Finding Trouble
by jldw

Summary

Loki wakes up after being beaten by the Hulk. The Chitauri! He must stop them. He has to get the Hulk to help him. This is a story about what would have happened if Loki helped stop the Chitauri and the butterfly effect afterwards with a small cat there to help.

Very slow burn, it is Frostiron. I will mark chapters where graphic memories are described. Eventual new villain.

Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Trouble for Loki

Prologue

A cat looks out the window. New York City is in ruins. There are a few people visible moving around carefully, mostly in small gardens. Those small gardens are planted in the rubble of destroyed buildings, cracked sidewalks, and anywhere else that dirt peaks out. Only one building sticks out. Not because it lacked gardens. In fact nearly all the various roof areas or balconies have gardens. Only these are tended by robots. But the real reason it sticks out is; it shows no signs of age or war damage. It is still tall and while there are a few tall building still standing, the rest show heavy damage.

There exists around the building a wide birth where no one stands, warnings and words of hate are painted around it outside a 25 foot barrier. Stay out, here be monsters! This is the only place people can see to blame. It is also the building where a cat is looking out.

Inside the cat turns its head to look at Tony Stark, Ironman, Genius, Billionaire, Philanthropist and outcast. The man everyone blames for the world’s problems.

Tony Stark is landing on his landing pad. He is in a battered Ironman suit on. He is gently carrying what appears to be a seventy five pound black house cat with green eyes.

He sets the cat down, has his armor removed and they walk into the building.

The small black cat run up to them and nuzzles both happily for their return.

Tony says. “Jarvis bring up an interactive screen.” Then looks at the larger cat and says. “I don’t understand why I can’t hear you.”

The cat paws at the screen and types. “The collar at my neck is preventing it you imbecile. You must remove it.” The collar has spikes that poke into the neck and it is helping hold another item in place that is digging into the cat’s spine.

Tony looks nervous, he licks his lips. “How? I don’t want to hurt you.”

The large cat growls and types. “It is a magical lock. The first thing you learned to do. Now take it off!”

Tony takes a deep breath reaches out with his hand and with his magic unlocks the collar.

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Chapter 1
May, 2012 - New York City.

The Chitauri were attacking. The Hulk was on a rooftop attacking Chitauri when he saw one hovering over and cornering a battered smallish black cat with a black velvet collar. He pounded the chitauri and picked up the cat. “Good Kitty.” he smiled and it purred. “Don’t die kitty,” he cooed and placed it on his head.

The Hulk climbed up Stark Tower and listened to Loki taunt, while green eyes looked down, hidden in brown hair. The Hulk started smashing a meow is heard and the Hulk says. ‘Puny God’

Loki felt his mind clear for the first time since returning to the nine realms. Well as clear was a relative term. His magic was realigning and repairing his brain. ‘Just think the God of Mischief reduced to a Ragdoll.’ He tried to smirk but his brain was not working right. ‘Think something is important. Vision is like looking through the bottom of red glass. Body feels like it has been through a meat grinder, like when he was tortured. Yes, if he ever forgave his brother he was going to have Thor beat the Other and his Chitauri until they scream for death like he did.’ Something about that. ‘Oh no! The Chitauri.’ He needed to get the portal closed and stop them but he was too weak, too broken to do it himself. Loki looked up and saw a fuzzy Hulk before he shut his eyes again. He needed to think fast, he couldn’t afford to make the Hulk any angrier.

“Help me, please.” He said. He felt fear race through his body.

The Hulk looked at the God, perhaps a little confused.

“The Chitauri need to be stopped.” Loki announced in a hurry.

The sound the Hulk made shook the building. Then he pounded his fist into the floor next to the god.

One of Loki’s eyes opened in terror, seeing the large green figure. He tried to shudder but ended up yelping. ‘Think, think, it’s so fuzzy.’

The Hulk smashed his fist through a wall and squinted threateningly at Loki, as if expecting him to get up and fight again. Loki thought, ‘I have to try again, Midgard, Asgard, the whole nine realms are at stake.’ He closed his eye, worked through his panic and summoned his voice to speak. “Thank you for this.”

Once again the Hulk was unsure. He stood a little taller shifting his shoulders back.

“Can you get the others here?” Loki asked. He could feel his magic healing his skull, his brain starting to clear a bit.

Hulk growled some more. His face shows more anger as he noticed a chitauri fly past.

‘No this won’t work. If he leaves we’re all in trouble.’ ‘Think, what did Barton say about Hulk and Banner? I have to get Banner back. What has worked so far?’ Ah light dawned. Loki took a hard breath. It was imperative that he work through his fear which was growing as memories were returning. His anxiety warned him he might not survive if he was beaten again. He had a strong mind but it was dreadfully damaged and threatened to fail his need to talk.
Finally, he adjusted his voice to sound a bit like a small hurt child. “I need help. You are such a help. Can you help me?”

The Hulk looked at him again with an angry face, his head tilted, his attention was on Loki at least and not the battle beyond.

“You have helped me so much. Please, I need your help some more… We can stop this... Can Dr. Banner come help me?... You can help me solves this… Please help me.” This takes so much effort. His body is broken trying to heal, his mind splintered from the control and torture, still he fights to speak, though emotions are threatening to keep him still.

Hulk is confused, the green is starting to fade, just a bit. Hulk reached a finger down to touch Loki’s face.

Loki steadied his nerves, took a deep breath. It was now or never, and leaned his head into the finger. Then very slowly moved his left arm which miraculously is not too smashed, to hold the finger tight. “Thank you so very much... Can you help me?... I was mind controlled…uh…had bad people… playing with my mind… Please help me.”

“Puny God?” The Hulk really doesn’t understand. Plus his vocabulary is clearly limited.

“Help me Hulk…Whaaat… your head?” Loki is startled when he sees green eyes looking at him from atop the beasts head. For a moment he once again fell silent. Fear was suddenly in control, he was too panicked to even pull away.

The Hulk smiled reached up with his other hand. “Good Kitty.” He says as the cat jumped on his hand and bounced down to the floor.

The cat ran up to Loki and sniffed where their hands touched, drawing Hulk’s attention. Then the cat rubbed up against both hands and purred.

Loki watched the cat and suddenly found the strength to continue, fear receding. “Thank you so much Hulk… You saved me… Got rid of… the bad people in me… Thank you Hulk…”

Loki still sounded like a child. “Please help me... I need Dr. Banner… to finish… what you started… You have done so much. My thanks.” He didn’t mention the Chitauri. He couldn’t risk having Hulk’s attention back to the battle right then.

They were both distracted some by the cat who was really insistent on marking both their hands with its face. Curiously, it helped both of them to calm down. Loki was amazed by it and focused on the little cat so he could continue.

The Hulk was also shrinking and a very confused Dr. Banner found himself with his hand being held by Loki, who should have, by all rights, been dead from the beating. “Is this a trick or a hallucination? What do you think you’re doing?” He pulled his hand back and looked at Loki. The cat, was looking offended at the loss of a hand that clearly belonged where it was.

After a cough, “Thank the Norns. I need you to close the portal... The Chitauri must be stopped.” Loki looked up finally seeing Dr. Banner.

“Aren’t you their leader?” Banner asked suspiciously.
“No, I was controlled, a puppet master. Your other self, managed to release me from that control. Please hurry.”

“Why can’t you do it yourself?” Bruce asked as his head was clearing. Then he noticed how bloody Loki was with broken bones including a broken back. “Oh, I see, dumb question. What do I need to do?”

“My staff will break the protection barrier around it… I had Dr. Selvig build it in…. Just don’t touch the sharp end or the gem, it will control you…” Loki did not want to risk the Hulk being controlled. He felt his fear spike up again. Then the cat brushed his hand again and licked it. Surprisingly, he once again felt the calm come over him.

“What about the cat?” Banner asked a bit confused as to why it was there but unable to look away from it.

The cat was now looking between them and hissed suddenly at something outside.

“You, the Hulk brought it… Go now… once the portal closes… they will all die.” Loki explained painfully.

Bruce wanted to ask more questions but ran to grab the staff. “This better not be a trick.”

“It’s not. Please act now… I would do so myself… but it will take too long to heal enough.” Loki was forcing himself to talk. It was all very taxing right now. He hoped Banner would make it in time. He struggled to have faith Banner wouldn’t touch the end. His mind was trying to shut down but his resolve wouldn’t let it - he would not let those that controlled him win - he needed to save the realms. Fortunately the cat was there somehow giving him support. He silently thanked the Norns for it.

“We better just hope I can keep control until I get it done.” Banner said as he bounded up the stairs toward the cube.

Meanwhile Tony led two Chitauri scooters on a chase weaving in and out of buildings. Jarvis reported. “Sir, it appears that Loki was controlled and the Hulk has removed the control. Dr. Banner has resurfaced and is currently running up to close the portal. He is clearly concerned his other form will reappear before he gets the job finished.”

Tony narrowly avoided an explosion caused by one of the scooters following him as he made a quick turn. “Huh, guess pigs do fly, or maybe reindeer. Thanks Jarv, I’ll try to distract any Chitauri in that area. Did you copy that Steve, Clint, Natasha?”

“Yes.” “Affirmative.” “Roger that.” They answered.

Natasha was already on her way to the roof and made it there the same time as Bruce did. She distracted Dr. Selvig by hitting him in the head, while Bruce began closing the portal.

Bruce relayed what Loki told him as the staff pierced the protective shield around the Tessaract.

“Loki said something about them dying when the portal closes.” Natasha reported.

“I hope you’re right. I’m running out of arrows.” Clint interjected.
The portal started closing and amazingly enough the Chitauri started falling.

Almost simultaneously Fury reported. “Gentlemen, I hate to tell you that the World Security Council has already sent a nuke your way. I hope you have an idea how to stop it.”

“Really? Couldn’t they have waited? And you wonder why I don’t trust you Nick!” Tony answered, then after looking around continued. “I’m on it. Anyone have an idea where you want it?”

“Back at the WSC maybe?” Clint grumbled.

Meanwhile, Tony had reached the nuke. “Guys, I’m gonna have to put it into the ocean unless you bozos have a better idea… like up’s Nicky’s ass. Jarvis or Fury can you find out if this is on a timer?”

“Not helpful guys.” Steve exclaimed as Fury could be heard huffing exasperatedly.

Several moments passed and Jarvis answered. “Sir you have less than four minutes before it goes off.”

“How the hell did you find that out before me? Do you have all our servers bugged?” Fury exclaimed.

“Not yet, but I’m thinking it might be a great idea Nick.” Ironman offered.

“We’ll talk about this later Stark. How far out are you?” Fury sounded concerned.

“Not far enough. It’s going to go down off Long Island. Can’t be helped, better underwater than in the air. At least some of the radiation will be contained.” Tony wasn’t happy. “Yeah, you bet there will be words later Fury.”

Tony took it as far out as he could and directed the trajectory at an acceptable angle to go off in the water and flew back. He managed to outrun the explosion. Ironman had saved New York City but Long Island… not so much. Even at the best depth he could managed, there had still been a backwash of radiation. There would be a lot of people, many of them very rich, who had homes on Long Island that would now be uninhabitable due to nuclear fallout. He knew there would be people who would still die over the next few weeks due to radiation poisoning. Still more would end up dying young, victims of cancer.

