink ever again." Clint muttered as he drank his coffee. 
"You keep saying this but you always drink more." Natasha childed. 
"Why am I the only one with a hangover though?" Clint whined. 
"Well for starters Steve and I can't get drunk. Thor is a God, so it takes some really strong liquor to get him even doesn't drink because none of us want to see a drunken 9 foot tall rage monster terrorizing civilians, and Natasha isn't fazed by alcohol until she downs a bottle or two of fine vodka. Therefore you, Birdbrain, must be the only one on our team who is susceptible to hangovers." Tony said with a laugh before he shoveled more eggs into his mouth. 
"This is so not fair." Clint said as he placed his head on the table. 
"Speaking of Bruce has anyone seen him?" Steve asked. 
"Last I saw he was necking with Vynx, his long lost lover." Tony said with a sly smile. 
"Bruce has a girl? When did this happen?" Clint mumbled into the table as he still had his head down. 
"Since about 5 years ago. They were forced to leave each other, and I reintroduced them last night," then Tony glanced up to see a very happy Bruce walk up to the table. "Speak of the devil. Hey Brucie-pie, how'd you sleep?" Tony asked slyly. 
"Oh you know...how it normally is." Bruce said as he sat down at the table and poured himself some coffee. 
"Is that a hickey?" Natasha asked gesturing towards a circular bruise on Bruce's neck. Bruce turned an amazing shade of red. 
"When are we going to meet the woman who has enthralled our shield brother so?" Thor bellowed and Bruce turned a deeper shade of red. 
"Don't worry Bruce, we won't tell." Clint said coyly. 
"Fine. There's this girl that I met a few years ago. I saved her life and we slowly began to fall in love. But she was whisked away before either of us could act on those feelings. Tony reintroduced us last night, and we decided that we will try and date, and see where it goes." Bruce said with a hopelessly romantic look in his eyes. 
"Tony, you're now forever going to be known as Yenta. This is the second time that you matched one of us up with another. Before we know it we'll all be matched up and settled down." Clint said with a grin. 
"Third time." Natasha said softly. 
"What?" Clint asked. 
"Well Pepper and I started seeing each other a while back. We're thinking about going steady." Natasha said with a slight blush. 
"How did I not know this?" Clint asked. 
"Well its been a crazy couple of months." Natasha said. 
"Great the next thing you're going to tell me is that Steve is dating Rhodey or something like that." Clint said and a blush crept on Steve's cheeks. "You aren't, are you?" 
"No Clint I'm not dating. I'm waiting for the right gal to come along." Steve said. 
"Uh, guys I have to go, the council is waving me over, probably something to with my mission." Tony said as he downed his coffee and slipped away. 
"I can't believe you're dating his P.A.." Clint muttered. 
"Grow up birdbrain." Natasha argued back. 
"How many times do I have to tell you, I hate that name." Clint said turning red. 
"Some days I can't tell if you two are adults or just oversized children." Steve said practically scolding the pair bickering back and forth. 
"I take offense at that statement!" Clint said as he flung a piece of bacon at the leader of the group.
"Case and point." Steve said throwing the bacon back at Clint, but missed his target and hit Tasha right in the face. Soon the entire table was in a full blown food fight. " Seriously?! I leave you guys alone for five minutes and you start a food fight?! You do realize you're making me look bad in front of the people who just appointed me as one of their leaders, right?! " Tony practically growled at the sight of the avengers in the midst of a food fight. The rest of the avengers stopped what they were doing and paused at the sight of a practically fuming Tony. They had never seen Tony so angry before and it was truly a terrifying sight. They muttered their apologies and set about picking up the bits of various food lodged in unusual places. Anger was still rolling off of Tony, and all the rest of the team took his look to heart as neither of them ever wished to get him that impossibly angry again.

Tony sat down and started to drink his cup of coffee while trying to calm down from being embarrassed in front of the entire den who looked up to him. The avengers were finished cleaning up after themselves and sat back in their chairs with kicked puppy looks on their faces. "So what did they want with you?" Clint asked being the bravest, or stupidest one of the group. "Well they were confirming my first mission as a kind of ambassador of the council. I'm meeting with the President tomorrow morning." Tony said. "The President? As in President Obama?" Bruce asked. "Yeah, a meeting has been due for a while now, and they want to show me off a bit. For the next few weeks I will be meeting with various heads of military branches, the heads of various governmental organizations such as the CIA, the FBI, the NSA, homeland security, you get the jif. I'll also be meeting with various foreign dignitaries."

"How big is the orders network?" Bruce asked perplexed. "Extremely extensive, even I don't know how large it is, but I guess that I'm about to find out." Tony said as he sipped his coffee still with a scowl on his face. "So who started it? " Tony asked. "I did." Clint said shamefacedly. "Sorry."

"Oh don't apologize to me. Plus its too late for apologies. You're about to learn why the cubs are so well behaved." Tony said cryptically. "What?" Clint said, praying to god that tony wasn't suggesting corporal punishment. "You're going to be cleaning this entire room with toothbrushes until its spotless." Tony said. "Are you serious?" Steve asked. "Completely. Trust me its the same punishment cubs get whenever a clan causes a disturbance during meal times." Tony said with a evil grin. "Don't you guys wonder why I never play pranks during meals or with food?"

"But we're not Dolofóni." Steve said. "Doesn't matter. If you're in the den the rules apply. So see you guys later, I'm due for a training session with Fane." Tony said as he picked up his tray and walked away. The rest of the avengers glared at Clint, who nervously tried to divert their attention, earning subsequent slaps, punches and flicks from his annoyed teammates.

"So how'd you guys like your little team-building activity after breakfast." Tony said snidely, trying to get as much reaction out of his fellow team members as possible. "It brought back fond memories of a similar punishment Loki and I would get whenever we were misbehaving. Our mother would order us to clean the entire great hall, though our scrub brushes were somewhat bigger than the ones here on Midgard. Oh how my brother and I would enjoy those days, because we would get out of some rather dull lessons of the day." Thor said fondly. "Well, I think my life is in serious danger. I'm scared that Natasha's going to stab me, that Steve is going to jump me in a dark hallway and that Bruce is going to poison me somehow. I don't even think I'm going to be able to sleep tonight." Clint said nervously as Steve, Tasha and Bruce stared him down. Tony couldn't help but laugh. "What's so funny?" Natasha asked thoroughly annoyed.
"You guys, well except for Goldilocks, learned the lesson." Tony said.
"What lesson, besides the one about how to spotlessly clean a floor." Steve asked.
"Well usually one person is the instigator and by the end of the punishment he either learns to not do it again, or well is stupid." Tony said. "Come on guys, we have to start getting ready. I have to be in D.C. in a few hours." Tony added as he stood up.
"I thought you said you were meeting him in the morning?" Steve asked.
"I am, but I need to meet with the Secret Service tonight. I am a very powerful assassin and mutant you know. Plus they want me to get in a quick training session for the agents, as I am a fully trained sniper and well assassin." Tony said.
"Don't you ever get a break? With the pounding your muscles have taken during the last five days, I'm surprised you're still able to walk." Bruce said.
"We have a special soaking treatment that helps heal the muscles, plus Natasha is really good at back massages." Tony said. "Plus even without a full heal, I still heal at a faster pace than most. I'm also used to it. I do portray three different people you know." Tony said, as they started back towards the room.
"I'm just surprised you haven't burned out yet." Bruce said.
"Don't jinx me. Since I did my packing after my training session, I'm going to take a quick nap, because as Bruce said, my bodies been through hell this week." Tony said with a yawn. Leaving the rest of the avengers behind.
"We seriously need to get him to relax." Clint said.
"I agree." Tasha said.
"You thinking what I'm thinking?" Clint asked.
"Operation: Get Tony to Relax, pt.2, has begun." Natasha said. Then the pair explained to the rest of the team what they were planning.

Two black SUVs pulled up to the curb.
"Mr. Samael ? We've been ordered to escort you to the pre disclosed location." A man with an earpiece, and black suit said as he opened the door for Samael.
"First of all, its just Samael, or Master Samael, but I'm not partial to that title yet. There's no mister as Samael is not a real name but more of an alias. Secondly, I'm going to need you to say the code word, anyone can appear in a black SUV and suit. And thirdly, relax, I'm only minimally armed and I have no strife with you."
"The code is 'I dreamt of pink unicorns and flying hamburgers.'" The man said almost embarrassedly, but visibly relaxed when he heard the youth of Tony's voice. "If you don't mind my asking, how old are you?" The man asked curious.
"I'm 27, but i've been in this business for more than half my life. " Tony said as he got into a car fully loaded with bulky secret service men.
"How can you be a master assassin if you're not even 30 yet?" The guy asked curiously.
"I'm extremely good at what I do. I also possess mutant abilities that enhance my skills. But don't worry guys, I'm one of the good guys, I only hunt those who hurt, exploit, or kill, if not all three, innocents." Tony said as he noticed how tense the other men were, but as soon as he mentioned that the men relaxed a bit, but still sported wary looks on their faces. "So to lighten up the mood a bit in here, because I feel like I being taken in for treason, why don't you guys ask me a few questions? I know you have some, come on you're sitting in a car with a legendary mutant assassin, and we have about a fifteen minute drive, so come on ask away." Tony said with a grin, the agents looked at each other waringly.
"Is it true that you can hit a target 2 miles away?" One bravely asked.
"Yes, in fact I can hit a target 3 miles away with ease." Tony said and the agents stared back at him with shock.
"3 miles? But the highest distance on record is 1.5! How?" One asked.
"Well I am a mutant, and I've been training as a sniper since I was 14. I also make my own bullets, in order for them to withstand shots of that magnitude." Tony said.

"So what are your abilities, if you don't mind my asking?" Another brought up.

"Well you know the avengers right?" They all nodded their heads. "Well I essentially have the same physical abilities of Captain America, can outshoot Hawkeye, can almost lift a deadweight on par with the Hulk, can take down the widow in less than a minute, in fact I did so when I was 15. I am about as smart as either or , if not more so. And I am an expert weapons maker, as the Dolofóni, prefer to do things the old fashion way to ensure perfection. I can do all of these things because of my powers which happen to be superhuman abilities, superhuman mentality, inert ability and I'm also a powerful empath. I'm also a medium level telepath and a minor telekinetic due to the superhuman mentality part. And don't worry about the empathy part, I mainly use that power to control the mood of an group of people who are anxious or terrified due to a villain attacking them or something along those lines. But my best power is that I can't get drunk, and that's due to my very increased metabolism." Tony explained.

"So you're essentially the best qualities of all of the avengers put together into one person?" One curious agent asked.

"Yep."

"What about Thor?" Another asked.

"Well Thor and I share a background set in ancient tradition, and we also share a love for feasts and mead." Tony said.

"Ancient tradition?"

"Well the Dolofóni have been around for 3,000 years. We still do things the old fashion way in a lot of senses, including this hideous uniform. Although I must admit, that the council version is a lot better than the others, at least I got to choose the colors." Tony said.

"So why the bloody feather?" The either stupidest or the bravest of the men asked.

"Well my name means the Angel of Death in Hebrew, and I have a flair for dramatics. So I leave the feather to mark my passing, I also leave a bloody confession for them. I guess I'm a pretty terrifying sight to behold when on a hunt, as I also rigged my mask to weep fake blood." Tony said. The rest of the men stared back at him blank faced.

"So that explains the unidentifiable substance at the scenes." One man quipped.

"So any more questions, maybe a fun one this time, don't want to leave you guys with that piece of imagery." Tony said.

"Who do you like more? The Avengers or the X-Men?" One asked.

"Well I've got to say I like living with the avengers more. There's a lot of strife in the X-Men due to a complicated love triangle between Cyclops, Wolverine and Dr. Gray. But we do have a lot of fun together, especially since I'm one of the younger X-Men and the youngest Avenger, so I can practically get away with murder, figuratively not literally. You should see some of the pranks I get away with. Plus apparently I have a death wish, as I actively play pranks on two of the more volatile members of the X-Men, Cyclops and Wolverine. I'm actually pretty surprised that I haven't been run thru with adamantium claws or photopic lasers yet." Tony said with a grin that was contagious.

The rest of the ride was filled with stories of some of the best pranks that Tony had done and by the time they pulled up to the training facilities, where Tony would be giving a demonstration and partake in a sort of war game with the agents, the SUV was filled with laughter, which left the agents outside the vehicle wondering what went on in that seemingly short ride to the training facility.

"Mr. Samael, if you would follow us." The agent who greeted Tony as he stepped out of the vehicle.

"Its just Samael. There is no mister, its like Beyoncé or Einstein, only one name is needed." Tony said with a grin as he was escorted inside.

"OK, well then, Samael, we need you to tell us if you're armed at all. Its just a security precaution." The head agent asked.
"Well I only have a few ceremonial knives on me, It is customary for a Dolofóni of my status to be armed at all times. I did leave the majority behind though. And if by security precautions, you mean metal detectors or a body scan of some sort, there are a few things you might want to know about." Tony said.

"We use a body scan device." The agent supplied.

"OK then, well you should know that I have a highly advanced prosthetic arm, that I keep covered at all times as it is one of Mr. Stark's prototypes. I also have a metal implant in my chest and two hearing aids, as I'm mostly deaf without them. So I'm going to flare up a bit on the screens." Tony said. "Not to mention I have several metal plates in various places due to unfortunate hunting accidents." He added.

"OK, we'll be sure to account for that. May I ask where your weapons are?" The agent asked.

"Well there are the visible ones, and I have a knife on the inside of each boot. Thats all I have on me today." Tony said.

" OK then I don't think we'll have any problems with the body scan then." The agent said as they passed thru a hallway where several scanners were set up to do the scan. "Now we just need to do a blood scan to make sure you weren't drugged before you came here."