He hated the WSC and SHIELD more than he ever had right now. How could they decide to set a nuke off in New York City? Now he just hoped they would own up to it.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Loki Needs to Stay

Chapter Summary

Loki tries to convince the Avengers to let him stay on earth.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

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While not graphically described, Loki is talking with a very damaged body. A little more than he was in the movie.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Avengers were gathering back in Stark tower where they found Loki hurt and bleeding. He had managed to survive the life threatening damages, but still laid in the hole on the floor.

No one noticed the small black cat with the black velvet collar, sitting in the corner behind a plant watching. It had left Loki’s side before they arrived. Loki had lost track of it and was now wondering if it was a hallucination, since no one else had seemed to mention it. This was by far the worst shape he had ever been in mentally and real or not that cat had given him some mental strength. Hopefully enough to deal with what was now coming.

Loki looked up as the others started to gather around him in the rubble of Stark’s bar. Thor was uncharacteristically silent as he walked in, clearly unsure of himself. He avoided looking at Loki. He had been told that Loki had helped somehow at the end and for once seemed to be waiting before making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. ‘Perhaps he has learned a bit. Thank the Norns for this small favor.’ Loki thought.

Natasha walked in last. She was holding the staff. She walked toward Loki who felt a wave of fear race through him as she got closer.

“Would you please be so kind as to leave that over there, and not bring it so close to me?” Loki was staring at the staff. He was still very much messed up, and started shaking when the staff got close. Never again did he want to be under another’s control.

Natasha nodded and set the staff far away. She returned and said, “You were under someone’s control too.”

“Oh yes.” Loki responded. While Thor looked up with hope in his eyes.

“Who’s?” She asked ever the interrogator.
Loki looked at Thor who was listening. “Mostly a creature called ‘The Other’… he reported to Thanos, the Mad Titan.”

At the mention of Thanos Thor turned to look at his brother and boomed. “Brother, we must go to Asgard and tell father at once!”

Loki looked tired and weak. His speech was filled with pain yet a bit of anger still got through. “I’m not your brother… Odin is not my father… I will not return to Asgard to be ridiculed, used, tortured and imprisoned… It will be worse because they now know I am of a monster race.”

“Never, you are still my brother, adopted or not.” Thor stated loudly. But it was a declaration only - it lacked conviction, and only a bit of compassion seeped through.

The response was unsteady and bitter. “No matter how you wish that were true Thor, it is not... Surely, you remember how I have been treated... Or are you still too blind?.... It will be much worse now… even if, given leniency… which is very unlikely… I will not go back.” Loki told him. His voice turned slightly stronger now, clearly trying to bluff them into believing him stronger than he was, but his pain was such that even he could not hide it completely from his face and his broken body was obvious to anyone with eyes. He started to look at those around the room. Barton was angry. The Widow was unreadable. The Man of Iron was looking at possible damage to seemingly random spots in the ceiling. The Captain was watching closely. Banner was listening, having found an afghan to cover himself with.

“But Odin must know about Thanos.” Thor insisted.

“I will tell you, that they may be warned… Though I doubt you will be believed as it is from me…. I have suffered much… I will not be tortured by Asgard. I will make a deal with Midgard… for my continued existence… and stay here.” Loki tried to sit up, but the pain and lack of useful bones and muscles stopped him.

Thor was suddenly there picking him up and carrying him to a sofa. It was a testament about how Loki was suffering that he didn’t object. Steve quickly brushed the sofa off before Thor set Loki down very gently. They arranged the pillows so that Loki might lean up slightly to see those who were around him. The rest of the Avengers were watching suspiciously, trying to decide how they each felt about Loki right then.

“Asgard will not be happy, but you are right in that they will not be kind to you.” Thor finally spoke sadly at a normal volume as they moved and careful adjusted the battered and broken body of his brother.

“Why should we allow you to stay here?” Clint asked suspiciously. Steve and Natasha nodded in agreement.

Loki looked around the room. Dark and assessing faces were all around. The attempted show of strength was gone, dissipated from his clear helplessness when they moved him. Talking took effort, the strength gained from the cat was waning. “Surely one of you is interested in the technology of the Chitauri? ... I am also a skilled healer... Or perhaps help with scientific research?… I could even teach you some theory behind magic... I am sure there is something… that Midgard might want in exchange for a deal." He was struggling to breathe. He finally took a deep breath, winced and continued with pain and frustration spilling into his voice. “Or do they execute innocent people… who were tortured … and forced to be controlled… on Midgard too … without listening to them ….or their side of the story?”

“No one wants you on earth no matter what you offer.” Barton growled.
“Execute and torture? Innocent and controlled? While I doubt you’re completely innocent, I’m sure they’ll take your story into account.” Steve said sounding a bit startled, clearly convincing himself that Asgard would be fair.

Natasha had tilted her head toward Barton. Loki imagined her agreement with him. He was sure Stark wasn’t even listening as he had climbed up on a chair and was adjusting some sort of device with a lens.

Loki looked worried now, dread written across his eyes thinking about the wrath of Odin. He turned his head to Thor, panic now slightly renewed his weak voice. “You can’t take me back... They view me as an enemy... They will punish me for breaking... talking with the enemy... and leading an army while being controlled... For the madness I suffered before. It will be decided without facts. I may be damaged now, but Odin will do worse... you know what he does to Frost Giants... I have crossed him too often... Please Thor... he has gotten worse... you know this... He will not just kill me... he will torture me for eternity.” He was gasping for air by the time he finished.

Bruce looked shocked. “Did I hear that right? They torture or execute, for talking under torture or for acting under another’s control?”

Thor looked down with shame. “The Æsir are a warrior race. You are expected to hold your tongue and die. We generally take care of our own but once you are marked a traitor things change. Odin’s punishments are... sometimes, severe. I doubt Loki would be executed though... more likely broken and enslaved by father. He is too valuable for his magic.”

“What about a trial? If he was controlled surely that would clear him.” Steve asked surprised by what Thor had told him of Asgardian justice.

Thor shook his head. “He would likely get no trial and no chance to speak. The Allfather would just punish and sentence him as he sees fit.” Thor was starting to look quite uncomfortable under the uneasy faces of his teammates.

Barton’s face was unmoved, saying angrily. “He deserves no less, or we could just kill him now.”

Loki’s eyes were closed and to even the untrained eye, he was shaking a bit. He whispered loudly without hope. “Yes Thor... kill me now... rather than take me back to Asgard... I can no longer stand torture... They know what I am... I will be tortured.” Perhaps his eyes were watering or perhaps those were tears. It was hard to tell with so much damage.

“You said you could tell us about the Chitauri and are able to heal?” Bruce asked. Then to the others. “Loki was able to talk down the Hulk very quickly. And honestly, he helped us close the portal.”

If Loki could move and he were not completely terrified of Banner he would kiss him. Perhaps if he was allowed to stay he would just enchant pants that would stretch with him. Those wedgies had to hurt.

“Wait Bruce, while Asgard may not be the place to send him, because no one deserves that.” Steve said then turned to Loki. “You can’t expect us to just roll over and believe that you were controlled. How can we be sure this is not a trick?”

Clint growled. “I’m sure it is a trick; he’s just trying to cut his losses. He’s fooling us, acting the victim. He was always talking to those above him.”

“I was being given orders... Orders I could not disobey... Did you not notice my pain at times?”
Loki countered despondently. How could Barton not have seen his pain?

“Yeah, I did see pain, but anger too. If you were really controlled like me you wouldn’t have been angry.” Clint spit back.

Loki closed his eyes, suffering with each breath. “I was trying to fight the control… I even did for moments at a time. Selvig…Selvig was able to put in a way to stop the cube…” ‘And Barton’s pants would be giving wedgies of epic proportions.’

“Loki would never have built that in, if it was his plan. And a bottleneck opening where everyone could see them approach, never. He is too smart.” Thor interjected sticking up for his brother.

Natasha suddenly decided to interject. “Everyone close your eyes. What color are Loki’s eyes?”

Clint. “Blue.”
Bruce “Blue”
Steve. “Blue.”
Thor. “Bright Green.”
Tony now typing at a tablet across the room. “Blue before. Green now.”

‘What!? Stark was actually listening?’ Loki thought. ‘Did he just look it up? Or perhaps he just noticed things like eye color given his reputation.’

“Exactly, Stark.” Natasha said with a smirk.

Stark didn’t respond but continued to look intensely at his tablet.

“That’s serious evidence for him being controlled.” Bruce smiled. “Can you help advance our healing?”

Loki looked up, his green eyes were quite damp now, some of it blood. He was clearly fighting a battle with himself, trying to stay calm, or maybe just to keep from passing out. The strength from earlier was gone, no cat in sight. He had completely given up on looking strong, he was falling apart, just barely holding onto his sanity. “Yes, I can teach you, help you… Please let me stay.” His voice was quiet, shaky and a bundle of nerves. Muscles twitched and tried to move, he appeared to be attempting to pull himself into a ball but his body was not capable of responding. He would have to get over his fears of Banner, he owed him much.

“Loki, you know there is much we are not allowed to tell the mortals.” Thor felt the need to add.

“Thor… I know the rules better than you… how much is allowed and the reasons behind them… You don’t have to worry.” Loki made a slight attempt at snarling, gritting his teeth because of the pain it cost to make that snarl.

“How could we trust you not to just try to take us over again?” Clint asked.

“I could leave the magic suppression cuffs here, until you proved yourself.” Thor volunteered.

Loki looked more pained, if possible, at the thought that Thor had brought the suppression cuffs with him. “If it means not going to Asgard… And no torture… I will agree to them for a time… Assuming the key is left with a trustworthy guardian… and my safety is assured… through magical oaths.” He despised the cuffs, but anything was better than facing Odin.

Natasha looked at Loki. “Magical oaths?” She clearly found this unbelievable.
Loki laughed weakly perhaps his voice had healed a bit as his head was clearly healing first. “Yes, little spider… magical oaths… guaranteed honesty… Just because your world has not discovered magic… and proved it… does not mean it doesn’t exist. The Tesseract should be proof enough.”

“That’s a start. It’s still going to take some time before we even start to trust you. First we’ll need to figure out who has the authority to approve you staying and who would be taking responsibility.” Steve added warily, not sure he wanted Loki here but was not willing to knowingly send a man to be tortured.

Tony had been quiet. Loki had thought he was not been paying attention. Suddenly Stark responded. “I do. I’ll take responsibility.”

“What? Are you crazy?” Barton said. Steve and Natasha both had similar looks but for different reasons.

Stark walked over and sat next to Loki’s head on the arm of the sofa. “If he really has that kind of knowledge and is willing to trade it for asylum, I’ll take the responsibility for him, and make sure he’s allowed to stay with me.” Tony said, realizing both what a huge opportunity this was for gaining knowledge, and that he might be making the biggest mistake ever. But, hell he would never get a chance like this again and you only live once.

“You and what army. SHIELD will want him, governments will want him, and everyone will want a piece of him. And we can’t guarantee his safety.” Steve said clearly unaware of the power Stark held in the world and already wondering how they might protect Loki from abduction.

Loki looked at the Man of Iron sitting by his head, surprised by this strange mortal.

“I have an army of lawyers. He is a gold mine of information and I want it. Furthermore I don’t trust SHIELD to make a deal and not use his knowledge against us, or to torture him themselves. I’ll build a facility to protect him if I have to. Hah! I already have. This tower is already secure against nearly any attack.” Tony’s endless thirst for knowledge, his desire to learn and understand was clearly in control. He was ready to do whatever it took. He was already seeing possibilities in his mind.

“Oh yeah, real secure Stark.” Clint interjected looking as a leaf blew past him from the broken windows.

Tony shot Clint a dirty look. “It’ll be fixed. And made ten times better.”

Loki reached up with his working left arm and Stark grabbed his hand. “Thank you, I am indebted to you.” Loki said with the honest heartfelt sincerity that only someone rescued from the brink of death would have.

Thor looked at Loki then at Tony, voice sounding amazed. “I do not remember you ever saying that brother. Man of Iron, you have made two great friends today, Loki and myself.” He kneeled down next to Loki, looking like he wanted to hug him but feared breaking him. Loki just closed his eyes, hand still held tight in Starks.

Bruce added. “I don’t trust SHIELD or any government either, after that bomb, after what’s been done to me. Tony, I don’t know you very well either. If you do this, would you allow me some say? There needs to be some checks and balances on this for his sake.”

Loki was still looking pale but had stopped shaking, he was gaining some comfort from the Man of Iron. Hope existed again. But fear was threatening to break through again. The green monster had
added one more level of damage to his already crippled mind, despite the support and apparent acceptance from Banner.

Tony answered Bruce smiling and standing up by Loki, but still holding his hand. “I can live with that, I was going to ask you to move into the tower to do science with me anyway Brucie. He can join us.” Tony gestured at Loki with his head.

“But he killed Phil!” Clint screamed in protest, not believing he was hearing this.

A burst of anger suddenly sprouted forward as Loki attempted to hiss, interrupted by a deep gasp and cough. “And how many did YOU kill, while YOU were under control?... Can you not see my hand was also forced?” Loki shuttered, letting go of Stark, and put his one working arm over his forehead. Trying to hold onto the hope he might be able to stay. ‘Should I make a futile attempt to look strong?’

Clint shut up. He obviously didn’t like it. But reality dictated if Loki really was controlled, he had a point. Loki didn’t know Coulson. He wasn’t different from any other man that had been killed attacking him. It didn’t mean Clint would ever like Loki or ever trust him, but for now he was not going to block his staying on earth.

“Fury is not going to like this. He will have a lot to say. If he allows it, he will demand SHIELD be in control.” Natasha informed them arms crossed.

“Fury doesn’t always get what he wants.” Tony shut down Natasha with his voice and a glare. Knowing she would be watching and listening.

Looking satisfied, the black cat left unnoticed. It entered the elevator and somehow traveled down to the first floor. Later it would leave the building only to be picked up by a shelter, which quickly discover it had lost its owner due to casualties and needed a new home.

Chapter End Notes

Don’t worry the cat will be back briefly in chapter 4 and more from chapter 5 on.

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo’s tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
The Agreement

Chapter Summary

Details of the agreement for Loki’s stay on Earth. Fury gets involved. Steve learns what a nuke is.

Chapter Notes

This chapter has a brief description of Loki’s tortured body.

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Loki wanted to negotiate the terms quickly, before Thor left. Thor didn’t want to spend too long on Midgard as he needed to get the Tesseract back to Asgard and talk with his father about Thanos.

Tony found himself explaining to them all exactly why SHIELD shouldn’t be invited to the negotiations. “I don’t trust them enough to change a lightbulb in the subway! Have you guys already forgotten that an hour ago they were willing to destroy New York City because they didn’t trust us? One that I had to take care of for them. Because they screwed up? Jesus, they were building weapons to use with the Tesseract. I wouldn’t doubt if they kept the remains from Hydra in their back pocket. And you think I should trust them with off world technology? They’ll have him in a testing facility in nothing flat.”

“SHIELD’s not like that Stark. They’re the good guys. They were trying to deal with an impossible situation.” Steve defended.

“Look, I’ve done the bigger and better weapons route. It blows up in your face. SHIELD is one accident away from that. They don’t think about what they’re doing. That power is spread across too many heads to control, many of which seem all too trigger happy. In addition they covet anything that anyone else has that they don’t. Want me to show you how many times they have tried to get a copy of the Ironman suit or into my personal servers?” Tony had said while hovering near Loki.

“Can you honestly tell us you don’t covet the information he could give us?” Natasha said calmly looking directly at Tony and smirking.

Bruce decided to chime in. “I understand what you’re saying Natasha, but Tony has a point, they’re not being careful. Besides, I agree that they’ll more than likely lock him up someplace and run tests against his will. Here I can make sure his rights are honored.”
“He’s a criminal and an alien and has no rights.” Clint muttered under his breath.

Thor growled. “The Man of Iron has agreed to take responsibility for my brother. Loki and I have both agreed that this is the best course of action. You shall remember that he is a Prince of Asgard and will treat him with respect.”

“That doesn’t mean we should give him a clean slate and trust him with all Stark’s secrets.” Steve pointed out.

About that time Jarvis announced Fury was on his way up.

“Who notified him?” Tony snapped.

“I did.” Both Clint and Steve answered. Natasha just smiled, because she knew they would.

Then Fury tried to insist that if Loki was staying he needed to be held in SHIELD’s facilities. Tony wouldn’t hear of it. Fury had brought them footage of the destroyer and had it played.

“That transformer wannabe wasn’t even close to causing the damage your nuke, that SHIELD sent to New York’s already caused. The radiation death and damage are much worse.” Tony barked out.

“What exactly is a nuke?” Steve asked.

Fury fumed. “We don’t have time for this.”

“Oh yes we do.” Tony said gleefully feeling the need to tweak Fury’s eyepatch.

Tony instructed Jarvis to show Steve what it would have done had it landed. Jarvis showed them pictures of the bombs going off and the after effects from tests and then actual footage from Hiroshima and Nagasaki Japan. Then pictures of the aftermath of what fallout did to the survivors. Jarvis then pulled Twitter and Instagram pictures from the current Long Island. Finally Jarvis showed a simulation of what would have happened had the bomb gone off on its original course.

They all winced and Fury suddenly looked very tired.

Steve’s eyes went from curious, to awed, to upset, to horrified, ending in serious shock at what unbelievable damage, destruction and long term health and environmental problems it could cause. He quickly agreed that he would help watch Loki, especially after he found out SHIELD wasn’t even taking responsibility for the nuke that Stark dumped off Long Island.

It took two days of negotiations. They took many breaks because of Loki’s exhaustion. Occasionally he would suddenly just start to uncontrollably shake. Tony recognized the panic attacks and fortunately knew enough about them to help him through them.

Fury balked at first because Loki ‘looked’ healthy. Then Loki dropped his glamor. They saw wounds beyond what the Hulk had done to him. Wounds from torture sessions with magical instruments, some of which had been so bad they were still partially open, being held together only by spells. Seeing holes and clear paths into Loki’s muscles, organs and raw flesh changed things.
After emptying the now used trash can liners and cleaning the floor, no one complained again about the breaks.

They asked about frost giants. Thor started telling stories of them when Loki angrily stopped him. He didn’t want to be forced to explain that Odin had actually enchanted his tiny body which kept his skin and eyes looking like an Æsir and hidden the enchantment’s existence using the ancient staff Gungnir. Loki refused under any circumstances to show them a frost giant or Jotar.

The magic suppression cuffs were an anti-magic shell and would keep Loki’s magic inside him until they trusted him. He could not affect the cuffs but he could affect himself and thus continue self-healing.

Anthony Edward Stark was ultimately responsible for Loki, who would live in Stark tower. He would keep one key. Steve and Bruce would share a second key to the cuffs and would both live in Stark tower as would the two SHIELD spies.

The agreement was to be enforced by magical oaths. These oaths had time limits and could not be broken during that time. Loki with Thor’s help made a simple oath item. Thor had a small amount of magic and training enough to assure Loki would not screw with the item.

Tony brought a crystal drink tumbler for the physical item to enchant but couldn’t convince them to require alcohol to use it, much to his disappointment.

Loki and Thor were naturally bound by the oaths they made as a result of being raised in Asgard but they agreed to use it too if it would reassure the humans. Tony, Steve, Bruce and Fury all tried it by promising not to lie for one hour.

The demonstrations had Clint rolling on the floor in laughter. It did more than anything else in his accepting Loki staying on earth. He had so much blackmail material now. Even Natasha couldn’t help but smirk as Clint asked nosy and embarrassing questions.

Fury even admitted to having sent a couple spies on a mission to get him some fresh expensive special order pastries by telling them they contained a hidden message. Clint was in hog heaven. No one ever had anything on Fury.

Steve admitted to once having a huge crush on a male friend. Another time, before the serum, he had gotten drunk, taken off his shirt and danced on a table, and no one had even noticed. Only his best friend had watched and then had carried him home.

Loki in turn made a similar oath. They spent the time verifying the truth about his capture, torture and being controlled.

They discovered magic oaths were serious stuff. Agreeing to tell the truth did allow you to stay silent. Agreeing to answer and not was bad news, causing severe pain possibly even death. Revealing secrets you had sworn to keep was even worse, one had to be careful with secondary effects. You couldn’t get someone else to somehow break the oath for you without risking the consequences. Tony decided Jarvis needed some new programing to help them with this.

They agreed Loki would go to SHIELD headquarters accompanied by Tony, Bruce or Steve, once a
month where they would be allowed to ask questions. Once he was healed they could do a onetime brief examination of him and extract four vials of blood. Loki really didn’t like the idea of examinations and giving them his blood, but it soon became clear he would have to pick his battles and SHIELD demanded something.

Loki agreed to give them as much information about the Chitauri as he could and not break Asgardian law. Seems you were not allowed to help a civilization destroy itself by giving them information on things they couldn’t really understand. Fury did not think Tony at all funny when he quoted the prime directive from Star Trek and compared Loki to Captain Kirk.

Stark on the other hand was different. As an individual, a genius, and his keeper/guardian there was a loophole. Loki agreed that if Stark proved he could indeed keep his tongue, he would be given the opportunity to go into some sort of binding apprenticeship. Then the rules could be bent for him and him alone, and once bound, there was so much more he could learn.

Loki was learning to appreciate this man who could get his way by talking. His way used intelligence and logic with cunning and power that nearly had Loki applauding him.

Loki had been surprised when Tony had first brought in his lawyers. By the end he was impressed. It was clear that the only people, who really knew exactly what the agreement said was himself and Stark.

No, Loki would not underestimate Anthony Stark. It would be an interesting partnership. A challenge to see how much knowledge Stark would learn, how much Tony would push himself and what he would be willing to do to get around limits Loki set.

Chapter End Notes

I'm afraid this chapter is/was mostly groundwork filler. I wish it were more interesting but I don't seem to have developed enough skill yet to do that. Please forgive me.

Because it is short I am posting it early and will be posting the next chapter this weekend.

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Left on Midgard

Chapter Summary

Thor leaves, Pepper meets the Avengers. Loki starts to deal.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

A couple weeks later Tony found himself holding a smallish black cat while Loki filled out adoption paperwork. Trouble, he thought as he looked at the cat. How had he ended up here? He thought back to just days after the Chitauri attack.

************* Flash back**********

Pepper had been out of town when New York was attacked. She had offered to come to the negotiations but Tony insisted that she stay away until the deals were worked out. This was not SI business and she had enough to do. He didn’t trust SHIELD. He barely knew the Avengers. Loki was all but a complete unknown. He told her he wanted her safely away for now.

Tony didn’t want Pepper anywhere near Loki.