"I'm going to have to watch that entire process. I can't have you scan my DNA in any way, it is vital that identity remains secret." Tony said.

"OK we will do everything in our power to make sure your identity remains unknown. We have already taken several precautions in protecting your identity, including the disarmament of any microphones in any room that you might be in."

"Thanks for taking those precautions." Tony replied as they were lead into a small room where Tony's blood was drawn and they watch the entire analysis and subsequent incineration.

"Ok, so the agents are waiting for you. Is there anything you'll need?" The agent asked.

"Um what exactly am I going to be doing?" Tony asked.

"Well Samael, they're going to be playing a sort of war game. You'll be playing a rogue assassin trying to kill the President and they're going to try to stop you." The agent explained.

"So I basically pretend that the president came up on my hit list and they are going to stop me. What's the rules?"

"Everyone will have on special vests that marks hits and kill shots. You'll be given a special bow, a set of knives and a gun that can trigger the sensors if you manage to 'kill' or 'injure' an agent. You can use sleeper holds on them but otherwise no bodily injuries."

"That sounds like fun." Tony said with a grin.

" Mr. President, its a pleasure to meet you in person." Tony said as he reached out his hand to shake The President's.

"They told me you were young, but I didn't think you would be this young. How old are you Master Samael?" President Obama said as he sat down on one of the chairs.

"Please call me Samael. I was promoted to Master only a few days ago, and the title makes me feel old. I'm only 27." Tony said as he sat across from the president.

"27? How on earth did you become a master assassin at 27? You're barely out of your teens!" Obama said shocked.

"Well I practically threw away the traditional ranking system based on age. I became a full fledged assassin at 14 1/2, while most cubs don't become assassins until they're at least 16. I progressed thru the rankings rather quickly, I actually became a master assassin shortly after my 22nd birthday, when most don't until they're 30. I was awarded council ship due to my combined work with the Dolofóni, the X-Men and Shield. I'm also one of the best assassins in the order." Tony explained.

" You became a full fledged assassin at 14 1/2? Most kids still struggle with simple algebra at that age!"
"Well if it helps Mr. President, I wasn't fully operational until I was 15. Shortly after I became a fledgling I was injured in an explosion, and I found that I possessed mutant abilities. I was allowed 6 months to recover and to learn how to use my powers with the X-Men," Tony said.

"What kind of injuries warrant six months to recuperate?" Obama asked horrified that a young teen the same age of his youngest daughter suffered from devastating injuries.

"Well I had some chest trauma, mostly from shrapnel, I also received some nasty burns and I lost most of my hearing due to my eardrums being ruptured. But thankfully we discovered I had a healing ability, I was mostly healed within 5 days. I had to take off 6 months though to regain some of the muscle definition I lost due to the shrapnel, and to learn how to control my newfound abilities." Tony said.

"You're deaf?"

"Yeah, but don't be surprised. I'm not the only mostly deaf member of the avengers, Hawkeye is mostly deaf too. It actually proves quite useful on missions where we have to have complete silence. Both of us can hear though thanks to the hearing aids Shield had in development." Tony explained.

"Let's go take a walk outside, in order for you to tell me about the new program your superiors want to try. There's less people around out there, plus its a gorgeous day." The President said as he rose from his chair and led him outside.

"OK, so the Dolofóni think that, with all the threats that you and other governmental officials have been facing over the past few years, there should be a few undercover assassins placed inside the secret service and other organizations. They would be fully loyal to the organization they would be placed in, only having to report to the den every few weeks, and would be fully undercover with only you and a few other people knowing that they were there." Tony explained.

"That does sound like a good idea, with how you managed to take down 50 of my highest trained secret service agents yesterday. But how do they know it will work?"

"Well because of me. Technically I was their trial run, with me being apart of three organizations." Tony said then he glanced something out of the corner of his eye. "You guys don't happen to have an agent hiding in the treeline about 1000 meters to our right do you?" Tony asked one of the agents who had accompanied them. By the looks of confusion and shock on their faces he knew it could only be one thing. "Get down! Sniper!" He yelled as he ran to cover the President and the agents went into action. He felt a wave of pain erupt through his back as he tackled the president to the ground.

"We've got a Sniper over here! Shots have been fired. I need immediate medical attention, the Eagle is down!"

"Mr. President, Are you okay?"

"I'm fine!"

"Then where is this blood coming from?" "Samael? Oh God, he's been hit!"

"Is he going to be OK?"

"It doesn't look good!"

Tony heard voices yell in a frenzy as the pain washed over him like a tsunami, and he sank into the inky black sea of unconsciousness.

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President Obama POV

"You guys don't happen to have an agent hiding in the treeline about 1000 meters to our right do you?" Samael suddenly asked as he saw something out of the corner of his eye.

"We don't have anyone over there." One of the agents said.

"Get down! Sniper!" Samael yelled as two subsequent shots went off, and the next thing he knew he was on the ground, with the young assassin using his body to protect him.

"We've got a Sniper over here! Shots have been fired. I need immediate medical attention, the Eagle is down!" Agent Rupert yelled into his earpiece and the rest of the agents went into a frenzy.
"Mr. President, are you okay?" Agent Michaels asked him worriedly.
"I'm fine!" He blurted as he didn't feel any pain, yet he felt a warm sticky fluid penetrate his suit. Blood! If he hadn't been hit, Oh God...
"Then where is this blood coming from?" Agent Michaels asked in a panic. There was only one person who the blood could have belonged to. "Samael? Oh God, he's been hit!" He yelled as he realized that the young man hadn't moved despite all of the commotion. The agents ran over and pulled Samael off of him, and began to examine the wounds. "Is he going to be OK?" He asked fearing the answer, as the assassin had just saved his life.
"It doesn't look good!" One of the agents yelled, he was unsure who as his brain had started to fog at the realization that the young man who had already been through so much might have just made the ultimate sacrifice.
"I need immediate medical care. Man down with two gunshot wounds, one upper back and one lower abdomen. He's lost a lot of blood!" Another agent yelled into his ear piece.
"Samael I need you to stay with me! Shit! He's going into hypovolemic shock!"
"Why do they have to wear so many layers? I can't access the wounds!" Another agent yelled in frustration before he heard the ripping of fabric.
"Mr. President, are you OK?" Agent Michaels asked worriedly.
"Is he going to be OK?" Was all he could muster.
"He's lost a lot of blood, I'm not sure how much longer he'll survive though, its bad." The worried agent said defeatedly.
"He's just a kid! Barely ten years older than Malia! He shouldn't be lying there covered in blood! He should be enjoying his youth! Do everything you can to make sure he lives." He ranted as he started to question why someone so young had to suffer so much.
"He's going into cardiac arrest!" An agent yelled urgently as his heart sunk lower.
"Damn It! I can't give him mouth to mouth with this stupid mask on! I'm going to have to take it off!" Another agent yelled, then a round of shocked gasps erupted.
"Holy Shit!"
"It can't be!"
"What is it? What's going on! "He yelled as he got to his feet.
"Mr. President, you're going to want to see this!" Agent Michaels said with a look of shock on his face, as he walked over to where the young man laid limp on the ground, with Agent Sullivan giving him CPR. He glanced down at the unmaked face, they're was no mistaking his Identity.
"Is that Tony Stark?" He asked as he heard a chopper land. "Get me on the phone with Nick Fury, Now!" He yelled as the young billionaire, who had way more secrets than any of them could imagine was loaded onto a backboard and taken onto the helicopter. Then he was handed a phone.
"This is Fury." A man answered on the other end.
"Director Fury?"
"Yes, who is this and how'd you get my private number?" The man yelled.
"This is President Obama. You better come down to D.C. Its about Samael, or should I say, Tony Stark."
"I have no idea what you're talking about."
"He's been shot twice by a sniper while protecting me. We had to take off his mask to start CPR. Trust me, I know who he is. You better come, I don't know how much longer he has." He said as his voice betrayed his true feelings.
"Oh shit, I'll be down there as soon as I can. Do me a favor and keep his identity as down low as you can." The man said urgently as he hung up.

"Widow." She blurted as she answered the phone.
"Its Tony, he's been shot. Its pretty bad. You might want to get down here." Fury said anxiously as she felt her knees give out and the phone dropped to the ground.
"Tasha? Tasha! What's wrong?!" Clint yelled as he saw her collapse. She couldn't find the words to answer him as her eyes welled up with tears. Clint picked up the phone and his face fell as he heard the news.

"Natasha? Clint? Someone tell me what's going on!" Steve bellowed.

"Its Tony, he's took two bullets for the president. He's in bad shape." Clint managed to get out and the rest of the teams faces fell. How could Tony be dying? He just got out of the hospital two weeks ago due to Magneto, how could he be there again? All of the Avengers were lost in their thoughts as they processed the devastating information. With the only sound being Natasha quietly mumbling,

"о Тони ... младший брат ... они будут платить за это...(oh tony...baby brother...they'll pay for this.)"

"Charles what's wrong?" Jean asked as the professor got a pained look on his face.

"Its Tony, we need to get to D.C. now! He's been shot protecting the President." He exclaimed.

"What?!"

"Get the blackbird ready, he knows."

"Who knows? Knows what?"

"The President knows that Samael is Tony Stark." Charles exclaimed.

"Oh, shit!" Jean exclaimed, as she ran off to gather the X-Men.
As soon as they landed they were met by Director Fury and several secret agents.
"What happened?" Clint asked, wanting to get as much information as possible.
"The President and were walking outside, discussing the potential collaboration between the Dolofóni and the Secret Service, when Mr. Stark, spotted something in the tree line. He asked if we had any men in that area and we didn't. We heard two subsequent gunshots and Mr. Stark had tackled the president to the ground in an effort to protect him." One of the agents who were at the scene stated.
"Did you catch him?" Steve asked.
"No we found no trace of the sniper except for two bullet casings. He must of left in a hurry."
"Or he wanted us to find him." Natasha suggested.
"What?" The agent asked confused.
"Who knew that you guys were going to be outside? Was it a last minute decision or was it well thought?" Natasha asked rapidly, letting the Widow slip thru.
"The only people who knew were the secret service agents who patrol the perimeter and those who guard the President. No one else really knew." The agent said.
"Then you either have a mole, or your radio lines have been tampered with." Clint said.
"How is he?" Natasha then butted in directing her question to no one in particular.
"Tony's still in surgery. The bullets were high impact, so they caused a lot of damage. He's also lost a lot of blood. He's lucky to be alive though." Fury stated.
"Is his true identity still safe?" Bruce asked.
"The President wishes to consult that topic with you and a few of his advisers." Fury stated.
"When?" Steve asked.
"Now, that way he can start damage control if needed." Fury said as the Secret Service agents escorted the team of superheroes to a boardroom located deep within the bowels of the hospital.
Clint couldn't help but notice the addition of secret service men and the solemn atmosphere of the hospital, as an near attempt on the Presidents life is an extremely serious matter. They arrived at a door, with two armed men standing guard. One of the agents who escorted them went into the "Mr. President, I have the people you wished to speak with outside."
"You can bring them in." A exhausted sounding voice answered. The door opened to reveal the President and two of his advisers, sitting at a large table. "I was hoping to be able to meet you guys under happier circumstances. My daughter Sasha, is pretty much obsessed with all things Avengers." The president said with a fake smile as he stood to greet the legendary heroes.
"I wish we could have meet under better circumstances too." Steve said in his Captain America voice.
"I always knew there was something special about Tony Stark, but never in a million years would I have guessed that he was one of the most powerful mutants and assassins on this planet, or that he would take not one, but two bullets for me." The President said gravely.
"Well thats Tony for you. He might be one of the most brilliant people on this planet, but he is also one of the bravest self-sacrificing idiots I've ever met." Steve said.
"I kinda figured that out when he tackled me to the ground and got shot." The President said blank faced.
"Trust me, I know how you're feeling right now. I can't even begin to tell you how many times Tony has thrown himself into the line of fire in order to save one of us. He's had so many close calls that the medics on the helicarrier know most of us on a pretty personal level, due to how often he winds up there. Yet he always seems to make it out no worse than when he came in." Clint said trying to ease the worried Commander in Chief.
"Then why does he hide behind a mask?" The President asked.
"Honestly, I have no idea. Half of the team only recently found out that he and Samael were the
same person a week and a half ago, and we've been on the same team for over two years. Heck we even live together." Steve said.

"How'd you find out about the man behind the mask?" The president asked curiously.

"Well a mutant named Magneto, decided to reveal his secret and then tried to kill him." Steve said.

"And nearly succeeded too. In fact he was only let out of the hospital last Friday. Then he was promoted to the Council, had to go through a tough three day trial, in which he couldn't sleep and was forced to go beyond his limits. You were his first assignment as a council member." Bruce added.

"How was he not dead on his feet? I watched the surveillance of him taking down 50 of my most highly trained agents, while barely breaking a sweat, during a training session." The president said in shock.

"Tony doesn't know his limits. When he lost his arm 4 years ago, he shrugged it off like it was a scratch, holed himself up in his lab and emerged two weeks later with a fully functional bionic arm, the Iron Man armor and a miniaturized arc reactor, that could power a small house for a year. He doesn't know the concept of relaxation and 'taking it easy' doesn't exist in his vocab. Its probably why he's so good." Clint said.

"But why doesn't he show his true colors and just reveal who he is?" The president asked. Widow just handed him a heavy folder.

"Because if he did the public will know that he lied about his entire past. What you know about Tony Stark is just a well fabricated lie. It was necessary for us to hide the real events that happened during those four years where Tony was off the charts, because we couldn't let how insane and dangerous Howard Stark was come to light." Natasha explained gravely.