His relationship with Pepper was always explosive and often on the rocks. He was never what she wanted. She tried too hard to change him. Their relationship wasn’t very old and he already suspected it wouldn’t last. But she liked him and he owed her so much. She really did take care of him. Besides he had stuff in that agreement he didn’t want her to know about, like a potential apprenticeship in magic.

He knew that Loki was very good looking. Hell, he was attracted to him when the guy was still controlled. He didn’t want to put avoidable temptation right in front of her. One of the things he and Pepper shared was a type in men, tall, dark haired, slim, and good looking with high cheekbones. Her favorite color was even green. She also seemed to like intelligent broken people that she could possibly fix. He had known her for years. Loki filled in all her boxes.

If one compared himself and Loki you ended up with many similarities. Tony was no idiot. Genius remember? The differences Tony saw, were things like he was short, Pepper was obviously taller in heels. Loki was polite and a god. Damn it, the god was even polite to lawyers. How was Tony supposed to compete with that? If Pepper didn’t fall for the god, she was sure to point out how he did the things Tony refused to change in himself. Nope, he did not want Pepper around Loki any more
Pepper had finally shown up the day Thor was leaving for Asgard. She had surveyed the Tower and wanted to meet the rest of the Avengers and Loki. Thor was talking to Loki about the Tesseract. Loki was once again propped up in a chair just inside the doors in the penthouse. Thor was standing next to him. The others were gathered around watching.

“Now remember Thor you have to put energy here and then twist while thinking of the exact place in Asgard you are going. Frigga is going to be on the other side waiting for you.”

“I wish you could go and get her so she could do this for me brother.” Thor whined again. Thor was not stupid but had always relied on Loki for anything involving magic so he felt uncomfortable around it. This, despite his years of learning the basics of magic and actual ability to cast small amounts of it.

“I am not your brother! You should remember that in Asgard.” Loki glared at Thor. Who sent him the best puppy dog eyes anyone could ever remember. Then Loki rolled his eyes and continued in a gentler yet scolding voice. “You know I can’t do that with the cuffs on. Besides I’m not going to take them off and risk going to Asgard. Really Thor, I know you are not the idiot that you act.” Loki added.

Thor sighed and lost the puppy look which was at least partially an act, and gave a reluctant Loki another hug goodbye. Up to seven so far. Loki was counting.

Tony and Pepper came up. Tony said. “Hi guys, I have someone I’d like you all to meet. This is Pepper Potts, CEO of Stark Industries and my girlfriend.” Tony introduced each of them to Pepper as she smiled, nodded and added pleasant hellos.

“This is Clint Barton. His specialties are archery, spying and being a birdbrain.” Tony said.

“HEY! Stark, not nice. Hi.” Clint exclaimed and shook her hand.

“This is Bruce Banner who will be working with me. He’s an amazing researcher and written some great stuff on gamma radiation. But watch out, he turns this funny green color when he gets mad.” Tony said as he poked Bruce.

“Nice to meet you Pepper.” Bruce said nodding a greeting and gave Tony a sideways glance.

“You know her, Natalie or Nellie or Natasha I forget. What is your name again?” Tony smirked bending over enough to put his face directly in front of her.

“Hello, Ms. Potts. Nice to see you again.” Natasha totally ignored Tony’s remark and face.

Pepper knew who she was, as proved by the glare she gave Tony.

“This is Steve Rogers. Captain America, my father’s hero, perfect in every way.” Tony said flatly. He knew Pepper was aware of the problems Tony had with his dad’s hero worship.

“The pleasure is all mine ma’am. Thanks Tony.” Steve said, not aware that to Tony that was no compliment. He also shook Pepper’s hand.

“This is Loki, God of Mischief, who we talked about. He’ll also be staying and also working with me most of the time once he’s a bit more healed.” Tony added more energetically.
Loki stood, took Pepper’s extended hand with his working arm and kissed the back of it. “What an honor and delight to meet you. I look so forward to getting to know you. Both intelligent and beautiful, such an impressive woman to be able to control and run both Stark and his company.” Everyone laughed. If charm could be measured on a scale of one to ten. Loki just gave an eleven.

“Why thank you Loki.” She beamed at him like he was a breath of fresh air. Tony could tell Pepper was impressed.

Tony quickly directed Pepper toward Thor. “This is Thor, God of Thunder, crown prince of Asgard. I understand he likes Poptarts.” This gained another laugh.

Thor laughed and also took her hand and kissed the back if it. “I do like them and will miss them when I return to Asgard, Lady Pepper.”

“Nice to meet you too. When are you leaving and how long will you be gone?” Pepper asked.

Thor looked very sad indeed. “I am leaving presently. I really do not know when I will return as the Bifrost is still a long way from being repaired.” He quickly turned to Loki and added. “If you could check in on Lady Jane sometimes. Tell her I do not expect her to wait as she may waste many years before I return.”

“What!” Fury said loudly.

“And this is Nick Fury, head of SHIELD. Temper tantrums on demand.” Tony added, completing the introductions.

Pepper began. “Nice to…. Only to be cut off.

“You said you were not going to be gone a long time.” Fury went on turning to Thor and ignoring Pepper.

“I am not.” Thor looked confused. “A long time would be at least twenty years. Is this not true brother?”

Loki rolled his eyes. “Perhaps in Asgard where people live thousands. You forget mortals don’t live over a century.” He wondered how Thor would ever manage to be king when he couldn’t be counted on to understand cultures that were not Æsir.

“Nothing you can do now Nicky. Paperwork has dried.” Tony said with a laugh.

Thor did leave shortly thereafter. Loki ended up with 14 unwanted hugs and only a few more bruises from Thor.

Tony, Loki and Pepper went back to the tower and talked about the details of Loki’s rooms. In addition to the standard bed, bath, kitchen, living room, and study, Loki required a room for a library, a room for meditation and eventual research and a large storage room. And after seeing and using Tony’s, he requested a huge sunken tub, with frosted glass windows and large sills and counters plus a few details that would remind him of those on Asgard. Pepper enjoyed helping him design it. Tony’s watched his mind flipping between thoughts telling him to keep them apart and imagining the bathtub with lots of bubbles and Loki in it.
They set Loki up in a temporary guest room to begin with and checked on him regularly. Jarvis watched all the time. Loki did not actually do normal sleep, he would lie there concentrating on healing until he was so exhausted that he would pass out into an almost coma like state. He would wake up with a scream or a whimper then start healing again.

After a few days Loki’s body had recovered enough to not simply lie passed out in bed as an invalid. Loki then took to sitting in the corner of his room on a chair staring at the walls, or the door, or vents when a noise was heard. His feet and legs rested tight against his body, with arms wrapped around them. His chin sat on his knees. Sometimes he would scream for no reason at all. He tried to bury his head in his knees when this happened, but until his suite was finished the sound still carried out of the room.

Tony was checking on him regularly and would spend time holding Loki. Tony remembered Yinsen holding him. The man had tried to give encouragement but he had not sugar-coated it. He had encouraged Tony to fight to live, to survive. Tony didn’t think Loki was hearing much though, still he talked and encouraged like Yinsen had. Eventually Loki would start to lean into him. It made him feel warm inside, useful. He was giving back some of what Yinsen had given him; Yinsen would have been proud of him.

When Loki leaned into him, Tony could forget the fallout on Long Island which was his biggest source of guilt currently. Loki would mumble thanks, sometimes after a particularly bad fit. He felt closer to Loki because of it. He had high hopes for their alliance, at least if Loki ever came out of his room.

A few days later they moved him into his suite. At night Loki now slept lights on, in the back corner of his closet, in a fetal position with blankets wrapped around him, suffering from terrible nightmares.

Loki did start to wonder about Stark though when he could forget his trauma. Other than his mother he had never had someone take care of him like this. The man seemed to enjoy it, even find peace in it, despite the fact he never shut up. But even his continuous chatter didn’t bother Loki. In fact, he found it soothing. Was Stark taking care of his investment or trying for friendship? He never tried to take advantage of Loki, which was puzzling. Loki was in such bad shape he finally gave up trying to figure out Stark’s motives. It was helping him, giving him a bit of a reason to trust. He just let go and leaned into the calming touch and sounds.

Loki rarely talked, only telling the things he felt necessary to share. One was that he had to work through some of the torture before he could talk about the Chitauri. The other was that being held helped the process which Tony smugly took credit for already doing.

************************

Tony was knocked out of his thoughts as the cat slammed her head into Tony’s face. Well at least she seems to like me Tony thought as she continued to nuzzle his face and purred.

Chapter End Notes

Next week we visit the shelter to adopt our precious cat.

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a
comment. I appreciate all of you.
Chapter Summary

Loki has a bad nightmare and they decide to get him a pet.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony continued to think back while waiting for Loki to finish filling out paperwork for the cat he was holding.

------------ Continuing thinking back****

Loki finally was ready to come out of his room. He still didn’t trust Bruce not to turn into a green monster on him and trembled when he stood too close. Actually he didn’t really trust any of them. Steve and Tony were clearly more honorable than the others, but Steve trusted SHIELD too much.

Tony had an agenda, but it was one Loki could understand and it put him at ease. He knew the inventor could be trusted to protect his assets. For the time being Loki was very much one of those assets. Tony hadn’t disappointed him either. The man continued to make him feel cared for in a way he had a hard time explaining. He tried to tell himself he was only a possession, undeniably a prized possession, and even that made him feel more valued than he had felt from anyone, save his mother in a very, very long time. He even caught himself fantasizing about having a real friend.

One night a few days after Loki started venturing out of his room. Tony was summoned and had to wake Loki up barely a half hour after he went to sleep. An hour after he left Jarvis summoned Tony again. He brought a bottle and two glasses with him this time. They sat together and drank.

Tony assured Loki that torture screwed with everyone. Loki admitted it was much worse than anyone could imagine despite the fact that he had been trained to withstand torture.

Loki then decided he trusted Tony enough to tell a story.

About a child raised and taught to be a brother and a king but treated as an unwanted offspring, used for his skills and powers, and belittled the rest of the time. Never fitting in, no real friends, only his mother loved him. The picture he painted was bleak. About a child never understood because he was different and thus alienated. A child who tried very hard to please his father. How he would never fit
in on Asgard because he was a scholar and a mage. Stuck in a world that honored brute strength, fair hair and simple answers. Suffering with a father that showed favoritism, showering Thor with praise and few punishments, while his dark haired son took the blame and punishments most of the time and received little to no praise.

Then he found out he was a frost giant. Something much worse than Midgard’s boogie man or Satan. He had been overcome with grief and crazed. His life was a lie; he could never hope to please his father. Yet, he found himself holding Gungnir and being temporarily regent. Wanting desperately to still please Odin, his father, he had no choice but to keep his commands. Even his best was still not good enough. Ostracized, lied to, and discovering he was a monster with no hope of redemption, he resorted to certain death by falling off the end of the Bifrost.

After drifting for? He still didn’t know how long. Thanos found him. He was insane at that point having been alone in the void so long. Then he was tortured by ‘The Other’. He had fought his captors, as they tried to control him. His mind protections were too strong to just force the control, but eventually they broke him and he accepted the control.

Tony being drunk felt moved enough to actually share that Howard never thought Tony measured up and his father’s best day was when he shipped him off to boarding school. Then unbelievably he volunteered that he had been tortured by the Ten Rings while held by them. He was skimming over most events but described the torture, something he hadn’t talked about to anyone.

“I wish you could hold me more.” Loki slurred near the end while leaning into Tony. They had drank that bottle way too fast.

“Sorry, m’ not your bitch.” Tony replied looking at the empty bottle.

Loki sat up looked at Tony, eyes not quite focused and grinned. “I don’t want a bitch, but a queen!”

“Queen is a rock band and Freddy Mercury’s gone.” Tony looked at him.

Loki laughed. “Whoever he is. No, I want someone special. Although I have heard you used to make a good bitch before Pepper.”

“Who said that? I’ll have you know I am super genius special. I’m much better than any queen.” Tony responded sitting up higher.

“Ah, but you certainly can act like a bitch to that Fury person.” Loki said smugly.

Tony sat back and pulled Loki into his shoulder to hold him more like he had asked. “You got that right Princess. Don’t worry, someday we’ll find you a prince.”

They both laughed and felt a little better for talking, and nervous about sharing something emotional. They eventually fell asleep leaning against each other buried in blankets, in the back corner of the closet.

The next morning Loki pushed Tony over announcing. “Stark, I require a pet.”

“What did you say?” Tony looked skeptical while rubbing his face where he had fallen against an empty glass.
“Are you daft this morning just because we talked? I require a pet.” Loki stood up, gathering the empty bottle and both glasses.

“Why do you feel the need to bring some strange creature into my home that will defecate all over it?” Tony questioned, also getting up and feeling stupid and embarrassed for passing out next to Loki in the back of a closet. Then he wondered why he felt that way? It wasn’t like he had something he needed to hide.

“It is my home too now. But if you must know it will help me heal.” Loki responded leaving the closet heading into the room.

Tony squinted his eyes at the bright light as he followed Loki. “More my home as I own it. I’m not sure I see why you need a pet.”

Loki sighed. “Mentally. Or do you enjoy hearing me scream at all hours of the day and night? Perhaps you are looking for an excuse to sleep in the closet. Do you do this often, enjoy being in the closet?”

“A pet it is. I’m all for it.” Tony agreed readily. “Will it really help you not scream?”

“What I need is time. You have spent too much time on me already. You need to return to your normal activities. A pet will stay with me, speeding up the process. Thus less time screaming.” Loki looked put out to have to explain this.

Tony thought for a moment. Maybe it was a great idea. He hadn’t gotten anything done since Loki came. Plus adopting a homeless pet would be great publicity. “You win, let’s go get you a pet.” He felt a bit sad that Loki might not want him to continue holding him when things got bad.

Not being shy, he added. “You don’t need to worry about my work. Got lots of stuff completed and backed up waiting to go. I want to be there for you when it’s bad, someone helped me a while back, I want to help you.” Yes, Tony thought giving Yinsen credit, it might work. He didn’t know why but that contact seemed to help him more than he had expected, it just felt right. Nonsexual touching was a rare thing for Tony, something he really didn’t do unless he was drunk and in those cases he didn’t usually remember. For some reason he seemed to be okay touching Loki, and he didn’t want it to stop.

Loki listened. Tony wanted to help him. He would never be able to stop those hopes of ‘friend’ and possible ‘real friend and ally’ if Stark continued this. He felt the need to respond with a quick insult. Instead an awkward but real “Thank you,” was all that would come out.

They headed down to the nearest shelter. It didn’t take long for them to find the room with cats. Loki knew immediately that they were more appropriate for him than dogs. He remembered how the mentally induced hallucination of a cat had helped him.

Tony spied some cute kittens and took one out. “How about this one?” It was a grey tabby. He started petting it and it purred. Then it batted at his hand and squirmed into a standing position. In a matter of moments it had climbed up Tony’s arm and onto his back.

Tony was now bent over not wanting the kitten to fall off him while trying to grab it. It dug its claws into his back. Tony yelped and straightened up only to have the kitten climb onto his head. He reached for it and almost had it when it jumped over on top of another cage. He then spent the next ten minutes trying to catch the loose kitten.

Finally he went to put it back and suddenly the other three litter mates jumped out. Tony grabbed at
them trying to keep them in the cage afraid they might hurt themselves if they fell out. But they promptly used Tony as a tree instead. One headed for the top of the cage using Tony’s head as a bounding tool, one jumped to the floor after shimmying down his middle and leg, and the third one jumped on his shoulder and scrambled down his back and launched itself off his butt onto a chair before taking off towards the door. Tony still held the first kitten and set it down only to have it jump out of the cage straight to the floor before he could close the door.

Fortunately a volunteer was just coming in and grabbed the third escapee before it left the room. Tony caught the one on top of the cage. The second one he cornered after nearly stepping on it twice and the volunteer grabbed it. He was not allowed to put them back.

It took another ten minutes to catch the original gray kitten. When he finally caught it Tony huffed. “We are not getting this one.”

Loki laughed and held up a black adult cat. “Of course not, I like this one.” It reminded him of his hallucination.

Tony looked at the sign. “Four years old already? You don’t want a kitten?”

Loki smiled. “Everyone wants a kitten. But I want a cat that is calmer and will sit in my lap. Besides she is a kitten at heart.”

“With the mess you’ve caused? Let’s call it Karma, because Karma’s your bitch.” Tony laughed at himself.

Loki smirked and smiled at the cat. “Really Stark, I think she reminds me of you.”

“No, just no. I see where this is going. I am not your bitch, we will not revisit that. You’re nothing but trouble you know that.” Tony said lightheartedly looking from Loki to the cat.

“Yes, you’re right. Trouble is much more fun.” Loki laughed.

Tony looked at Loki. “What, admitting you got trouble? I never expected that.”

“Oh, I think you want Trouble. Here you take her.” Loki handed Tony the cat.

“Why did you hand me the cat?” Tony asked.

“Because you wanted Trouble, so I gave her to you. Besides I think she is going to officially belong to you.” Loki smirked as he started filling out the adoption paperwork putting Tony’s name as Adopter.

Tony laughed at that. “You enjoyed that way too much, jerk. Hello Trouble, guess you have two dads now.” He said petting the cat.

Tony looked at the cat. It was a smallish sized cat. The hair was soft and medium length on its body, but looked longer on his head and tail, just slightly dripping off those areas. Its eyes were green but not as green as Loki’s. And the purr was loud and made Tony think of engines. Tony liked it already. “Fine, let’s get out of here before ‘I’ cause any more trouble.”

It took quite a while to get the paperwork all filled out. Finally Loki took the cat back. “You need to sign and pay some sort of fee. Then we may return to your citadel of self-gratification.”

Tony huffed at Loki, signed the papers and paid the fee. They asked if he wanted the black velvet collar that her late owner had given her. “No, we’ll get her a new one.” Then they went out for the
photo shoot for the press.

“Smile, we need to change your image for the better.” Tony said as he watched Loki change almost magically to become the prince of charm with a million dollar smile.

Of course pictures were taken. Tony found out that adopting an older cat got more praise, because, as Loki said: ‘Everyone wants a kitten’ and there are not enough people to adopt very loving adult cats.

Loki agreed to keep it in his room to begin with and they didn’t tell the Avengers that they brought Trouble into Stark tower.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo’s tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Trouble with the Avengers

Chapter Summary

They talk about the Chitauri, May turns into June, and Trouble is discovered.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

A few days after getting Trouble, Loki made the decision that he could talk for a couple hours a day. On one hand, he didn’t want to ever talk about the Chitauri, but knew he needed to because of his agreement and besides it would help in his healing. So he gathered Tony, Bruce and Steve together to start discussing Chitauri and their tech.

After a couple days Fury showed up. Steve had been trying to tell everything to Fury in daily reports. Fury didn’t understand a thing in the reports and demanded one of his scientists be allowed in.

The next day Fury arrived with a man in a white coat with thick glasses. “Well Stark, this is Dr. Herman Wells. he will be learning about the Chitauri with you.”

Dr. Wells held out his hand to shake. “It is a pleasure to meet you Mr. Stark.”

Tony reluctantly shook his hand. “Yeah, wish I could say the same. Nicky seems to think I don’t have enough SHIELD agents in my hair yet.”

Steve immediately responded. “Tony, can’t you be nice? He IS a fellow scientist.”

“We’ll see. Jarvis, I want a background check now.” Tony then looked at the scientist and handed him the enchanted glass. “I’m gonna ask you some questions. I want your oath that you are going to answer and tell the truth for the next thirty minutes.”

Steve said. “Tony!” looking at the glass.

Bruce interjected giving Steve a knowing look. “Not a bad idea really though, Steve.”

Steve crossed his arms in dismay but kept quiet.

Dr. Wells said. “Sure, whatever you say.”

“That will not do, you must give your word to that you will answer and answer truthfully for thirty
“Fine, you have my word I will answer all your questions and truthfully.” The man said still holding the glass. Then when everyone was still staring. “For the next thirty minutes.”

Tony caught a slight sparkle on the glass, barely noticeable.

Loki smiled and grabbed the glass causing confusion in the scientist’s face. “Ask your questions now.”

“What is your favorite heavy metal band?” Tony shot off.

The doctor looked confused and weakly said. “Ah, the Scorpions?”

“What is your mother’s first name?” Tony asked.

“Lorraine.”

“Cats or Dogs?”

“Uh, Dogs maybe. I’m not much of an animal person.”

“Why do you trust SHIELD?”

“I don’t.” Dr. Wells seemed surprised himself at his answer.

Tony had a big grin on his face and looked at Fury. “Shit Fury, and you wonder why I don’t trust you when your own people don’t.” Then he laughed.

Bruce asked a few science questions next. These were more like what everyone expected.

Loki then asked inquisitively. “Why do you work for SHIELD if you don’t trust them?”

The scientist said. “Because I was ordered too.” And his eyes became wide.

Stark jerked his head up and said. “By who?”

Dr. Wells’ face suddenly started to turn red. He was biting his lips trying not to answer. Finally he said. “Another organization.”

“Are you spying on SHIELD?” Tony asked.

The Dr. was shaking and couldn’t hold back a quiet yet biting “Yes.”

Bruce then asked. “For a Government?”

A quick “No.” was the reply.

Loki looked at the man. “Who do you work for? Be specific.”

Dr. Wells fought to not answer. His nose was bleeding now. He was shaking and biting his tongue. A few drops of blood could be seen in on ear.

Bruce started looking very agitated.

Steve looking at Bruce said. “Stop it. Cancel the oath.”
Loki looked at Steve. “It does not work that way. He has promised to answer. It will be over at the thirty minute mark.”

“Can’t you retract the question or something?” Steve growled.

Loki looked over at Nick Fury and gave predatory smile. “Do you want me to retract the question? I see you seem to have no problem with his suffering.” He said taking a step away from Banner.

Bruce had turned his back to Dr. Wells and was looking at Fury.

Fury who had been watching this unfold, looked annoyed at being brought into the conversation. “For now. I don’t need my problem children involved in SHIELD business.”

“You seemed all too glad to let us find your unknown spy. We save the world and you’re letting people blame us for the nuclear fallout on Long Island. But when you might be seen as getting your hands dirty, we are the problem children. You play dirty Fury. Forgive me if I don’t want to play in your sandbox.” Tony said and stormed out of the lab.

“Loki, just rescind the question so I can take my spy back to interrogate him.” Fury ordered.

Loki did and Steve helped Fury take Dr. Wells back to SHIELD.