"But wasn't Howard Stark proven, although never convicted, to be a terrorist?" The President asked as he opened the file.

"Yes, but in reality he was not only a terrorist and a war monger, he was practically an evil mastermind with aspirations for global domination. He had his hands in the pots of so many organizations, such as A.I.M. and Hydra, that all of them still haven't come to light, even though its been 10 years since his death. And he wanted to use his son as the ultimate weapon to achieve his goals." Natasha explained, to the audible gasps of three of her teammates and the president and his advisers. The President was engrossed in all of the paperwork that was sitting before him.

"How could a man do this to his own son? How was he able to get away with this?" One of the advisers asked perplexed by the images before her.

"Howard never thought of Tony as his son, he thought of him as a means to achieve his goal. What I'm about to tell you is something I don't think even Tony knows, as he was too young to probably remember it clearly. Howard Stark knew that his son was a mutant from the beginning, albeit very low powered. Howard also never got over losing Captain America in the forties, so he tried to create another super soldier, by injecting his own son with the serum." Natasha said.

"Did it work?"

"Yes, but not in the traditional sense as you can see with Captain Rogers. As Dr. Erskine stated "The serum amplifies everything that is inside, so good becomes great; bad becomes worse.". Tony was only a child, probably not much older than 6, when he was given the serum. His mutant abilities, and intelligence were all enhanced in a similar manner of how Captain Rogers gained 100 lbs of muscle and a foot of height, almost instantaneously. The serum also makes the bad qualities worse, it worked the same way. Although Tony didn't have any truly bad qualities, like the urges to get into fistfights like Steve, he was raised in an environment without love, and the serum amplified that and gave him an almost non-existent sense of self-preservation, and the constant need for approval and attention." Natasha explained.

"How do you know all of this?" The President asked with a mixture of curiosity and shock.

"Because I was there when it happened." Director Fury stated as he walked into the room and sat next to his favorite assassin, well second favorite. "Although I didn't know all of the details at the time. If I would have known then what I know I would have taken Tony away from his father, if you could even call him that, in a heartbeat. I didn't approve of Howard's reckless experimentation,
and he led all of us at shield to believe that the test subject was willing and not a six-year old little boy, who only wanted his father's approval. Howard told us that the test subject did not survive the trial, and we took his word although from that day forward we kept a wary eye on him. It wasn't until Samael came on the scene that we found out that the test subject from those trials was actually his son." Fury stated.

"Why did it take you so long?"

"Howard isolated the kid. He kept Tony away from the other kids his age, so no one ever knew anything was off with Tony besides him being one of the most brilliant kids on the planet. Howard didn't believe that the experiment worked, because like with most mutant children, Tony didn't show his abilities until after his father nearly beat him to death when he was 13." Fury said as he picked a series of pictures out of the file and put them in the center of the table, earning a collective round of gasps.

"I don't think I can do this anymore." Bruce said, as his skin took on a green tint.

"I have an agent outside with a sedative. It won't knock you out as promised. Go!" Fury said and Bruce got out of the room as fast as he could.

"What's wrong with him?"

"Didn't anyone tell you that Dr. Banner is the Hulk? The Hulk has developed an attachment to Tony, that none of us can really explain. The Hulk is VERY protective of Tony." Fury explained.

"Back to the story. By all means Tony shouldn't have survived that beating. Howard had mercilessly beat him after Tony had created his first AI, a small robotic dog designed to keep him company as he was incredibly lonely, and Howard exploded due to the robot being 'useless' and having no purpose in the finding of Captain America. So Howard tore apart the robot and proceeded to beat his son with the broken pieces and a hammer. Howard managed to practically crush Tony's left arm and leg, cracked his skull, causing some dangerous swelling and a grade three concussion. Tony was also given multiple deep contusions and lacerations all over his body, and left broken pieces of metal stuck in the wounds. Tony wasn't given any medical attention until a day later when it was almost too late. Tony was in the hospital in a comatose state for a week, and was in the hospital for another week for observation. He should have been in that hospital for more than a month with the injuries that bastard gave him, but he made a near miraculous recovery and defied the odds." Fury stated.

"How did anyone not find this out? Tony Stark, even as a child was a very public figure." One of the advisors asked.

"We later found out that Howard Stark either killed or paid off many of the doctors who had treated Tony over the years. One Doctor did manage to spill some of his knowledge to the media, but was subsequently killed in a brutal fashion after he watched Howard kill his wife and children." I still can't comprehend how a father could do this to his son."

"He was insane with the hunger for power, and he would do anything to get his way. During the four years Tony was 'missing', Howard Stark was actively hunting his son. There were no less than 6 times where he nearly killed or apprehended his son, each time Tony barely escaped by the skin of his teeth. Of course, we didn't know about this until after Howard died."

"Am I right in assuming Tony had a part in his fathers death?" The President asked apprehensively.

"Yes. Howard had taken his wife, his ex-butler, who practically raised Tony, and his household staff hostage. Tony was sent in to save the hostages and talk down his father. Tony managed to get the household staff free, but Howard refused to let his wife and butler go. Tony, who was bugged at the time due to a radio he has in one of his hearing aids, then found out that his butler was in reality an undercover MI6 spy sent in to gain information on Howard Stark, who had apparently been suspected to be a terrorist since the early 80's. Tony also found out that his father had been the man behind several of his most devastating attacks, including the one in which he lost his hearing. Howard then blew himself, his wife and his butler up, and Tony barely managed to escape with his life once more. Tony then took back his old life, just to have his Godfather turn around and hold him prisoner for two more months. I'm not even sure how Tony managed to escape that without losing his mind." Fury explained.
"So you're basically telling me that if I reveal his identity to the world, his tragic background is going to come out of the shadows?" The President said with his head in his hands.

"No, I'm saying, if you want to reveal him, can you at least wait until the whole mutant revelation to pass? He hasn't even had time to deal with those ramifications. If you reveal that he is also a highly trained assassin along with being one of the most powerful mutants on the planet, he will most likely lose everything. His company, his fortune, his reputation and even his privacy. He would never know another moment of peace, if you reveal this secret now." Fury said.

"I see what you mean. If I had a back story even half, no a quarter, of as tragic as his is, I would've never even held a public position, not to mention become president. I'll keep his identity a secret, until he decides to let it come to light. I just want the world to see that if it wasn't for Tony Stark and his mutant abilities, I wouldn't be here. He needs someone powerful in his corner to support him during the next few weeks as the world decides on whether Tony Stark is dangerous or a hero." The President said.

"I might be able to help you there. We can create a back story stating that you were having a private meeting with Tony Stark, not Samael, when due to his abilities he saw the sniper and saved your life. There are no video feeds of Samael, right?"

"They met in an undisclosed location, due to the nature of their meeting. Any evidence of him being there has been destroyed." One of the head agents said.

"That just made it that much easier. We can even say it was a private meeting just between the two of you, to discuss his plan to put Arc Reactors in every major U.S. city, or something along those lines." Fury suggested.

"That seems plausible. It actually might work." The President said contemplatively. Then there was an urgent knock on the door. An agent got up to check the door. And led a doctor into the room.

"I've come to inform you that he's out of surgery. He's still in critical condition, as the bullets did a lot of damage to his abdominal tissues and upper thoracic region. He's also pretty weak, he lost a lot of blood. We're going to keep him in the ICU for a few days to monitor his health. Usually in the ICU the only visitors allowed are the patients family members, but seeing how he has no living family members, and how he recently saved your life, the visitation rules have been suspended, but only three people are allowed in the room at a time, as is not out of the danger zone yet. I also saw to it that two guards are placed by his door as you suggested. Do any of you have any questions?" The doctor asked.

"When will he be stable enough to be transferred to the Helicarrier? The doctors in our med-bay are more familiar with Tony's particular medical history. Plus its far more secure up there." Fury asked.

"As I've said, he's been touch and go, for the past several hours, but if he survives the night his chances of survival will increase significantly. So by my guess he could probably be transported in the morning, barring any complications." The Doctor said, as he led them to the ICU waiting room.

"We got a report of five people wanting to get information or to see , one of them says he a Professor Xavier. What do you want us to do?"

"It's the X-Men, there like Tony's second family." Fury said.

"But how did they find out where he was?"

"Charles is a very strong telepath. Tony's also a telepath, very minor compared to Professor Xavier. When Tony was shot he probably unknowingly broadcasted himself being in pain. It's happened before."

"Then let them up. They have as much right to see him as you guys do."

"Tell them to report to the nurses station when they get up to the ICU. I'm putting you guys in a private room, as I don't want word to get out that the Avengers, the X-Men and The President are all here. We would be flooded with paparazzi and the media. One of the nurses will bring them to you. Now who's up first?" The doctor asked. The team glanced at each other as if trying to communicate without words. They soon decided that Clint, Natasha, and Thor would be first up. Then the three of them followed the doctor to where their wounded teammate was laying. Leaving Steve, Fury and the President, along with his secret service agents in the tiny but well furnished room. A few seconds later there was a knock on the door. One of the agents went to answer it, then
ushered the group of mutants who had gathered outside in.
"Where is he? How is he? When can I see him?" Ororo immediately questioned as soon as she laid eyes on Fury.
"He's in a room in the ICU. He's only allowed three visitors at a time. He just got out of surgery and he's in critical condition." Fury explained. Then Ororo noticed how quiet the group of mutants had got, she gazed around the room and found the problem.
"Mr. President? Why are you here, did I miss something?" Ororo inquired a bit confused and in shock at the sight of the President of the United States in front of her.
"You must be Storm. I'm here because I'm the reason why Mr. Stark has been shot." President Obama said as all eyes came onto him.
"What do you mean you're the reason he was shot?" Scott said, a bit gruffly causing the two Secret Service Men to put their hands on their weapons.
"Well I was meeting with him, though he was dressed as Samael at the time, to discuss a few new Dolofóni policies that are about to be initiated. He spotted a sniper as we were walking, and the next thing I knew I was pinned under him and he had been shot twice." The President stated. "I owe him my life."
"How'd you find out his identity?" Jean asked.
"He had stopped breathing, and in order for one of my men to give him CPR, they had to remove the mask."
"And what are ya gonna do about that bit of info?" Logan asked, also a bit gruffly.
"I'm going to make sure it stays a secret, until the time is right. 'Samael' hadn't met with me that day 'Tony Stark' did." The president subtly implied.
"Its good to know we have a man as powerful as you on our side, Barack." Charles said stoically.
The President was a bit taken aback by the informality.
"Don't worry, he does that to everyone." Jean said.
"All I want to know is, is he OK?" Ororo asked.
"We don't know if he's going to survive the night, the bullets did a lot of damage. Plus Tony wasn't in the best physical condition to begin with." Fury explained.
"What do you mean, not in the best physical condition? He's in better shape than majority of the avengers and the X-Men, combined." Jean asked.
"He just came off of the trials. Three days of no sleep, very little food and intense physical tests. Plus he just recovered from Magneto less than a week ago. This mission was supposed to be simple." Fury said.
"Has anyone called Fane yet?" Scott asked.
"No, Clint's going to after he finishes his visit with Tony." Steve said.
"Where's Bruce?" Jean, who had taken a liking to the mild mannered physicist, asked.
"We had to cover some very sensitive background information with the President. The Other Guy didn't like subject, so we gave a mild sedative to avoid seeing his angry alter ego. Right now is sitting as high as a kite in a hospital room, he'll join us as soon as it wears off." Fury said.
"Sensitive news? Oh you didn't." Ororo said as she got the reference.
"I had to." Fury said.
"Don't worry, what I learned today won't see the light of day." The President reassured her.
"Thank you."

It was so painful to see Tony lying in the bed swathed in bandages, and hooked up to various machines designed to keep him alive. He looked so small and the lights in the room seemed to highlight every scar on his chest, which was uncovered for was of access. Natasha walked up to Tony's bedside and ran a hand through his tangled hair. She could feel Clint walk up behind her and saw his hand go to stroke Tony's limp one lying on the bed. Then she felt Thor's strong hand on her shoulder.
"Don't worry Natasha, he will survive this. He is not one for the valkyries yet." Thor stated in a soft but strong voice. Then they heard a tone that they would never wish on one of their enemies, Tony was flattlining. She saw the world grow fuzzy as she heard a doctors scream "Code Blue!" And "He's crashing!"

How could this be happening? Just yesterday she saw his cheerful smile as he laughed with his teammates over some stupid joke. She felt Clint's strong arms embrace her as he guided her away from the scene. She couldn't survive losing another teammate so soon after they had lost Phil, whose death was still fresh in each of their minds even after two years. She could hear Thor and Clint telling her things, but her brain couldn't comprehend the English she had grown so accustomed to...all she could see was a blurred landscape due to the foreign tears obstructing her vision. There was only one thing clear in her head, she was going to kill whoever had shot Tony, even if it was the last thing she did.

They were all sitting silently in the emotion filled room, when Thor, Clint and Natasha came in. Natasha looked as white as a ghost, and the rest of the room's occupants knew something was off. "What's wrong? Tony isn't..." Jean asked, as she had never seen Natasha look so shakened. "We don't know. Tony crashed while we were in the room...they ushered us out before we knew if he was..." Clint said as he trailed off not wanting to say the dreaded words. "He's going to be fine, he always pulls thru." Ororo said as she got up and led Natasha to a chair. "Anthony is a mighty warrior, he is far too young to go to Valhalla yet." Thor practically bellowed as he sat in an empty chair.

Then came an urgent knock to the door and the doctor they had spoke with earlier walked in. The entire room held their collective breaths as they waited for the news. "Don't worry, he's still alive." The doctor stated as the room found they were able to breathe once more. "He coded due to the fact that he's still recovering from the blood loss and not getting enough oxygen due to his already deplenished lung capacity combined with the collapsed lung. We have him on a ventilator now and under sedation. You can continue with your visits once we have him stabilized once more. I'm so sorry you guys had to witness that. "The Doctor said before he left the room.

"Has anyone called Fane yet?" Clint asked after he comprehended the doctor's news. "No, we were waiting for you." Fury said. "We thought he would take it better if you gave him the news." He added knowing the past relationship between the two assassins. "Yeah, probably a good idea. I'm not sure how he's going to react towards the news. Hopefully he doesn't call in the cavalry to hunt down this guy, because I think we're all itching to catch the bastard who did this to Tony. I'll be back in a bit." Clint said as he left the room to find a private location.

"When he says 'cavalry' what does he mean?" The President asked waringly. "The Dolofóni have a strong tradition of righting the wrongs that have been done to their assassins. The cavalry is what happens when a dozen of their top assassins are called in to correct said wrongs." Fury explained. "And why wouldn't he want the cavalry called in?"

"Well because it can become a bit messy when you combine a dozen highly trained assassins with two elite groups of superhumans." Fury said stoically.

"Oh...I see." The President said as if he just realized that he was sitting in a room filled with two powerful groups of superhumans, who now shared a common vendetta. "Its probably best if we don't tell you any details, as the less you know the better the outcome." Scott said.

"I understand, completely. I would probably do the same thing if someone harmed the person I loved." The President admitted.

"Glad to see we're on the same page." Fury said.
"As many of you may know, three days ago an attempt was made on my life. I would not be here in front of you today if it wasn't for the heroic efforts of a young man. Anthony Stark! put his life on the line to save me from being shot by a lone sniper. If it wasn't for the fact that Mr. Stark, possesses mutant capabilities, I would have not been able to escape the path of the bullets. Thankfully, Mr. Stark, was able to spot the sniper due to his enhanced vision and jumped into the line of fire, at grave personal injury. Mr. Stark, showed me the reason why mutants should be respected. We should not compare the entirety of mutant kind, to the actions of the Brotherhood. Who knows where the next hero could be? He or she could be standing amongst you. Mutants possess abilities that many can call heroic or lifesaving and thanks to the valiant efforts of Tony Stark, I plan on stopping all efforts made towards the Mutant Registration Act. Who are we to prevent the next hero from rising from a crowd of ordinary citizens? Who are we to say who can and can't go to school based on a simple mutation in their DNA? A young man is lying in a hospital bed recovering from wounds taken at the expense of saving a life, and thanks to that man and many like him, I can say that the world is a better place with mutants around."

"Is the target in sight, Hawkeye?"
"I have him in my sights, am I clear to take the shot?"
"Yes, set me up a live feed first, I want to see the life flee from the bastards eyes."
"Gotcha, Widow."
"боже мой! That can't be!" Natasha exclaimed as she nearly dropped her radio at the site of the assassin. "Take the shot now before he sees you Hawkeye!" She screamed into the mic.
"Shit he saw me!"
"Clear the vicinity! This has just gotten a whole lot bigger than an assassination attempt."
"What's larger than an attempt on the presidents life?"
"He's the Winter Soldier, he never misses a target. Something tells me he wasn't gunning for the president."
"The Winter Soldier? Wasn't he supposed to have died in the Cold War?" Clint asked confused.
"No, thats the last time he surfaced. We have to get this back to Fury, before its too late."

"How is he?" Ororo asked Bruce as she took a seat besides Tony's bed.
"Better, we just have to wait for him to wake up. Once he's fully conscious, he can begin the healing process." Bruce said.
"Why hasn't he woke up yet? Its been three days!"
"My best guess is, that he's exhausted. He's been through hell in the past two weeks. Even a superhuman needs to rest sometime." Bruce said with a frown.
"What he needs is a vacation. When was the last time he actually let loose and had a bit of fun?" Ororo said with a sad face.
"Honestly I don't know."Bruce admitted.
"He's 27! He should be out doing jello shots and getting into trouble, not running the world's largest tech company, and saving the President from snipers. The way he works, he's going to be an old man before he's 40." Ororo said with a forced laugh. Bruce joined in, relieving himself of three days worth of tension.
Then they heard the machines quicken.
"What's happening?" Ororo asked worriedly.
"He's waking up! I'm gonna go grab the others, you stay here in case he wakes up before I come
Ororo could see Tony's eyes fluttering, and a smile grew on her face.

"What...Happened?" He questioned, his voice raspy from disuse.

"You were shot protecting the President, malaika. (Angel)" She said. "How do you feel?"

"Like I went a round with the Hulk and Logan. Where are the others?" He asked a bit confused.

"Bruce went to get them."

"Was the President OK?" Tony asked.

"Yeah, you saved his life. Nearly died trying too. Don't you ever scare me like that again." She scolded softly, because the group of anxious superheroes burst into the room.

"Tony! You're awake!"

"Don't you ever do that again!"

"How do you feel?"

"Shield Brother Anthony! I knew you were not meant for Valhalla!"

"I'm so glad you're OK!" Came the barrage of panicked questions and exclamations.

"Guys let Tony breath a bit, he did just wake up!" Bruce proclaimed stopping the rapid questions.

"So what exactly happened? Wait, how long have I been out?" Tony asked taking in their anxious body language.

"You were shot twice with a really high powered rifle. The bullets did a lot of damage, we nearly lost you." Clint said gravely.

"You've been out for three days, Tony." Bruce said.

"Three days?! Does he know?" Tony asked in a bit of a panic.

"Yes..." Jean started before Tony interrupted.

"What? I'm never going to be able to show my face to the public again! Fane is going to kill me! What good is being an assassin if everyone knows who I am?!!"

"Tony, settle down. He knows, but he's decided to keep your secret. As far as the public knows Samael wasn't the one to save him, you were." Jean finished.

"What? How did you persuade him?" Tony asked confused.

"Well I may have informed him about your really happened." Natasha said guiltily.

"So he knows all of my secrets? That doesn't explain why he didn't go to the media." Tony said still confused.

"He took your past to heart, and we came to a mutual decision that the world is not ready to know what truly happened to Tony Stark during those four years." She explained. "He's made the public know that you're a hero, inside and outside the suit."

"Seriously?"

"He's considering giving you the Presidential Medal of Honor." Scott added.

"Even after the whole mutant revelation?"

"Tony, he told the public that he was against the MRA, he's on the mutant's side. This might be the turning point on that allows us to coexist with ordinary people without discrimination." Jean explained.

"Seriously?" Tony asked again. "Wait, where's Pepper?" He asked noting the absence of his PA.

"She, along with the Professor, is trying to control the hordes of people inquiring about your condition and wanting to interview you. You've become the most popular mutant seemingly overnight, and have acquired quite the fan-base and a horde of new enemies that need to be dealt with." Ororo explained.

"So how long do I have to stay here? Because this room is getting quite cramped with all of you in here." Tony said with a slight grin.

"Well I don't think you should heal in one go, you're body has been through hell in the past couple weeks and I don't want you to overexert yourself, so in a few days. But whenever you're ready we can start the first round."

"Ok, are you guys ready?" Tony asked, then waited for everyone to get seated anywhere they could find. "I don't think you guys are going to sleep this time, plus it might be awkward to explain why their is a room filled with passed out avengers and x men, to the eventual nurse who pops her
head in." Tony said with a grin, before he started siphoning the energy required to spark the healing process. When he was finished he fell into a deep sleep.

"What aren't you telling us?" Jean asked Natasha and Clint as soon as Tony was asleep.

"How do you know we're hiding anything?" Clint asked.

"I'm telepathic, remember? You two have been broadcasting fear and worry like a billboard, ever since you came back. Now tell us what you know." Jean said determinedly. Natasha and Clint exchanged grave looks.

"We tracked down the assassin..." Clint started.

"Did you get him?" Logan asked gruffly.

"No, he knew we were on his tail, and he played us like a fiddle." Clint finished.

"What do you mean he played you? You're two of shield's top assassins!" Scott asked.

"He's no ordinary assassin. He's someone like me. He goes by the Winter Soldier, though I know him by a different name, Yakov." Natasha said gravely.

"The Winter Soldier? Didn't he die in the 80's?" Bruce asked.

"No, as I told you, he is like me. He didn't die, he was most likely put away until he was needed. He's never missed a target, so he's going to be coming back to finish the job." Natasha explained.

"Finish the job? You mean he's coming back for the President? Shouldn't we tell the Secret Service?" Steve asked.

"No, I have reason to believe that his target wasn't the President. He was after Tony all along. He's going to try and kill Tony again when he is most vulnerable." Natasha said stone faced.

"Why would he go after Tony?" Jean asked.

"Why not? He is an extremely talented assassin, who happens to be the world's expert in technology, and a vital member of three top organizations. With Tony out of the picture, Stark Industries would fall drastically behind its competitors, some top criminals who would have ended up on Tony's list would be alive, and both the Avengers and the X-Men would lose one of their most vital members." Clint added.

"So what's your plan?" Steve asked.

"Well first things first, he probably just heard everything we just said, he's staking out the territory. So I've prepared a room that has no cameras and mics. Second, I want two people to guard Tony at all times, first up Thor and Ororo. Don't speak in English while in the room, OK? I'll fill you two in later, the rest of you with me." Natasha said as she put on her Widow persona, and lead the vengeful group of hero's to the blackout room.

"Is everyone in position?" She asked, getting everyone's affirmations in reply. "OK, we're starting the transfer now. Keep on your toes, and remember if you spot the Winter Soldier, don't go after him alone." Then Natasha along with Steve started their way to the rooftop with the gurney to await extraction.

"I've got movement in the corridor on your left. Confirmed sighting of the target." A voice whispered urgently in her.

"Looks like the fun's about to start." Natasha warned Steve with a smile.

"Can't wait."

Then figure jumped out at them and Natasha and Steve started attacking.

"Bet you thought we had Tony, Yakov." Natasha spat as she avoided a blow to the head. Then she pulled off the sheet of the gurney to reveal a dummy.

"Tony's in safe hands by now." Steve added, socking the assassin in the jaw with his shield.

The fight lasted for several minutes before Steve finally managed to pin the Russian to the ground.

"You know what I always wondered, Yakov? Is what is hiding under that mask of yours." Natasha said as she peered over him, then ripped off the mask. Steve loosened his grip as he bit back a startled gasp.

"Bucky?" The usually assured sounding Captain asked in a shaky voice. "It can't be, I saw you
"Bucky? Who's Bucky?" The man asked in a heavy accent, before Natasha got him in a sleeper hold and subdued the assassin.

"You mind telling me who Bucky is?" She asked the still shaken Captain.

"He was my best friend from the war, we grew up together. I watched him fall from a bridge to his death during a mission to take out hydra. We never recovered his body." He explained. Natasha knew that there was a very real chance that this Bucky and Yakov, were the same man, as she knew of the experiments the Red Room performed.

"Steve, now there is a possibility that they are the same person, but I've got to warn you the man you knew is most likely gone. I don't even remember my life before the red room. Hell, I don't even know my exact age. The Red Room was designed to wipe as much of our past lives from us as possible, in order to make us obedient assassins. I managed to escape, and regain some of my past characteristics. But it wasn't without years of trying. If there is any part of Bucky in that man, I will personally help it come to light. Now let's take him into custody." Natasha explained.

"Thanks." Steve said still in shock at the discovery of his best friend who was now a cold hearted assassin.

"Target is down, is Tony safe?" Natasha asked.

"Tony is still asleep and is safely aboard the Quinjet. Just waiting for you two." Clint said over the air ways.

"See you in a few." Natasha said as Steve threw the Winter Soldier over his arm and the went to the rooftop.
"Who ordered the hit on Tony?" Natasha spat as she slapped the assassin in front of her.

"You've grown weak since you left us Natasha." Yakov said with a grin.

"Answer me Yakov!"

"Anyone ever tell you that you hit like a girl?" He asked trying to rile her up.

"You know I have ways of making you talk, so why don't you do the cleaning crews a favor and tell me who ordered the hit? I'm sure they rather not spend hours cleaning up your blood after I'm done with you." Natasha growled.

"You don't have the guts."

"I've had enough of this! Do you realize who you shot?! You nearly killed the man that I call brother! You've made this personal! Now tell me who sent you!" She said as jumped on him and put her knife to his throat.

"Never!" He yelled. She placed pressure on the blade causing blood to well up.

"I have a room full of very angry superhumans out there, all wanting to destroy you for what you did to Tony. Now why don't you tell me who sent you before I send one of them in. You've heard of the Hulk, right?" She said with a sadistic smile, that struck fear into the eyes of the hardened mercenary.

"The..Hulk?" He asked a bit fearful.

"Yes. Big, giant, green, rage monster, who happens to be really angry right now. Seems you've hurt the man that he is very protective over. So, are you going to speak, or am I going to have to invite our big friend to play?" She asked coyly as she went to the door.

"Fine, I'll talk, just keep that Thing away from me. It was Hydra." He said before he suddenly grasped his head in agony as he let out an anguished moan.

"Yakov? Can you hear me?" She asked urgently at the sight of his distress.

"Head...ugh...hurts." He moaned as he clutched his head tighter.

"I need a medic here, Now!" She yelled into her mic. Moments later the door swung open and a team of medics came rushing in.

"What happened?" The lead medic asked.

"I have no idea, one moment he was spilling his guts, the next he was in agony!" She told them.

"What did you do to him during the questioning?" He asked.

"Nothing! I barely touched him, well I gave him that cut on his neck and knocked a few teeth loose, but nothing to cause this!" She said defensively. "What's wrong with him?"