The man died in his cell under mysterious circumstances that night. No one was happy. Tony was beyond angry. He could almost see SHIELD killing the guy just so they didn’t have to answer the Avenger’s questions.

Steve told Tony. “One bad apple doesn’t mean the whole bushel is bad.”

Tony glared at him. “Only from you Rogers. You do know most people don’t even know what a bushel is these days.”

The next day Fury sent a new scientist who passed all the tests. Fury also assured them that they would find out who was behind the spy. Tony had his doubts.

It took less than two weeks until they decided they had all the information about the Chitauri they could understand and the SHIELD scientist left. Tony and Bruce tried another day to get more detailed questions. Loki finally stopped them, because he was not willing to break Odin’s rules on what he could tell the humans.

In private Loki talked to Tony more about the Chitauri. Not about tech but how he hated them and some of the nasty demeaning things they had said to him. It helped to be able to talk about it as they drank together in Tony’s penthouse this time.

The Chitauri had discovered his past and continued to tell him he wasn’t good enough. That he deserved to die. That no one besides Thanos would ever care about him and Thanos gave tough conditional love. You had to give him your all and he would take care of you. Loki had never believed Thanos could love him either and rather than break he spiraled further and further into an unreal madness. Only protections, taught to him by his mother, built and aged until they were permanently embedded in his mind helped him protect some sanity.

Loki was nervous and his experience warned him Stark would use the information to harm him as
others in the past had. But he needed to continue to heal and talking was one of the best ways. So far the inventor had shown only consideration and understanding and had welcomed the chance to help him. So he allowed himself to put a bit of hope that the man was being genuine with him and would not use it as a weapon against him, for he had no one else.

Tony in turn talked about how bad he felt about Long Island. About the deaths and the sickness. About his guilt on loosing so many fishing industry jobs and problems the shipping industries were having.

Tony had grown up with nuclear weapons being the line not even an arms manufacturer crossed. Most kids remembered being distraught about Bambi’s mother’s death. As a child he had been traumatized when he was forced to sit in on discussions about nuclear death tolls with his father and military generals. They talked in real terms with details of the death and destruction they would cause and what was acceptable. His father had made some of the weapons in the cold war but most were now dismantled.

Now not only was he seeing firsthand people with radiation burns and military blocking off large areas that seemed to be expanding as time went by. He was also being blamed for it. He kept playing the ‘what is acceptable memories’, only to find his mind screaming back none of it is acceptable, over and over in his head. Tony talked about it all with Loki. Loki in turn, seemed to know exactly what to say to him. He didn’t brush it off with a simple ‘there was nothing you could have done.’

Meanwhile Stark also kept his word to help protect Loki. He really liked the man, although he failed to believe he was really a god. Tony didn’t have many people he trusted and could call real friends. When Loki only opened up to him, it just did something for him, made him feel special. There was a connection, one he wanted to explore and expand on. He was determined to be trusted, to break though that protective shell, and add Loki as a close friend. And what Tony wanted Tony got!

Tony held a series of press conferences and news releases with his PR team. In order to Spin the stories to best help Loki be accepted. Mind control was real; to break it required ‘Cognitive Recalibration’. Tony was now host to the displaced Prince. Poor Prince Loki had been taken, tortured and mind controlled.

He was Thor’s younger brother. They had chosen to leave Loki on Earth because ‘humans were more advanced when dealing with the trauma Loki had suffered’. Because of the compassion and understanding mortals had, Asgard felt he would be safe here. Some features showed Loki adopting the orphaned cat. The media ate it up.

For those who doubted and needed more proof. Loki and Tony approved a couple of milder pictures of his tortured body. A few government agencies got more graphic pictures to shut them up. Before long everyone loved the fairy tale involving their poor prince charming. And because the way one traveled to Asgard was destroyed in Loki’s ‘abduction’ he was stuck here, stranded for the foreseeable future until the ‘Rainbow Bridge’ could be repaired.

By the end people wanted to honor the Prince who helped save New York from the alien invasion. There were even stories written and suggestions of making an altered film version of The Wizard of Oz because Loki was from somewhere over the rainbow.

Tony’s personal rating was not so good though, despite positive damage control and getting brownie points for taking care of the Prince. He and the Avengers had been blamed for the bomb and not getting it away fast enough, even though they denied responsibility, because they didn’t even know it was coming until it nearly upon them.
Then the public, which had always been strange, proved to be no different this time. Suddenly people were convinced, someone they knew was controlled. This resulted in more calls to the police. ‘Just making sure my husband/wife/teenager/friend wasn’t controlled.’ It was an excuse used too often when someone was hauled away for violence, after giving a concussion with a frying pan and calling it Cognitive Recalibration.

Doctors and hospitals started complaining about people who felt they had been controlled and needed Cognitive Recalibrations by professionals. And then doctors who were ‘certified’ in Cognitive Recalibration popped up to take advantage.

Aliens just brought out the crazies. The Avengers got blamed for everything anyway.

Loki himself was overwhelmed by the attention. He didn’t understand how people who didn’t even know him could like him. He wasn’t their royalty and could be blamed for a great deal of destruction. So he stayed out of the limelight unless Tony and Pepper insisted. He was content to spend most of his time cuddling Trouble in his room and working through his mental issues.

Also that first month brought several thing:

Bruce moved into Stark Tower followed closely by Steve based on the agreement to watch Loki. They were quickly trailed by Clint and Natasha in order to ‘keep the group together’ which fooled nobody. They were openly reporting to Fury.

Steve insisted they get to know each other and proposed movie nights, group dinners and group training sessions.

Clint demanded a long hall in his apartment, to use as an arrow range for personal target practice where he promptly hung Loki’s picture.

Steve got laughed at because he wore full long sleeve pajamas to bed. At breakfast he added a heavy robe with socks and slippers. His dress really made him look like he was out of a nineteen forties screwball comedy.

Natasha liked to listen in on conversations and could lurk without being seen, until Jarvis started ratting her out. She demanded Tony stop Jarvis. He responded by assigning her a noisy mobile servant to follow her.

Steve caught Clint in the vents and discretely told him to stay out of them.

They were all glad when Loki moved into his own rooms and didn’t have to hear his nightmares and screaming.

No one noticed it but Clint had checked out Loki’s suit early on via the vents. He left quite suddenly when Steve called to assemble. So he made a beginners mistake and forgot to tighten down the closed vent. Trouble soon followed. The cat discovered it and started rattling the loose vent whenever Loki was out.

Tony tried to fix a meal and ended up with green eggs and ham. He decided boiled ham and spinach was a bad combo especially when the water boiled off and it burnt along with the plastic juice
absorber he had failed to remove. The eggs he over boiled in another pan turning the yolks completely green. It took a week to get rid of the smell. The rest of the team decided never to let Tony cook again.

Bruce went through twice as much herbal tea as Tony did coffee and booze combined during this time. He hadn’t ever heard so many ‘potty’ jokes which probably made him need to drink more tea.

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Tony and Steve had both gone with Loki to SHIELD’s first official day of questioning. Steve had always planned to be the one to take Loki. Tony went because he didn’t trust Loki out of his sight where SHIELD was concerned, and didn’t have faith that Steve could protect Loki.

Their time was spent asking about ‘The Other’ and Thanos. Yes, they might come to earth again. Loki could not give them a time frame either. Thanos wanted the Tesseract and needed to go through Midgard to get to Asgard now. Loki had failed to get it for them. Thanos would be angry, but guessing when, how or even if, he chose to react or show up was difficult. Especially since Loki spent most of his time being caged and tortured. Without the Tesseract, moving an army was time consuming and complicated. To do it quickly required its unique magical power.

By the end of the day Loki was completely exhausted and nearly collapsed in Tony’s arms. Tony spent the trip reassuring Loki that he had done nothing wrong. Steve looked at the two in puzzled amusement.

Stark Tower’s floors were huge, as the building covered a city block. The floor below Tony’s contained Tony’s private lab. He built Loki’s suite in an unused section of that floor below the private part of the penthouse. If Tony was going to be responsible for Loki and his safety, he wanted to be able to reach him fast and that required him to be close. He already had a hidden stairway from the penthouse to his lab and he had another built directly from his suite to Loki’s.

He built out a couple more floors and divided the first into four apartments. Three for Steve Clint and Natasha. A second floor he divided into Bruce’s apartment, a ‘sanctuary’ for the Hulk and an lab area built out to Bruce’s specification which contained a full medical clinic.

Steve was embarrassed to take his apartment because it was three times the size of the house he grew up in. He asked if maybe he could share with Clint. Clint took him aside and explained how much money Stark wasted in general. Steve then lectured Clint on being greedy. In the end though, Steve still had an apartment to himself.

In many ways Loki was settling in on Earth. He learned to use computers and the Internet very quickly. It only took a matter of hours before he had found enough virus’s to stop his computer. He was amazed what Earth allowed. After that he was given full access while looking but Jarvis had to approve anything he signed up for or tried to download.

He didn’t even have to be taught about using fake identities online. It took a whole day before Tony realized that Loki’s chat room activity had to be monitored too.
Loki started visiting Stark’s lab and soon had Tony’s bots eating out of his hands. He played with them and made suggestions on minor improvements, purposely avoiding ideas that might, say, fix Dum-e’s love of the fire extinguisher. He even taught them how to pet Trouble when no one else was around but himself and the inventor.

He fit right in with both Tony and Bruce with his thirst for knowledge. He enjoyed watching them discover. He was very careful at first, polite and holding his tongue. But as his mind slowly started to heal, along with his confidence that they would keep their word, they learned he could make very rude arrogant remarks and did so regularly. Tony usually laughed and teased back. Bruce just tried to stay out of it.

Outside the lab Loki remained rather aloof.

All this time the suppression bracelets stayed in place.

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Time continued to pass June came and things continued to happen:

Steve felt the need to have nearly daily conversations with Clint about privacy and the vents and insisted Clint tell Tony. Barton directed him to Fury who told him if he could figure out a way to stop it he was welcome to try. ‘He’d been freaking out agents at HQ for years by traveling in those damn vents all the time.’

Steve’s face was on Clint’s target wall the next two days, before a newer less damaged one of Loki showed up.

Tony bought Bruce a tea making machine, only to get told it tastes better from a ceramic pot. You see the process of steeping the tea is part of the calming ritual, Bruce explained.

Pepper learned Natasha had a taste for Russian gingerbread that could be used as a bribe for information about Tony and the other Avengers.

They all learned Loki was great if he was talking about things or stealing the spotlight with rude comments. But when asked to talk about himself he got flustered and blushed a bit and would throw temper tantrums afterwards in private about it. The public, and silently Tony, thought he was adorable.

Steve saw his first porn movie. Or at least part of it until he and his beet red face could escape from between Clint and Tony who were trying to hold him there. The next day he declared the assigned movie night to be a team building exercise and porn did not count, after explaining, yes, they had porn in the thirties.

As the days turned into weeks Loki slowly started to sleep in his bed rather than the closet. The cat helped. Curling into him when he sat in the corner. At night she would curl up against Loki unless he
had a nightmare which scared her. Then Tony would come down. Loki still didn’t understand why Tony was so attentive. Here was this mortal whose life span was no more than a gnat compared to him, yet he spent hours with Loki. As confusing as it was Loki was thankful and found himself feeling rather fond of the man, instead of waiting for the betrayal that always came when he let people close.