"His symptoms line up with a severe concussion or aneurysm. Did the symptoms appear suddenly?" He inquired, as the other medics laid The Soldier on a stretcher.
"He was about to tell me who sent him, but the moment he said Hydra he collapsed in pain." She told him.

"He might have an implant to prevent him from reveal his secrets. I won't know for sure until I get him in a MRI." The medic said with a grave look on face.

"I need to see Fury, tell me when his condition changes." She said before she rushed out of the room.

"Come in, Natasha." She heard before she even knocked on the door to Fury's office.

"Did you get anything from him?" He asked as she shut the door behind her.

"Hydra sent him."

"Are you sure? Hydra's been dead for more than half a century!"

"Director, you know as well as I, that Hydra was never truly dead, just as The Winter Soldier, never truly died in the 80's and is currently laying in a bed in the med-bay"

"What did you do to him?" Fury asked with morbid curiosity.

"I just roughed him up a bit, but the moment he mentioned Hydra, he collapsed in agony. They think he has an implant in his brain that will prevent him from speaking to us, and might also wipe his memories." Natasha said.

"Wipe his memories?"

"Apparently Steve wasn't the only Howling Commando to escape death in the 40's."

"You're not saying what I think you're saying, are you?"

"The Winter Soldier is truly James Buchanan Barnes."

"Are you positive?"

"Steve's already confirmed his identity with just one look at his face. We can't get any DNA samples from him, as there's no DNA on file for him. But they share the same mannerisms, vocal patterns and have similar scars from various accidents."

"Do you think this was staged?" Fury asked.

"Of course I do. Yakov went down far too easily. I trained with him in the Red Room and he never went down that fast, even if he was facing someone like Steve. I think this was just a warning. When Hydra has their eyes set on a prize, in this case Tony, they will do everything to get that prize." Natasha said grimly.

"What do you think we should do?" Fury asked a bit unnerved by what he just learned.

"Get Tony off the grid, and surround him with some of the most powerful humans, and well Asgardian, on the planet." Natasha said with a small grin.

"And what happens when the supervillain of the week decides to take advantage of the absence of the Avengers?"
"Well Tony does have a supersonic jet that can have us anywhere in the world within 3 hours, plus I know you have some tricks up your sleeve if anything should happen."

"Fine you guys have two weeks, but I want you and Barton to be ready in a moments notice if we find that Hydra cell." Fury said.

"Thanks Director." Natasha said with a slight grin, and started to head out the door.

"Operation Let Loose and Relax, is a go." She said as she ran into Clint in the hallway.

"He actually agreed to it?" Clint asked shocked.

"Well he may have had a little incentive as it turns out Hydra's after Tony." She said coyly.

"Wait...what?" He asked taken aback.

"I'll explain later. But the good thing is, We're headed to the Bahamas for two weeks." Natasha said with a grin.

"The Bahamas?"

"Don't you remember that Tony owns a private island there? It would be off the grid, has a strict no fly-zone around it and the waters surrounding it are patrolled constantly. Now to mention he's going to have two teams of elite superhumans and a few Dolofóni to be his bodyguards. The island will be the safest place in the world for the next two weeks." Natasha said with a determined look.

"You seem to have put a lot of thought into this." Clint said amused.

"Of course I have, have I ever done anything half-assed? We all need a break after these past couple weeks, and Tony's still exhausted and not fully healed yet. So we need to inform the others to pack their swimsuits, but if any single word of this gets to Tony I'll have your head, birdbrain."

"Stop calling me that!" Clint said annoyed. "So when do we leave?"

"As soon as the doctors say he's well enough to be moved, so possibly tonight." Natasha said. "So how'd your 'session' with the Winter Soldier go?"

"Well I managed to get one word from him, before he collapsed in agony."

"Natasha I thought we agreed to not do that type of interrogation again!" Clint said interrupting her.

"I didn't do it, I kinda wish I did though, but the medics think he had a brain implant that prevents him from talking."

"Wait what was the word you got out of him?" Clint asked curiously.

"HYDRA." Natasha said grimly.

"That's why you want to get Tony out of the country."

"Yes because Hydra will not stop until they get what they want. And they want Tony." Natasha said.

"How are you going to break it to him? You know he's going to want a piece of the action." Clint
"Simple we trick him."

"You know how he reacted last time when you tricked him." Clint warned.

"Well I kinda expected him to have that reaction, but I had no other choice."

"You put enough sedative to knock out an elephant in his favorite ice cream! To this day he has not even glanced ice cream."

"He had 6 broken ribs, a broken ankle and a concussion. He refused medical attention and holed himself up in his lab. If I hadn't intervened he would have punctured a lung! He'll get over it, eventually." Natasha said with a slight smirk. "Plus I won't be drugging him this time, Bruce will."

"You're evil."

"How else do you think he'll be able to take it easy? If we tell him our plans he'll end up coercing us into taking half his lab with him. This way he can't spend the next two weeks tucked away in a room tinkering with his many marvelous inventions, he'll be able to let loose and behave like any normal young man on a private tropical island." Natasha explained.

"I still stand by my previous statement, you're evil, but brilliant. So why Bruce?"

"Tony can't stay mad at Bruce, their Science Bros. They're the only ones who can understand each other's rants fully. Plus the Hulk has a weird connection with Tony." Natasha said.

"Remind me not to get on your bad side..." Clint muttered.

"After being partners for over 15 years, you still need reminding?" She asked with a grin, then they entered Tony's room together.

"Why do I have the feeling you two were just talking about me?" Tony said when he saw them.

"How'd you know?" Clint asked as he perched himself on a seat.

"Well I'm a genius, I've been living with you guys for 13 years, you two have strange looks on your faces and I'm bored." Tony said.

"Where are the others?" Natasha asked.

"I told them to get some sleep, they were practically dead on their feet. Plus the worried energy in the room was making my stomach turn, the rooms only so big and the downside of being an empath is that I can literally feel every single emotion coming from them." Tony said.

"Why hasn't this bothered you before?" Clint asked.

"Well I've always felt the emotions before, it's just magnified exponentially due to me still being on the mend. I just wish I can fully heal myself and get it over with, but Charles said that because my powers have been used so much in the last few weeks, I could go into shock or slip into a coma if I tried to heal myself again. So I'm just going to have to do it the old fashion way." Tony grumbled.

"Well now you know how the rest of us feel." Clint said before he was hit in the head with a
"I can still hit you, you know. Just because I'm wrapped in a mile of bandages and feel like I've been tossed from the helicarrier does not mean my arms have stopped working." Tony said with a grin. Then Clint threw the pillow back and Tony subconsciously blocked the pillow which earned a spike of pain from his back.

"Are you OK?" Natasha asked as she saw the wince on his face.

"Yeah...yeah, I just moved a little too fast. Man this is going to take some time to get used to." Tony said waiting for the pain to pass. Clint just had a kicked puppy look on his face. " Clint, it's not your fault, I just forgot that I was wounded for a second." Tony said trying to take the guilt from Clint.

"Do you want me to get a nurse to give you another dose of pain meds?"

"I just got some. They're giving me as much as they feel safe with giving, but because of my stupid metabolism it only takes the edge off. Bruce is working on some cocktail that he designed for Steve, but I can't have it till I get out of here." Tony said.

"Do you know when you can get out?"

"Later tonight or early tomorrow morning, as I'm healing nicely and there's nothing more that can be done here that Bruce can't handle." Tony said. "So what did you find out from the guy who shot me?"

"I'm not even going to ask how you found out that we've caught him, but I didn't find out much except for the fact that this is a lot bigger than we thought. We think they might try again so Fury pulled us all off of Avenger duty, with the sole purpose of protecting you." Natasha said.

"Well that sounds like fun." Tony said with a yawn.

"Get some sleep Tony, we'll be here when you wake up." Clint said.

"Don't know why...yawn...I'm so tired lately." Tony said as his eyes began to droop.

"You're exhausted and hurt, sleep will help you feel better." Natasha said softly, when she finished Tony was fast asleep, then she reached over and took out his aids.

"I thought you said you weren't going to drug him." Clint said urgently.

"I didn't, he's just exhausted. I'm pretty sure the whole emotions thing and the pain have used up a lot of his reserve energy." Natasha said, before she typed furiously away at her phone.

"Who you texting?" Clint asked curiously.

"I'm informing everyone that the Operation is a go." Natasha said without looking up.

"Is Pepper coming?" Clint baited.

"Yes, and I just got word that Rhodey is back on U.S. soil and has a four week break." Natasha said.

"Rhodey? Shit! We forgot to tell Rhodey! He must of freaked out when he heard." Clint said in a mild panic.
"How do you think he got back to the states so easily? Apparently when your best friend nearly died protecting the President you warrent a month long vacation." Natasha said stoically.

"He's sooooo going to deck me once he gets here." Clint said, and Natasha just nodded.

"Wait did you say Peppers coming? So you two are going to be on a private beach with no one around? Kinky." Clint said switching topics.

"If you say one more word, I will make sure the next two weeks are hell for you." Natasha said with a glare, then broke out in laughter.

"Its nice to see that you two are in a good mood." A familiar voice called from the doorway. Both assassins fell silent as they recognized the person in the doorway.

"Coulson?" Both of them whispered in shock.
"You can't be here, we all saw you die!" Natasha said as she went pale as a ghost.

"This isn't real! It can't be! Natasha what do you slip in my drink?" Clint said trying to take in the sight of their dead handler, who was obviously alive. Coulson's face fell as he realized what was happening.

"Wait you all thought I died?" He asked perplexed.

"Fury told us you were stabbed in the heart by Loki. We were devastated by your death!" Natasha said.

"Fury told you I died? I didn't die! Yes I was stabbed, but I was out of the med-bay in a week. I didn't even come close to dying!" Coulson said infuriated by Fury's games.

"Wait, if you didn't die then why didn't you contact us? It's been over a year!" Clint asked outraged.

"Fury told me I was on a strict no communication mission. I've been shipped all over the world on missions for the last year. I thought you guys knew. I just got back on helicarrier this morning and the first thing I find out was that Tony had been shot protecting the President! I've been asking to be reassigned to you guys this whole time and Fury only granted my reassignment this morning!" Coulson said getting angrier at the second.

"Fury's been playing us, this whole fucking time! How could he keep us in the dark? We were fucking messed up by your death! Tony, Natasha and I just locked ourselves into our work in order not to be crippled by the thought that we weren't fast enough to save you." Clint said his eyes teeming with emotion.

"I didn't mean for any of this to happen. I missed out on so much with you guys! I swear if Fury ever reassigns me again I will take out his other eye and taser him so hard that he will be left on the floor drooling for hours." Coulson said which brought a small laugh out of Clint. The next thing Coulson knew was that he was nearly tackled to the ground by the two shocked assassins.

"I've missed you so much." Natasha muttered.

"I've missed you guys too, now would someone mind telling me why Tony took a bullet for the president, and why hasn't he healed yet?" Coulson asked.

"We've had quite the eventful last couple of weeks." Natasha said.

"Last couple weeks? You guys better start from the moment I was declared dead.

"Well good things he out like a light, because this is going to take a while." Clint said gesturing towards Tony, who was sleeping with a pained look on his face. Then Natasha and Clint took turns recapping the events that happened in the last year.

"So everyone knows that Tony is a mutant?" Coulson asked, stunned.

"Yep, they don't know the true extent of his powers but they know." Clint confirmed.
"And the President knows that Tony is Samael? And he's not going to do anything about it?" Coulson asked again perplexed.

"Well we convinced him that Tony has some secrets that he cannot risk coming to light, secrets Tony doesn't even know about himself." Natasha said cryptically.

"What do you mean secrets Tony doesn't know about?" Coulson said confused.

"Well it turns out that Tony is more like Captain America than we originally thought." Natasha explained.

"Wait..you mean..Howard gave the serum to Tony? When did you find this out?" Coulson asked shocked.

"Fury's known since Samael appeared on the scene, he only recently informed Clint and I, the rest of the team found out when Fury decided to tell the President." Natasha said.

"How young?" Coulson asked not wanting to know the answer.

"We believe he was 6, but he could of been younger." Clint said.

"Why did nobody stop him? Wasn't Howard being watched by shield?" Coulson asked angrily.

"He was being watched, but he somehow convinced them that the test subject was willing, and not his 6 year old son." Natasha said angrily before they heard a rustling.

"Umm, Natasha? Did you drug me again?" Tony asked sleepily as he popped his hearing aids back in.

"Why would you think I drugged you?" Natasha said her voice on the edge of worry.

"Again?" Coulson asked curiously.

"Because I think I'm hallucinating, as Coulson is sitting right beside you." Tony said looking as if he saw a ghost.

"You're not hallucinating Tony. I didn't die two years ago, I was placed under complete radio silence. I just got reassigned to you guys." Coulson explained.

"You could've given us a sign that you were alive." Tony said with a solemn look on his face.

"I didn't know Fury declared me dead. I thought you guys knew I was on radio silence." Coulson said in a small voice.

"Why do you guys keep thinking that I drugged you?" Natasha said outraged.

"Well there was that time you slipped a sedative in our popcorn on movie night, because you wanted to watch a chick-flick." Clint said.

"Or that time you slipped me a truth serum during a game of truth or dare." Tony said.

"Or that time in Mexico..." Clint started but was soon stopped when Natasha slapped her hand over his mouth.

"One more word or I'll slip a hallucinogen in Bruce's tea, and make you deal with a tripping out Hulk." Natasha said.
"Last time you did that, 'on accident' of course, the Hulk somehow ended up covered in glitter and feathers and had drunk an entire milk truck of chocolate milk. Bruce didn't get the glitter off of himself for weeks." Tony said, breaking out in laughter that soon turned into gasps of pain. The rest of the occupants in the room cast him worried looks. "It'll pass, forgot I was still injured for a moment...oops." Tony said as soon as he regained his breath.

"So what happened in Mexico?" Coulson asked trying to change the topic.

"You don't want to know." Tony said with a grin.

"Now I really want to know." Coulson said with a larger grin.

"Well we were trailing some drug cartel members and they caught onto our trail. So Natasha suggested that we buy some of their product, to throw them off. Well the cartel guys didn't believe us and made us take the drugs in front of them. The rest of the night passed in a blur, we woke up in a dirty hovel filled with other passed out druggies and reeking of alcohol, and sweat." Clint said.

"And the drugs actually effected Tony?" Coulson wondered.

"Not in the traditional sense. They really amplified my empathic skills and being surrounded by people in euphoric state of mind also made me feel the same way. But when the drug wore off the post drug low also rubbed off on me." Tony said shuddering at the remembered feeling.

"He was puking for a week. He also was plagued by migraines and vertigo. Long story short, we don't listen to Natasha's ideas of 'blending in' anymore." Clint finished.

"Remind me not to accompany you on missions to Mexico anymore." Coulson said with a laugh.

Then there was a knock at the door and Fane walked in.

"You have got to stop doing this to me Tony! You've landed yourself in the hospital twice in the past month." Fane said exasperated.

"It's not like I meant to get shot." Tony grumbled, which brought a small grin to Fane's face. "So what took you so long? I've been here for days."

"Tony you're a council member now. The Dolofóni aren't going to let you nearly dying fly by easily. I had to gather a team to hunt down whoever's behind this attack." Fane said cryptically.

"Who'd you bring?" Tony asked curiously.

"Half of your clan and Elder Hawke." Fane said.

"You brought Hawke? But he retired from hunting years ago!" Tony said.

"When he heard you were near death he practically begged me to bring him on the Hunt." Fane said with a sly grin.

"Who did you bring from my clan?" Tony asked.

"Koen, Duncan and Veto. The rest were on hunts." Fane said.

"So you got the brawn and brains of the clan. Its going to be fun seeing Cap and Koen together since they're both blonde and have a leader complex." Tony said with a laugh.

"Would you guys mind filling us in?" Natasha asked and Tony and Fane suddenly remembered the
other three occupants of the room who looked lost at following their conversation. When Fane saw Coulson his face broke out into a huge grin.

"I had a feeling you weren't dead." Fane said as he enveloped Coulson in a giant hug.

"You're the only one who hasn't questioned my sudden appearance so far. I thought Natasha was going to stab me when she first saw me." Coulson said with a grin.

"So why the whole fake death and secrecy thing?" Fane asked curiously.

"Long story short, Fury played us all. He told them," Coulson gestured towards the three assassins, "that I was dead and he kept me in complete radio silence and made me believe that they knew I was alive." Coulson explained.

"Oh that sneaky one-eyed bastard." Fane said with a scowl.

"So would you two mind explaining what's going on with the Dolofóni?" Clint asked curiously.

"When a council member is killed, or severely injured, during a hunt, the Master of Masters assembles a team of five assassins to avenge the council member. The assassins need to volunteer for the spot on the team, so thats why Hawke, Koen, Veto and Duncan came with me." Fane explained.

"How long are you guys here for?" Clint asked.

"Until we catch whoever is behind Tony's attack. Do you guys have any leads?" Fane asked.

"Yeah, we caught the assassin, but it's become a lot more complicated." Natasha explained.

"How so?" Fane asked curiously.

"Well it appears that he was being controlled by a brain chip."

"Who's the controller?" Fane asked.

"Hydra." Natasha said gravely.

"Hydra? But they died out half a century ago!" Coulson said, obviously having not been fully informed.

"Apparently a branch of theirs survived, and now they have Tony in their sights." Clint explained.

"What's the plan of action?"

"We surround Tony with a couple dozen powerful superhumans while Shield digs up the location of the branch. Then we go in and take them out." Natasha explained.

"That sounds like a good plan. But what do we do with the assassin you guys caught?" Fane asked.

"Well the medics have him in a drug induced coma right now, to stop Hydra from controlling him. I believe they plan on removing the chip as soon as they find out more about it." Natasha stated.

"Why not just kill him?" Fane questioned.

"Because apparently the guy used to be a very close friend of Steve's, and we want to see if we can get his old self back." Clint said.
"And what if you can't get him back?" Fane wondered.

"Then we deal with it then. Right now our main priority is keeping Tony far from Hydra's reach."
Natasha said with a determined glint in her eye.

Then a knock came at the door, and Bruce walked in.

"I think we're going to need a larger room." Tony quipped from his bed.

"Nope, your doctor just approved of you going home." Bruce said with a smile. "And I've just
finished the cocktail that should take care of the pain you're feeling. I thought it would be better for
me to give you it before we get you back to the tower." Bruce said with a smile.

"About time." Tony said grinning at the thought of finally being pain free.

"You don't know how many strings I had to pull to get this in here." Bruce said with a scowl. "It's
like the doctors think I don't know what I'm doing."

"Just give me it already." Tony said a bit impatiently. A grin appeared on Bruce's face as he
prepped Tony's IV line and injected the contents of the syringe.

"Woah, how powerful...did ...you ...have ...to ....mak..e....this..." Tony said as he felt the effects of
the drug take place. He was asleep before he could finish his sentence.

"Jesus Bruce! Did you make it strong enough?" Clint asked sarcastically, amazed at the
effectiveness of the drug.

"Oh yeah, he should be out for at least the next 6 hours if not more. We should have no problem
getting to the Island before he wakes up." Bruce said, with a mischievous glint in his eye.

"You know this is the reason he doesn't trust any of you guys with drugs or food, right?" Clint said
amused.

"He'll get over it." Natasha said. "So what are the other effects of the drug?" She asked curiously.

"Well he should be relatively pain free for the next 48 hours." Bruce explained.

"Relatively?" Coulson asked.

"Yeah, he's going to have one hell of a headache when he wakes up." Bruce admitted.

"Any side effects?" Clint wondered.

"Well I haven't really tested it before. But he may experience a few minor hallucinations and
intense hunger. Also maybe an overall feeling of euphoria..." Bruce said sheepishly.

"What in the world did you give him?" Natasha wondered.

"Its best if you didn't know." Bruce said stoically. "but you can be assured it's all safe, well safe
for people with metabolisms like Steve's and Tony's. If you guys were to take even a quarter of
what I just gave him, it'll knock you out for about a week, then you would probably have the best
or worst trip ever." Bruce admitted.

"Sometimes you scare me Bruce, and I'm not talking about the Other Guy." Clint said with a grin.

"Wait I'm lost. Why did you drug Tony? And what Island?" Fane asked obviously not having been
"We're not going to the Tower, Fane. We're going to Tony's private island in the Bahamas. We drugged him because it's supposed to be a surprise." Natasha informed him.

"He has a island in the Bahamas?" Fane asked shocked.

"Yeah we just found out about it too. Hope you brought your swimsuit!" Clint said with a grin.

"Now come on guys the plane leaves in a half hour, let's go!" Natasha said with a smile.
Long Awaited Laughter

Chapter Notes

Im back! I'm so so so sorry for not updating in a month and a half, you would not believe the summer I've had...I'm going to try to get back on a regular schedule, but I can't guarantee that I will be able to make weekly updates as I have been suffering from, writers block alot lately...thanks for remaining faithful to this story!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"About time you guys showed up." Pepper said as they stepped off the Quinjet.

"Sorry, we had an, well, unexpected visitor." Natasha said as she threw her arms around Pepper in a quick hug.

"Unexpected Visitor?" Pepper wondered as she peered around the group, spotting the group of Dolofóni assassins flanking Bruce, who was carrying Tony. But she couldn't see any unexpected faces.

"You can come out now." Clint said as he banged the side of the Quinjet, and Coulson stepped outside.

"But-t-t you're dead! I went to your funeral!" Pepper stuttered in shock as she spotted the beloved handler.

"Long story short Fury played all of us. I'll explain better on the plane." Coulson stated.

"Speaking of planes, let's board it. I am carrying about 225lbs of dead weight right now. I don't see why one of you guys couldn't carry him." Bruce stated exasperatedly.

"Well you were the one who drugged him before he got on the plane." Clint said, earning a slap from Natasha.

"Drugged?" Pepper inquired, as she noticed that Tony was knocked out cold.

"Yeah, I had to drug him. Don't worry it's safe for people with enhanced metabolisms like Tony's and Steve's." Bruce explained.

"What did you give him?" Pepper asked knowing that Bruce wasn't saying the whole truth.

"A compound that would probably knock a normal person on their ass for a week. Tony's only going to be out for about 6 hours, but he'll be pain free for about the next few days, except for a bad headache..." Bruce explained as they walked towards the plane.

"You're still not telling me everything." Pepper stated stoically.

"Well essentially he's going to be high. Not dangerously so, but we're going to have to keep an eye on him." Bruce said with a grin.

"So you're telling me I'm going to be stuck on a private island with the avengers, half of the X-
Men, a half dozen Dolofóni assassins and a drugged out Tony Stark for two weeks." Pepper said as if she was on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

"At least I'll be there." Natasha said suggestively.

"Ewwww...you're going to make me go blind." Clint whined.

"Well now you know how Tony and I felt when you and Fane were dating." She spat back. Which brought a few chuckles from the younger assassins.

"Sometimes I think you guys are just children who were handed oversized weapons." Bruce said annoyedly.

"Well he started it." Natasha fake whined, bringing everyone to laughter.

" So which X-Men are joining us?" Fane wondered.

" Logan, Scott, Hank and Jean." Pepper said.

"How did Logan and Scott agree to be on an private island together?" Clint asked shocked.

"Well the professor said it would be good to have another telepath with us, as Tony's powers are still on the fritz a bit, so Jean volunteered. And since Jean is coming Scott also volunteered. Logan volunteered because he probably can't stand the idea of Jean and Scott being together on an island for two weeks. They really need sit down together and discuss their issues. It's been going on for years." Pepper explained.

"Wait who's Hank?" Bruce asked as he was still unused to the X-Men.

"Dr. Hank McCoy, also known as the Beast. He's probably one of the only minds on the planet who can even come close to Tony in matter of intelligence." Natasha explained. "He also happens to be about 7 feet tall, blue, and covered in fur. Like a shorter hairy blue hulk." She added.

"Wait he's like that all the time?" Bruce asked in wonder.

"He has a way to repress his mutant gene but he chooses to embrace his mutancy." Natasha stated and Bruce had a look of wonder on his face.

"Are you guys really about to leave without me?" An outraged voice called out from behind them. They turned around to see a very pissed off Rhodey still dressed in his war machine armor walking towards them. "First I hear that Tony had been shot while protecting the freaking president, without any of you guys calling me to tell me about it. Then the second I step foot on the helicarrier, because what other place would I find my nearly dead best friend, only to be told that you guys are leaving the country. I can't believe not a single one of you guys even bothered to give me a quick call to inform me that my best friend was ok!" Rhodey yelled, visibly angry.

"We meant to call, it's been a really crazy week." Pepper explained with a remorseful look on her face.

"Well then I hope wherever we're going is far away. Because I expect each of you to tell me everything that has happened. Starting with why Tony is unconscious in Bruce's arms, why there are half a dozen Dolofóni assassins flanking them and why Agent Coulson not buried in a box six feet under and is standing in front of me!" Rhodey said as he continued his rant.

"We'll explain everything on the plane." Natasha assured him.
"Where are we going anyways?" Rhodey asked.

"To one of Tony's private islands. Hope you brought your swimsuit." Natasha said with a grin.

Tony opened his eyes to see Bruce peering down at him.

"About time you woke up, I was starting to think I gave you too much." Bruce said with a relieved smile.

"Too much what?" He questioned, his brain oddly fuzzy.

"Of the compound I created. You've been out for 8 hours. How do you feel?" Bruce asked curiosity masking his face.

"I've been out for 8 hours? What did you give me Bruce?" Tony asked shocked, then he remembered, "You drugged me, didn't you?" Tony accused.

"You really don't want to know what I gave you, but how do you feel?" Bruce asked again.

"I feel good, I can't even feel the pain from the wounds. Wait, this isn't the tower," Tony stated as he finally peered around the room, "Bruce where are we?" Tony asked.

"Well before you get on my case, this was all Natasha's idea. But we're on your island." Bruce said.

"My Island? And who's we?" Tony asked, voice a bit slurred.

"We're on your island, Naboo, only you would think of naming an island after a planet from Star Wars. And we have Logan, Jean, Scott and Hank, your Dolofóni squad, all of us, plus Coulson, Rhodey and Pepper.

"Wait Coulson's really alive? I thought that was a dream. But wait if you're all here, who's well avenging the planet?" Tony asked curiously.

"We brought one of your Mach 3 planes. It will take us less than an hour to get back to the tower at top speed. We all needed a vacation anyways. By the way thanks for naming your secondary AI here, HAL 9000...Clint hasn't stopped looking around anxiously every time he hears the slightest sound. I think he's seen far too many Sci-fi films." Bruce said with a laugh. Then he noticed that Tony had a dazed look on his face. "Tony? Tony!" Bruce screamed trying to get his attention.

"Eh, what?" Tony said as he came back to reality.

"You checked out for a minute there...Are you sure you aren't in pain?"

"Oh, yeah, I just got a great idea for something..." Tony said as trailed off and went further into brainstorming mode. Bruce knew that it was best not to disturb the young genius when he was in the middle of inventing so he left the Stark Pad, he brought to give Tony, on the nightstand and left the room with a smirk on his face.

"How is he?" Pepper asked anxiously when Bruce came into view.

"He's off in his own little world inventing the next greatest technology." Bruce said with a smile as
he grabbed a seat on a log next to where his team members were sitting near a bonfire.