Loki also found himself slightly more comfortable with Bruce. He could be in the same room without Tony. Bruce was a genius too. Not in Tony’s league but far above most mortals. Bruce seemed more afraid of himself than Loki. Loki liked the mortal man, he was gentle and accepting. They shared a hidden monster inside. It gave Loki a sense of comradery with him. He still feared the Hulk but was beginning to no longer fear for his life if the beast came out.

Loki learned that Tony had never even met most of the Avengers before his arrival on earth. Only Natasha who was undercover at the time and on the top of Stark’s list of untrustworthy. And Howard Stark had compared him to and flaunted Captain America so much that the Genius found it hard to deal with Steve.

One afternoon Bruce and Steve were in the kitchen cooking dinner. Tony and Loki were still in the lab when suddenly a screech was heard throughout the ventilation system. A few moments later Clint scrambled out of it in the kitchen.

“There’s something in there”, he yelled.

Steve, who’d already had one discussion with Clint about privacy that day, answered, “Yes, you! I told you to stay out of there.”

Moments later the elevator opened revealing Tony and Loki who had been alerted by Jarvis.

“So you put something in there to scare me? I would expect it from Stark but not you.” Clint glared at Steve.

“No, I didn’t. It’s dark in there you probably just saw your shadow”, Steve defended himself.

“Well, there is something alive in there”, Clint snarled.

“Let me get this straight. You have been climbing regularly through my vents without permission. And now you say someone has infiltrated my tower through them?” Tony growled as he tilted his head annoyed he had not been told before now about Clint.

“I’m saying something is in there. I’m sure it’s not a person.” Clint corrected ignoring Tony’s comment.

Loki peered into the dark hole very nervously. “How large was it.”

Clint noticed Loki looking. “Man, it’s not a Chitauri, too small.”

Loki nodded and left.

“Is it some sort of mechanical device?” Bruce asked.

“No I don’t think so, it had eyes but they weren’t human and it moved like an animal.”

“Oh, please, don’t let it be rats.” Bruce sighed.
“My tower does not have rats, I find your suggesting it offensive.” Tony objected. “And that does not answer my question as to what you were doing in there.”

“I was crawling around.” Clint quipped.

“Why were you crawling around? You’re spying on us?” Tony was not happy. He knew Clint and Nat were keeping an eye on them. But using the vents was real spying.

Clint looked at him. “Aren’t you more concerned with what’s in there?”

“Oh I’m concerned alright. Because I have been infiltrated by a God Damned SHIELD spy. Who has been crawling around, spying on my tech since he moved in. I thought I could trust you Clint for personal privacy. I opened my home to you. Do you watch Pepper and me have sex too?” Tony was livid. He really didn’t care if he watched him have sex with Pepper, hell he was a bit of an exhibitionist. But his lab was off limits unless invited, real spying stuff. And if he watching him comfort Loki? That just felt too private, just wrong, a personal thing.

“No, I don’t give a shit about your way to public love life. We have a criminal living with us and I don’t trust him. You knew I’d be watching him.” Clint shouted at Tony.

Tony glared and spit out. “So do you get off on watching him scream and curl in a corner? Do you take notes in my lab too?” They already knew Loki did these things. What did Clint know? Was he spying for Fury?

“Fuck you, I don’t really care about whatever he does in his corner now. It’s when he starts planning against us that I’m waiting for.” Clint threw back. “And I don’t understand most of what you say in your lab anyway.”

Tony felt a marginally better figuring Clint would have said something if he’d really seen something with Loki. But he had all but admitted to watching him in his lab. “You don’t trust any of us do you? Admit it Clint, you are only here to spy on us all for Fury. I think you need to leave.” Tony yelled back.

“I’m not leaving! Someone has to watch that fucker.” He said pointing to the elevator where Loki had just left.

“I’m watching him. Bruce and Steve are watching him. You are invading our privacy and stealing my tech!” Tony was louder yet.

Steve interrupted. “Guys this is not productive. Clint, I told you to tell Tony. Tony, I understand this is common for Clint. He does it at SHIELD headquarters; they say it calms him down. Clint have you actually been trying to steal Tony’s tech?” He looked at Clint.

Clint crossed his arms. “No, I’ve just gone past the lab a few times and found myself wondering if they were even speaking English.” Clint frowned and looked away.

“You need to stay away from the lab, Clint. I understand Tony has had stuff stolen before and is paranoid. And you Tony are going to let Clint stay.” Steve looked annoyed at both of them.

Loki suddenly reappeared. “It’s Trouble.” He said.

“What kind of trouble?” Steve asked, looking worried.

“My Trouble.” He looked at Tony who knew instantly.
Clint calmed down and looked pale. “A spy for The Other or the Chitauri? Are they back?”

Loki rolled his eyes. “No, Trouble is in there.” Then pointed to the hole.

“Trouble? In the ventilation system?” Bruce asked not understanding at all.

“Yes, exactly.” Loki answered

“Can you describe it? What kind of trouble?” Steve looked at Loki.

“Black, sneaky bastard.” Loki mumbled.

“Bitch.” Tony slyly corrected.

“I got my bow. I’ll just shoot it.” Clint volunteered.

“Don’t you dare!” Loki looked horrified.

Tony finally burst out laughing.

“Tony, how can you laugh when we have some sort of trouble sneaking into the building?” Steve scolded.

“Trouble was already here.” Tony said and broke into more laughter.

“I think he’s lost it. There is something we are clearly not getting.” Clint shook his head.

Loki smirked, he had been having fun. “He brought Trouble into the building weeks ago.” He pointed at Tony.

“What did you do this time Tony?” Bruce asked.

Loki leaned into the vent smiled and said triumphantly. “I found my Trouble!”

Clint, Steve and Bruce took defensive positions and watched Loki turn around holding a dust covered smallish black cat. “Trouble, how long have you been in there?” Loki gently scolded while nuzzling the cat in his arms.

Clint lowered his bow. “A cat! When did we get a cat?”

“A week after Loki moved in.” Tony wheezed out still in the middle of a giggle fit.

“How did it get in there?” Steve asked.

Loki looked at Clint. “Someone apparently left the vent grate in my room unsecured.”

Clint looked sheepish.

“Tony, I believe I have some more suggestions for upgrading security in your tower.” Loki informed them.

“Aww please, I need space to crawl around.” Clint whined.

Tony finally had his laughing under control said. “Yeah, we’ll figure something out. But I think certain areas are going to be off limits from now on. Is there anything else I need to know about you? Do I need to provide the Hawk mice and rats to hunt, before you introduce them yourself?”
Loki took Trouble back to his room and returned for dinner. Natasha was amused and admitted she had wondered where they kept Trouble for some time and would like to meet her. She couldn’t understand how the others had managed to miss the press about the cat and Loki.


Natasha adored Trouble. The cat tolerated her at best.

Nat would grab her, pick her up and hold her. You would hear a small screech and her ears would be back the whole time if Tony and Loki were not around. Trouble would of course immediately fight and abandon Natasha, quickly bolting out of her lap if Tony or Loki appeared, even if she was bribing the cat with food.


Trouble was soon given the run of the upper floors of the tower.

Chapter End Notes

Trivia- a Bushel in the US is 8 dry gallons or 35.24 liters. Imperial Bushels are 8 imperial gallons or 36.39 liters. It was traditionally used in agriculture.

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Loki, Back in the Closet

Chapter Summary

Loki talks with Bruce and Tony makes a mistake.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By late-June Loki’s body was finally healed. He informed Tony he was tired of effectively wasting his daily magic. He convinced Tony to provide him with materials to forge his own metal alloy, which in turn he fashioned into leg bands. These bands were both tight and flexible with many joints. With some creativity he was able to fool the cuffs into thinking they were part of his skin. So he enchanted them, first making them into a magic storage device, and then promptly storing his magic in them.

Tony was fascinated by the process and tried to ask questions. Loki was polite but firm, telling Tony he had to wait as the contract stated. Tony wasn’t happy but settled with having Jarvis record everything so he could ask questions later.

Loki relaxed through learning and figuring out puzzles and Banner was both. So one of the things Loki studied was Bruce Banner and the Hulk. He went through many files finding them on the internet and asking for classified ones that Jarvis had gathered.

Banner’s childhood was also a nightmare. He too had father issues having witnessed his alcoholic abusive father murder his mother. No wonder he got along with Stark and Banner. They all had horrible father figures. Then there was General Ross, his daughter and the whole gamma radiation turning him into Hulk mess. One would wonder if the fellow did not have issues. Perhaps Loki would find friendship amongst this group that was real.

One night Tony was off with Pepper and Steve was out for a run. Loki found himself alone with the man who had done so much damage to him.

“Do you mind if I ask you a few questions Bruce?” They were all on a first name basis.

“I suppose so. You’re going to ask me about the other guy aren’t you?”
“Yes, I read about him and I listen to you talk about him. Do you really believe you have another being inside you?” Loki asked.

Bruce was surprised by the question. Surprisingly, he had not been asked it before. “I really don’t know. Wish I did in fact. It might be easier to accept if I did. I suspect he is just a very angry facet of my own personality.” Bruce answered as Trouble walked into the room.

“How much do you remember, when the ‘other guy’ is out?” Loki continued.

This was a more common question and it showed. “Bit and pieces mostly. When I choose to become him I remember more than when I get mad and he escapes. Then, practically nothing.” Bruce said as Trouble jumped up on the sofa next to him.

“I am not familiar with the process in which you first…discovered him. Would you be willing to go into detail on that with me?”

“Guess it wouldn’t hurt. I was working on gamma radiation for the government. Really they wanted to see if the Captain America serum could be replicated.” Bruce continued as the cat found his lap and curled up.

They talked for quite some time. Loki asked many questions about the formula. About the power sources they used. About details of the Hulk. About the tests and experiments Bruce had conducted since and what results, if any, had happened. Bruce wasn’t sure he wanted to tell Loki at first. But as Loki talked it became clear that Loki knew more about gamma radiation than he did and he figured it wouldn’t hurt. All the while Banner petted Trouble.

“I have some ideas, but I need more information. Do you think at some point when you trust me more, you might allow me look at you with magic? I make no guarantees other than being able to give you more details into what has happened and why it happens. But a possibility exists that I might be able to do something.” Loki offered.

Bruce was stunned. He didn’t expect Loki to volunteer to help him. He was not sure he trusted him either but he said. “Maybe later, when I get more comfortable around you. I might like that. Thanks for the offer.”

Then he looked at the cat in his lap and said in a slow deeper Hulk voice. “Good Kitty.”

Loki did a double take looking at Trouble, who stood up and meowed at Bruce.

Bruce said, his voice normal again as if he had not just said anything. “She’s acting strange tonight; she usually only sits in your lap.”

After Bruce left Loki got on the floor with Trouble next to him and looked her in the eyes. He wondered why he had not noticed her resemblance to a certain cat. He softly mumbled to himself. “Could you be real and not a hallucination?”

She just groomed herself and ignored him. Then stopped and rubbed her head against his cheek as if to mark him as her own.

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Pepper liked Loki. He was polite. He also turned out to be very useful. He was a skilled negotiator, something she had discovered quite by accident. In addition he seemed to motivate Tony.
She had asked Tony to come to a meeting one evening at dinner because she had a really tricky negotiation the next day. He said he was busy. Loki asked if he could be of any assistance as he had a great deal of experience. Odin often used him for such things.