"Are you sure that's safe?" Rhodey asked with a smirk. "Because I remember one time when we were at MIT and he was on an pot and caffeine fueled inventing craze for a week just because he caught a whiff of a group of kids smoking a bowl at a party. He came out of his lab a week later with a fully functional jet pack and DUM-Y, and you all know how DUM-Y turned out." Rhodey said with a grave look on his face, that was soon turned into a smile as the group of assassins and superheroes broke into laughter.

"Oh God, what have I done?" Bruce asked with a facepalm as the group broke into a second round of laughter.

"Wait who's DUM-Y?" Koen asked, as none of the Dolofóni, besides Fane, actually knew the extent of Tony's inventions.

"DUM-Y is Tony's absent minded robotic helper in his labs." Bruce started to explain.

"Absent minded?" Veto asked confused at how a robot could be absent minded.

"Tony somehow programed each of his AIs and Robots to be self-learning. Essentially he gave them personalities, and DUM-Y somehow got it into his head that humans can ingest oil and gasoline, and Tony being trapped in his own little world during his inventing crazes consumes the laced coffee and smoothies DUM-Y hands him. You have no idea how many times he had to get his stomach pumped from drinking gasoline." Pepper explained.

"Why not just program him not to do that?" Veto asked again.

"Because Tony thinks it's unfair to take away his Robots free will." Bruce explained.

"I still think how much power he's given his Robots and AIs is creepy, and I've lived and worked with him for more than a decade...I've seen too many movies to know that having this many AIs is just a recipe for disaster." Clint said, still a bit jumpy about Tony's island AI.

"You're so paranoid, I'm sure Tony has a killswitch to stop any of his creations from taking over the world. Though you have to admit that JARVIS does share a lot of similarities to Skynet, and its uncanny on how similar he got the AI here to sound like HAL-9000 from 2001: A Space Odyssey." Natasha said with a smile as Clint began to twitch nervously.

"Don't say that! I swear this AI is out to get me!" Clint said with a look of panic on his face that sent the rest of the group into laughter, much to Clint's annoyance. The rest of the evening was spent in a euphoric state as the tension that had been built up over the past week dissolved into much needed joy.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter should have more excitement in it... I'll try to get it out soon, but for now tell me how you've enjoyed this chapter in the review section...Again I'm soooooo sorry for the extended wait!
The Hands of Fate

Chapter Summary

Sorry for the long wait, life has been pretty chaotic these past couple months...
So now for the long awaited chapter

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Tony! Come on Tony wake up!” Clint yelled as he realized Tony was in the midst of a nightmare. All he got in response was a few muffled groans. “Tony it’s just a dream!” He yelled again, making sure he kept his distance from the troubled man.

“Clint?” A sleepy groan came from the bed, “where am I?” Tony asked with a barely concealed panic.

“You’re in your bed in the tower…you just had another nightmare.” Clint said trying to assure the groggy man.

“Where’s ‘Tash?” Tony asked confused.

“She’s gone…remember?” Clint reminded Tony.

“Oh…” Tony said with a tear in his eye as he remembered the events that had transpired 6 months ago.

“Shh…just try to go back to sleep.” Clint said as calmly as he could manage trying to soothe the empath, like he had for every night for the past 6 months. When he saw Tony finally nod back into sleep, he returned to his side of the bed to try to get back to sleep. After the nightmare that occurred 6 months ago, He had taken to sleeping with Tony as it was the only way that both he and Tony could actually get a full night’s sleep. Especially on bad nights where the two were plagued with never ending nightmares. As he heard soft snores emerge from the man sleeping besides him he finally relented to the siren call of sleep.

*6 months ago*

“Shit! That was the engine! “The pilot yelled as a shudder ripped through the plane. “Brace yourselves…This landings going to be rough.
“We’re crashing?!? But we’re flying over open waters!” Pepper yelled completely terrified as she was the only one on the plane who wasn’t an assassin, superhero or mutant.
“Pepper calm down!” Natasha said in a strong voice as she tried to ease her panicking girlfriend.

“Why should I be calm when we’re about to crash in the middle of the Pacific Ocean?” Pepper said in a panicked voice.

“I’m pretty sure Tony designed this plane with one purpose, to keep its passengers safe.” Natasha assured her partner. Then Tony came running into the room at an unbelievable pace.

“Tony what’s wrong?” Natasha asked as she noted the look of worry on her brother’s face.

“The planes going to fast and we’re still being targeted…I’m going to put on the suit and try to slow the plane down and take out the fighter jets.” Tony said as the suit was being assembled on him.

“Targeted?” Pepper asked her worry increasing tenfold.

“Yeah we’re being targeted by two USAF fighter jets. We’ve been trying to contact them to tell them who we are…but they either are rouge, or our radios are down, or…” Tony trailed off as he realized what was happening.

“Or what Tony?” Natasha asked as she realized the train of thought that ran thru Tony’s head.

“Or the United States government declared us enemies of the State.” Tony said as the helmet clasped around his face. Then he went to the depressurized cabin that would allow him to get outside the plane without causing structural damage.

“What does Tony mean by enemies of the State?” Pepper asked, already knowing the answer.

“A few months ago Clint and I came across some files stating that if SHEILD were to ever collapse all of us Avengers would be considered rouge operatives. We haven’t heard from Fury in weeks, its very possible that SHEILD was destroyed while we were on the island. Combine that with the fact that we have half of the key players of the X-men, several high ranking Assassins and the most wanted man in the world on this jet, it makes a lot of sense that the armed forces would try to take us out or keep us out.” Natasha explained.

“The most wanted man? OMG you mean Tony don’t you?!?” Pepper asked, and Natasha nodded. “But he just saved the presidents life!”

“He is one of the most skilled assassins on the planet, he also happens to be an extremely strong mutant. Combine that with the fact that he is the 7th richest man on the planet and one of the smartest men to ever exist. You have an asset that every country on the planet wants to have or to kill. Tony is the Game changer.” Natasha explained then another jolt ran through the plane.
“What was that?!?” Pepper screamed in terror, then she ran into the control room, despite knowing that it wasn’t safe in there. She couldn’t believe her eyes as she took in the sight that unfolded before her.

“Iron Man, come in! Come on Tony talk to me here!” Rhodey was screaming into a headset. “Sir is not responding to my instructions.” Jarvis’s voice came over the intercom.

“What do you mean Jarvis?” Clint asked, already knowing the answer.

“Sir took some fire at 09:34 and he hasn’t responded to me since then. I believe that Sir is unconscious.” Jarvis explained.

“Can you take over the suit?” Rhodey asked terror in his voice.

“The suit is malfunctioning; I cannot control the suit remotely.” Jarvis said sorrowfully.

“How long does he have till he hits the water?” Fane questioned.

“Approximately 17 seconds.”

“Jarvis is the emergency tracker still working?” Clint asked.

“Yes Master Barton.” Jarvis responding.

“Broadcast it on the Avengers’ frequency. Jarvis, do everything you can to keep Tony alive.” Clint said, voice filled with authority.

“Will do.” The AI said before signing off.

“Aren’t you going to go after Tony? “Pepper asked in a tearful voice.

“Pepper? What are you doing in here? You’re supposed to be in the cabin with Natasha!” Rhodey said as the people in the crowded control room finally realized Pepper was in the room.

“I came in here to see what was happening.” Pepper said. Then another jolt shook the plane. “What’s the damage?” Clint asked the assassins who had taken over the planes targeting system.

“They just took down the guns. We’re completely defenseless.” Kane said in a shaky voice.

“There’s nothing more we can do…everyone get in the cabin! I’ll try everything to make this
landing as smooth as possible.” The pilot ordered.

They made it into the cabin just as the plane started to rapidly lose altitude. Then another jolt shook the plane and a hole appeared in the side of the hull. Various curses filled the atmosphere as the plane rapidly lost pressure. The next few moments were met both acceptance and denial as the plane shook uncontrollably and the passengers lost their grip on consciousness.

…

“Pepper, Sweetheart, come on wake up.” She heard as she slowly returned to consciousness. She opened her eyes to find the face of her stoic girlfriend fill her view.

“About time you came back!” Natasha said as she kissed her cheek.

“What happened?” Pepper asked groggily.

“What do you last remember?” Natasha asked, her voice filled with concern.

“We were on our way home…oh then the plane was crashing…wait is everyone alright? Where are we?” Pepper asked trying to sit up as she remembered the events prior to her losing consciousness.

“Lay back down, you took quite the hit to the head. Firstly everyone made it off the plane, Fane has a broken nose, Clint has some broken ribs and Jean has a broken ankle. Everyone else has just bumps and bruises, well and mild concussions. When the plane was crashing everyone lost consciousness due to lack of sufficient air, but luckily Bruce hulked out at the last moment and the Hulk somehow managed to get the emergency raft to work saving us all from drowning. He and Hank were the only two not knocked unconscious by the crash and they both managed to pull everyone to the raft. I guess the raft then drifted to this little out crop of an island.” Natasha explained. “The tech geeks are now trying to find a way to get us back to the states. “

“What about Tony? Did you guys find him?” Pepper asked remembering the fact that Tony had been knocked out in his suit before the plane crashed.

“Rhodey, Fane, Scott and Logan took the raft out to try and find him. Somehow one of the GPS trackers survived and they are tracing his location. His suit should be able to support him for another 12 hours.” Natasha explained.

“I hope he’s alright.” Pepper said. Then her stomach growled. “There wouldn’t happen to be any food around here would there?”

“Of course there’s food…I’m not sure how long it will last since the majority of us happen to have amazingly fast metabolisms.” Natasha said with a smile on her face and offered her hand to Pepper.
*A few hours later*

“Is that the raft?” Clint asked as he spotted something black on the horizon.

“I think so…” Natasha said as she followed Clint’s pointed gaze. “I hope they found him.”

“They seem to be coming in hot, I think they got him.” Clint said trying to assure Natasha. They continued to look towards the horizon. Then Clint noticed something odd, “Jean, you might want to prepare a triage area…I can only see four heads…if they did find Tony, he or one of the others might be unconscious.” Clint said as a warning.

“It better not be Tony…I swear that boy is a walking target…If my hair wasn’t already white he would be turning it grey.” Ororo said shaking her head. The group on the small island seemed to hold their breath as they waited for the boat to come ashore, unsure of what fate would have dealt to their teammates on the raft.

Once the boat pulled ashore everyone set to action as they found out that the victim was in fact Tony.

“Has he regained consciousness yet?” Jean asked as she checked Tony’s vitals.

“Not for us. But Jarvis informed us he has had several periods of lucidness while trapped in the suit. But he’s had limited oxygen for the past 12 hours and he’s lost quite a lot of blood.” Fane informed the anxious group.

“Well he’s not in hypovolemic shock,” Jean said, the rest of the group breathed a sigh of relief, “Let’s get him off the boat. Keep the suit on, he may have a spinal injury and the suit will keep everything stable.” Jean ordered. Hank and Logan gently lifted the unconscious Iron Man from the boat and carried him over to the area by the fire that Jean had set up in advance for this type of situation. Jean than began her examination of Tony. “Tony? Can you hear me?” She asked her patient slightly tapping his cheek. At first she didn’t get a response, but after a few slaps Tony began to come around.

“Mmm…Jeaann…?” Tony asked completely confused about why Jean Grey was in his face. “Good you’re awake! Are you in pain?” Jean questioned. It took a few seconds for Tony to come back to her with a response.

“What? Can’t…hear..water damaged aids…” Tony explained with a look of confusion. Jean repeated her question in ASL.

“Uh..my right side…head…” Tony slurred slightly with the combined effects of a concussion, exhaustion and pain.
“On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your pain?” Jean signed with one hand, as she palpitated Tony’s side where the main injury was located.

“side…7…head comes and goes maybe a 5?” Tony answered groggily.

“OK, good…I’m going to give you a shot of morphine to take the edge off okay?” She informed her patient.

“Wait…where are we? What happened?” Tony questioned as he finally took in the place he was in.

“Your suit took some damage while you were fighting off the Jets. You ended up crashing in the ocean a couple miles from where the plane crashed. We’re currently on an outcrop in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 50 miles from the Georgian Coast line. Now you need to get some rest, we’ll answer more questions later.” Jean informed him before she injected the morphine and Tony was lost in the throes of sleep. When she finished her examination she let out an audible sigh of relief. Tony’s injuries were far from the worst that could have happened.

“What is it?” Natasha asked mistaking her sigh of relief for one of worry.

“Tony’s wounds are better than what I expected…Only Tony could fall over 1,000 feet, get hit by missile, and be stranded in open water for over 12 hours and escape with a 6-inch gap in his side, a grade 2 concussion and a case of dehydration and exhaustion.” Jean said with a smile as she shook her head in amazement.

“Seriously?” Clint asked perplexed.

“Yes…and with his healing powers its practically a paper cut for him…I’m not even going to stitch up his side, as it would probably be healed in a matter of hours.” Jean said as she went to the first aid kit from the plane. She then pulled out an IV bag filled with a Saline solution and a large pressure bandage.

“I thought you said he was alright?” Pepper, who had no experience with field medicine, asked.

“The Saline drip is for the dehydration and to replace the 2-3 pints of blood he lost…the bandage is to the cut clean.” Jean explained while she finished working on Tony. “He’s most likely going to sleep till the morning.” She said as she pressed the emergency release button on the Armor and it fell off Tony’s body. She motioned for Hank and Logan to move the larger pieces of Armor to a safer location and she gathered up the smaller pieces. She then placed a blanket over the sleeping man and left him to sleep.

*One Week Later*
“I think I’ve got it!” Tony yelled from the pile of scarps that used to be his Mach XVI suit.

“Really?” Rhodey said in surprise from his own pile of scraps.

“About time!” Clint yelling from across the beach and then subsequently groaning from a piece of a gauntlet meeting its mark. “Hey!” He yelled in annoyance, which was met with laughter from the two MIT alums.

“Birdbrain! What have I told you about insulting our only way off this godforsaken island? “Natasha asked, in a strange mother-like tone of voice.

“How many times do I have to say DON’T CALL ME BIRD BRAIN!” Clint yelled before hissing in pain as an expertly thrown stick hit his head.

“Fine, I give up…you said don’t insult Tony or I’m going to be left behind.” Clint added in a sulk that would make a toddler envious.

“Samael, you really found a way off this island?” Koen asked, using Tony’s assassin name as it was the one he was used to.

“Yeah, I managed to reverse engineer the repulsor’s on my gauntlets and boots and repurposed them for an engine to propel the boat. If my calculations are right, we should reach Georgia by nightfall.” Tony said with a proud look on his face. The Dolofoni members just looked at him in amazement as they had yet to witness the extremes of Tony’s technical brilliance.

“But how?”

“Well I scrapped the metal and reused it for something useful. Of course I couldn’t do it without Honeybear over here.” Tony said referring to Rhodey’s old college nickname.

“All I really did was help fix your cochlear’s. “Rhodey admitted.

“Without which I would be almost completely deaf.” Tony shot back.

“Get a room already, you two.” Clint said in good spirits.

“Well let’s get this show on the road…I personally would kill for a cold beer right now.” Scott said.

“And a cigar.” Logan added gruffly.
“Wait aren’t we going to test the engine first?” Hawke asked.

“Nah…we only have one shot at this, as the whole engine is jerry rigged. But if it makes you feel better I’ve been making engines since before I was successfully potty-trained.” Tony said with his signature smile gracing his face.

“I’m not sure if that’s impressive or sad.” Clint said with a chuckle, even though he knew of the tragic childhood of the man he considered brother.

“Both? It doesn’t matter…The sooner we all get on the boat the sooner we can be in the States stuffing our faces with pizza. “Tony said as he practically shoved people on the boat.

After a few shaky starts the makeshift engine purred to life and the group let out a cheer as they were finally going home.

*A Few hours later*

“Is that land?” Clint questioned as he peered ahead in the fading sunlight.

“I think so…but then again you’re the one with 20/5 vision.” Natasha quipped.

“Wait what are those?” Hawke asked noticing several moving shadows on the supposed shore.

“I think they’re…wait... SHIT!!! They’re insurgents!” Clint said as he noticed the telltale sign of guns.

“I have a bad feeling about this…” Steve added as the growing knot of fear grew within his stomach.

“Yeah…We’re going to be going up against an unknown number of armed insurgents…and we are without guns or any sort of weapons.” Rhodey said forgetting about the company he was with.

“Who said we’re unarmed?” Fane said with a mischievous glint in his eye. The rest of the Dolofoni, along with Tony, Clint and Natasha, shared similar expressions on their faces.

“Trust me, I’ve faced worse odds.” Tony added with a chuckle. “Birdbrain and Tasha, remember when we escaped the guerilla camp in Colombia, armed with only a few pieces of Glass? I still remember the look on the Leaders face when we took down 20 of his heavily armed men in front of him. Now those were good times.” Tony said chuckling, Natasha and Clint joined in as they remembered their time as assassins.
“I swear you guys are either the luckiest SOBs in the world, or the most insane!” Rhodey said as he eyed the laughing assassins cautiously. “What’s wrong with a little insanity?” Natasha asked completely stone-faced. The trio exchanged looks before bursting into laughter again.

“I don’t see how you three can laugh! We’re going to our deaths!” Pepper yelled as she was outraged at their easygoingness.

“I rather face death laughing than crying.” Tony said seriously.

“It’s what we do! How else do you think we can go against such odds and horror and escape with our lives and our sanity?” Natasha added.

“We all have our routines. Our average mission would scar a civilian for life. Hawke and I personally smoke a cigar and drink a glass of whiskey before every mission, if time allows for it, if not we do it afterwards.” Fane added.

“Koen, Veto and I always go to the nearest pub and order three rounds of drinks the night before, even if we have separate solo missions…If we can’t meet before we get pizza at the next available time. Its our bit of normalcy.” Duncan added.

“And you guys?” Bruce asked his three fellow avengers who happened to be part time assassians.

“We try to go out for pizza, drinks and go to a movie, concert, opera or a ballet, at least twice a month. In fact, our tradition was started by Coulson and Fane after a practically grueling month of back to back missions. And after really bad ones we eat Ben and Jerry’s and watch our favorite movies until we pass out.” Tony said.

“Well that explains the empty Ben and Jerry’s containers.” Steve said with a smirk.

“A ballet?” Pepper questioned.

“Well Natasha wanted to be a ballerina before she was taken to the Red Room, plus we go all out. It’s like playing dress up for adults. Didn’t you wonder why I held season tickets to the Met and NY Ballet…though I personally prefer the opera.” Tony said with a smile. The rest of the group looked at the close-knit trio with curiosity as a new light was shown on them.

“Ok enough with the chit chat, we should be landing in approximately five minutes. We need a game plan now.” Clint said urgently.

“Well since you and I are quiet fluent in multiple forms of sign language, I say we split up and lead
one team ashore SEAL style and the other stays on the boat for a more direct attack.” Tony offered.

“Sounds good, what team do you want to lead?” Clint asked.

“I’ll take the wet team…it would be best if I and the rest of the Dolofoni, go ashore…we’ve had a similar sim in training.” Tony said.

“Ok then, I guess its settled I’ll lead the others in a direct confrontation. Signal me the exact details once you scout them out.” Clint said, as the Dolofoni striped down to their underclothes. With only Tony wearing any type of armor, as his reactor was quite noticeable. Then they dove into the water and swam to shore with the stealth of a highly trained SEAL team.

“So guys here’s the plan, no one says a word until Nat and I give the signal…we’re going to try and pass us off as survivors of a plane crash who don’t speak English, so unless you guys have mastered Slovakian, no talking at all! If they do happen to know that we are the Avengers and X-men, then we give them all we got. Rhodey, you and Pepper will stay on the boat with Natasha and Jean protecting you as you both have no superpowers of experience in guerilla warfare. If the boat is targeted, then you can move to safety. Once Tony and the assassins give the all clear sign, we will meet up and assess our losses.” Clint said with all the authority of a 5-star General. “Anyone want to add anything?”

“What are we using for weapons?” Steve asked.

“Nat, how many knives do you have on your person?” Clint inquired.

“10. You?”

“3, but I also managed to save my bow and a quiver of arrows from the wreckage.” Clint answered and they started to pool the weapons together and divided them out.

“Bruce, I think you’re going to have to start thinking some very angry thoughts, We’re going to need the Hulk.” Clint added.

“One question…what am I supposed to do…It might be hard to explain my blue fur…plus what are we going to do about Ororo and Scott?” Hank enquired as he realized some of the groups more noticeable attributes.

“Are you okay with hiding under some blankets?” Clint asked and he received a nod as a reply. “Good… now for you two…” he said addressing Scott and Ororo, “I think we could use a blanket as a hood to hide the hair and the glasses. We could also pass it off as an effort to keep cool in the sunlight. Now anymore Questions?” he received no objections. “Ok then…We may lose our lives tonight, but if we happen to survive, first rounds on me tonight!” He added as a last minute pep talk before the shit hit the fan.
*On the Island*

As soon as the group of assassins made it to the shore they dove into the tree line for coverage. Tony and Fane split the group down the middle with Tony taking Koen and Veto and Fane taking the rest, in order to fully scout the shore in the least amount of time.

Tony’s group soon eyed the enemies camp and were shocked to see the stockpile of weapons. They definitely weren’t GI’s so that left only one possibility…HYDRA.

*On the boat*

“Who are you?” An angry voice and gun greeted the team as they landed.

“Naše lietadlo havarovalo... Pomôžete nám? (Our plane crashed…can you help us?” Clint asked. The rest of the team held their hands up in peace at the sight of the gun.

“What? Do you speak English?” The trigger happy guard asked.

“Eh…I speak little English.” Natasha said brokenly.

“Good…now answer my question, who are you?!”

“My name Natalisha…This my family…our plane crashed 5 days ago, we lived.” Natasha explained.

“Myslíte si, oni ho kúpil? (do you think they bought it)” Clint asked as if asking what she said in English.

“Áno, ale umožňuje pokračovať v tomto šaráda trochu dlhšie. (yes but let’s continue this charade a bit longer)” Natasha explained.

“What did you just tell him?” The guard inquired.

“My husband Ceslav do not know English. He wanted to know what I said.” Natasha explained.

“Ok then… I need to search your boat and your family to verify your story…explain that to them…I don’t want to have to use my gun on you!” The Guard explained and Natasha displayed a frightened demeanor. Natasha said some random words in Slovak and the rest of the team looked at ease. “Wait what is this?” The guard shouted as he kicked something soft. He tore off the covering and found Hank hiding. Then he took in the rest of the group and released that they were
the avengers and x-men. He was just about to call for reinforcements as Clint grabbed onto his neck and he gradually lost consciousness.

“I say we have less than a minute till they investigate his disappearance. Everyone assume attack formation!” Steve ordered.

*Meanwhile in the forest*

Tony could hear the sounds of the armed men getting ready to protect the beach from the group on the boat.

He signaled the others to prepare for the oncoming assault, in order to keep as many from the beach as possible. The group of assassins stealthily moved through the shadows silencing as many men as possible and throwing their unconscious bodies into the tree-line.

Tony could hear the sounds of the Avengers and X-Men fighting, he could smell the scorched ozone from Thor’s and Ororo’s lightning strikes, and could hear the distinct sound of bullets ricocheting off of Steve’s shield. He longed to join his brothers in arms but knew that they would stand a better chance at surviving if and only if they prevented the backup from reaching the battle.

Then an idea popped in his head. He motioned towards the others to stay back then he crawled over to the munitions and stole an armful of weapons that he needed to complete his task. 3 minutes later he had assembled a high powered bomb that would take out the rest of the base and half the tree-line. Yeah it would reveal their presence, and Greenpeace would probably sue him for taking out a half mile of forest, but you only live once. He set the timer for 50 seconds and started running from the ill-fated base. He signaled to the others to get towards the beach ASAP.

*Meanwhile on the beach*

BOOM!!!! A ground shaking explosion ripped through the skyline. All the people, Insurgents and Hero alike, stared at the raging inferno.

“What in the Nine Realms was that?” Thor boomed.

“That was Tony’s signal.” Clint said bemused.

“You have to admit he has a gift for theatrics.” Steve said with a small grin, before he deflected yet another stream of bullets.

“About time you guys showed up.” Clint said as he noted the arrival of the assassins.

“Couldn’t let you guys have all the fun.” Tony said with a grin.

The remaining gunmen seemed to notice that they were severely outnumbered, especially since
their base and replacement forces had just been annihilated. One of the men noticed that the boat still had a few members of the avengers group on it. He decided that he would fix that problem.

Tony caught the man separating from the group out of the corner of his eye, and a sense of unease filled his belly. He turned his gaze towards the direction the man was going and saw Natasha, Pepper, Rhodey and Jean standing in the boat next to defensive and he knew what was about to happen.

“Natasha! GET DOWN!” Tony screamed as the gun man released a hail of bullets. Pepper stood frozen like a deer caught in the headlights, before Natasha tackled her to the ground as the others dove for cover. All Tony saw was a spray of blood and he knew that at least one of the bullets hit its mark.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” He said letting out a guttural roar as he gave in to the rage that he kept pent up for so long. Time seemed to slow down as he tore thru the line of soldiers. When he reached the boat and saw the rapidly expanding red stain on Natasha’s shirt. He crouched down low and gathered her into his arms.

“Stay with me, Сестра (sister).” He pleaded with tears streaming down his face, as he applied pressure to her stomach.

“Anthoska... Я...холодно. (I’m Cold).” Natasha said weakly as she felt herself fading away.

“Сестра, не оставляй меня. (Sister, don’t leave me).” Tony sobbed even though he knew she was beyond help; she was losing too much blood.

“Скажите Pepper и Clint… что я люблю их…Прощание… брата. (tell Pepper and Clint, I love them. Goodbye Brother.)” Natasha said between heavy gasps of air, before she grew limp in Tony’s arms. Tony took one look in her eyes and knew she was gone.

“До свидания сестра. (Good bye sister)” He whispered as he shut her eyes for one last time. He could feel his family surround him, but he couldn’t bring himself to let go of the woman he had spent the last decade with.

“Tony, we have to leave now.” Clint said, knowing that reinforcements could arrive at anymore.

“Я не могу оставить ее. (I can’t leave her)” Tony pleaded, his brain too numb to switch back to English.

“I know; I would never leave our sister behind.” Clint said with tears on his face as he embraced Tony in a grief filled hug. “Thor, can you get us out of here?” He ordered quietly, his voice filled with grief.
“Aye.” Thor said mournfully as he took in the scene before him. Then he called to Heimdall to allow them passage to Asgard as a final resort.

While the eclectic group of superheroes and assassins took in the grave scene before them, they gave Clint and Tony the space they needed to mourn the loss of their sister and best friend. There was nary a dry eye among them as they stood surrounded by the dead and dying insurgents on the deserted beach. How could they have loss such a strong and vital assassin in the blink of an eye? Haven’t the hands of fate dealt enough tragedy to this group of people who protected the innocent?

Chapter End Notes

P.S. Clint's and Tony's relationship is purely platonic
P.P.S. please don't kill me for killing off Natasha, her death will play a major role
P.P.P.S. don't forget to comment I really appreciate feedback.

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