She was skeptical but agreed. Suddenly Tony was willing to attend too. Loki questioned Pepper about their goals, and what she thought would be the best deal. Then, what she was willing to bend on. The next day he negotiated a deal better than her best expectations. Tony didn’t say much but she was sure just him being there helped.

After that whenever she needed a tough negotiator she would ask Loki, and Tony would also show up. She briefly wondered if he didn’t trust Loki not to hurt her. Tony’s excuse was that she couldn’t protect Loki if attacked. Tony always had his suit.

It wasn’t long before she would ask Loki to come when she needed Tony to attend a business function. It didn’t matter to her why it worked, as long as it did.

Steve wasn’t Loki’s biggest fan. Loki pulled pranks. Like putting all his socks in his shirt drawer and underwear in his refrigerator. Or finding his bed covered in dog hair. While Bruce and Tony laughed, Steve felt it was rude. Loki never did anything that was really bad though. Steve knew lots of guys in the Army who did similar things, but never to him, at least after the change. He did sort of feel uneasy about what might happen once Loki got his magic back.

Loki also looked into Steve’s background. Another alcoholic father, this one died young and Steve had next to no memories of the man. His mother died around the time he graduated from high school. He was seeing a pattern now.

He checked on the two spies. Clint was orphaned, lived in a bad foster home, ran away to the circus and was abandoned by his only relative, his brother. It was a sad story. In Natasha’s story details were very spars. Soviet born, raised to be an assassin, she was somehow rescued by Clint and owed her life to him and SHIELD. No wonder she was loyal to them.

The Avengers were all messed up, not a single decent father amongst them. He filed this in his brain to think about later.

Late June also had other things happening.

One day Trouble found Clint’s arrows. The next day they found fletching feathers across all the floors.

Clint retaliated by hiding her food bowl a different place every day for a week.

Steve discovered Loki liked to learn and decided they both needed more culture and dragged him to the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art. They never get past the weapons room. Steve learned Loki had a love-hate relationship with physical weapons.

Tony adored spending time with Loki. It took almost no time to figure out the guy could help him on anything. He could talk problems through with him and get intelligent questions and answers back. Tony had spent years looking for someone who could talk at his level, Jarvis was good at listening and occasionally asking questions but he wasn’t creative. Bruce didn’t really joke around and was
sometimes hesitant to criticize Tony. Loki was made to order. God, he even enjoyed the same stupid types of movies Tony liked. He watched Loki with Pepper though. He was not going to trust them alone. He was convinced Pepper had a crush. She kept asking him to those boring meetings.

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Early one evening Tony came up to the penthouse to find Pepper with Trouble on her lap. In front of her was a plate with two cheese blocks and a beef stick. Along with a bottle of wine and two glasses.

Pepper smiled at Tony. “This handsome fellow followed me up from outside the lab. He really likes to sit in my lap.” She was scratching the cat’s ears.

“Yes, she’s a lover. She’s a female Pep.” Tony went and sat down next to Pepper and also petted the cat.

Suddenly the elevator opened and a very worried looking Loki yelled, “Trouble!”

Pepper shrieked, and the cat jumped down.

“Don’t give us a heart attack Mufasa, little Simba followed Pepper up here.” Tony smiled at Loki.

“Trouble, come here.” Loki walked over bent down and the cat ran to him.

Pepper laughed now. “Her name is Trouble?”

“Yes, and she is a sweet troublemaker, are you not, Trouble?” Loki purred to his pet.

“When did she move in? I don’t remember you ever telling me about her.” Pepper asked Tony.

“We got her just after Loki moved in. The PR department knew. How did you not? She helps calm him down.” Tony added suddenly feeling a pang of jealousy. Trouble was his and Loki’s baby, not hers. He picked up the knife sitting next to the cheese and started to fiddle with it.

“What does she calm you down from?” Pepper looked at Loki.

“Memories.” Loki said carefully. Looking at Tony.

“I’m sorry. I heard you had some problems when you first came to us. You needed to escape your father or something?” She pried a bit while muttering. “Such a pretty kitty.”

Loki was not expecting to be questioned and he leaned against a chair, still holding Trouble.

“Allfather.” He watched Tony examine the knife up close.

“Tony has nightmares too. You know we have never had much time to get to know each other at work.” Pepper smiled at him and reached out to pet Trouble.

“Indeed, it is usually just business.” Loki saw Tony looking with daggers behind Pepper, scraping the knife across his fingers feeling the sharpness.

“Why don’t you and Trouble go back to your rooms and get some rest? Today was a hard day at the lab.” Tony suggested to Loki. Now he scraped the knife across his arm.

“I have a better idea. Why don’t you and Trouble join us for the evening?” Pepper looked at Loki.

“I’m sure he has something better to do this evening, rather than be here. Don’t you Bambi?” Tony made it sound like an order waving the knife tightly gripped in his hand.
Loki stood there for a moment. He saw Tony’s annoyed face. “Thank you for the kind offer Lady Pepper, but I feel the need to decline tonight. Perhaps another time.” And he left before anyone could say anything.


“I wanted us to be alone tonight.” Tony stammered not wanting to admit jealousy of a cat. He set the knife down just as absentmindedly as he picked it up.

Pepper left shortly after that. Tony choose to drink rather than examine his feline jealousy, eventually passing out.

About three am Jarvis tried to wake Tony. “Sir, Mr. Loki is having a nightmare.”

Tony continued to snooze so Jarvis got louder. “Sir, you need to know that Mr. Loki is having a rather bad nightmare.”

Jarvis was hesitant but got even louder. “Sir, Mr. Loki is in need of you now.”

Tony raised his head and mumbled, “Go away.” Then flopped his head back down.

After a few more tries. Jarvis put on an alarm with lights. “Sir, you need to wake up now.”

Tony, still drunk, yet already feeling his head ache lifted his head. “What the fuck J. Is the place on fire?”

“No Sir, Mr. Loki is hurting himself from a nightmare.” Jarvis was saying.

Tony was only listening to the pounding in his head. “I don’t care about anything right now. Leave me alone J.”

“But you told me specifically-”, Jarvis started only to be cut off.

“I don’t care what I told you! Just shut the fuck up until I talk to you again.” Tony growled, his head having elephants stomping through it.

“His bed just brok…” Jarvis started again, once again to be stopped by Tony.

“That was an order J!” Tony said sternly and went back to sleep.

Tony woke up very late the next morning and didn’t remember anything of the night before.

He got his coffee, forced himself to drink about ten gallons of water and took a couple of aspirin, maybe three.

After his second cup of coffee, he went down to his lab to work.

He gave orders to Dum-E and U, sticking to tasks that took his mind off his headache that was steadily improving. All the while he was wondering why Loki hadn’t just wandered in yet? He was usually up long before now. Even if he wasn’t coming, he tended to make some sort of snide comment by now, delivered through Jarvis.
At three pm. Tony, who was annoyed at the god’s absence and finally broke his silence with Jarvis. “Hey J. where’s Loki.” Tony said.

“He is in his room recovering from his injuries.” Jarvis said sounded disapprovingly.

Tony looked up from his work in shock. “What injuries? Why didn’t you alert me J?” And he started to move toward the lab door. Thank god Loki’s room was on this floor.

“Oh, I did Sir. But when I informed you, your orders to me were.” Then a recording of Tony’s voice played. “I don’t care what I told you! Just shut the fuck up until I talk to you again.” Followed by, “That was an order J.”

While listening Tony had run down the long hall to Loki’s suite. He opened the door and frantically looked for Loki dashing toward his bedroom.

He didn’t ask Jarvis any more right now but looked around. There he found Loki’s bedroom a shambles. The bed was broken in a multiple spots, dents were in the dressers, the chair was overturned and nowhere near its usual spot.

What had happened? Did Barton attack him? If this was a nightmare, it was really bad. Was Loki mad at him about last night? Shit, he’d been passed out dead drunk, he didn’t remember talking to Jarvis. He felt pathetic.

He found Loki curled up in blankets at the back of his closet holding Trouble and shaking. No blood though.

“What the hell Rudolph?” Tony said breathing a bit heavy, noticing the fact nearly every piece of clothing was also on the floor.

Loki stared at the floor and whispered something.

Tony didn’t hear it so he bend down and saw renewed tears in the god’s eyes. And in a calmer tone. “Afraid I didn’t hear that.” Damn, Loki’d been crying. And he had failed to be there, too drunk to care.

“S…sorry.” Came out very softly.

Tony put his hand on Loki’s shoulder and felt him shudder and try to pull away. The god rarely said sorry seriously to anyone. He saved it for politeness, when his silver tongue was working its wonders, trying to impress. “Why are you sorry?” For a second he imagined himself slapping Loki for trying to waking him up, dismissing it just as fast. Loki hadn’t ever come up to the penthouse without asking first.

Loki cowered at the touch. “….. are displeased … don’t … me … .” Tony could barely hear him.

“Woah, Reindeer Games. I’m missing something here. Calm down.” Tony got closer and put his arms around Loki and looked at him. “I’m not gonna hurt you.”

He was shaking quite violently now. “DDD…Don’t know what I did… The knife… Please no.” Loki choked out, his eyes glazing over.

Tony held onto Loki and pulled him into his arms and held him tight. Loki was shaking, Trouble pulled herself free from Loki’s grip between them, but stayed close. Loki was beyond a panic attack and going into shock.
“Loki, I’m not going to hurt you. Come back to us Princess.” Tony was not sure Loki was even hearing him. He didn’t respond but kept shaking and rocking, a ball in Tony’s arms. Tony kept trying to reassure him whispering calmly to him.

Trouble did the same brushing back and forth against him, sometimes looking at Tony with what Tony would swear was hurt and disappointment. He found himself apologizing to her too.

Sometime later Loki seemed to come back to himself. He looked up at Tony and around at the mess. “It was wrong. I did not mean to act this way. I heard you but I could not respond. I am sorry for disturbing you.” He whispered, trying to gain control of himself and the panic that was hiding just around the corner. Trying to distance himself from Stark, who he was sure would be angry with him.

Tony looked a bit taken aback and confused. That was a placating sorry, not one given to a friend. “No Loki, don’t ever feel bad about being yourself around me. I screwed up big time. I should have been here for you. I am the one who should feel bad, not you…. Now, care to tell me what happened?”

“Not really.” Loki looked down again still very conscious of his tenuous situation, dependent entirely too much on a man he was currently unsure of.

All the ground they had made went up in smoke from Tony’s perspective. Surely there was a way to salvage it, he thought? He asked. “How about we start out with how much I fucked up. Did I do something to set you off?” Tony had a bad feeling about this given the way Loki had cringed when he came in, but for the life of him had no idea what he did. Not showing up because he was drunk and asleep didn’t seem enough. Jealousy about Trouble and Pepper made no sense. “Please, Loki? I’m not angry. I won’t be, I promise. Just tell me so I can figure out if I’m a lowly worm, evil rat or just a stupid worthless imbecile.”

Loki sighed, and took a couple of deep breaths. He was stuck between a rock and a hard place he felt forced to answer. “Very well, yes, I suppose... Last night, Lady Pepper reminded me of my … memories. Then when you played with that knife, it was similar to the way one of my torturers had threaten me. Then you threw me out and I didn’t know why. What caused your anger?... I had … nightmares. You didn’t come to stop them. I believe I damaged some of the furniture fighting my torturers, as I had several cuts and bruises. I was still half asleep when I came in here and I feared the worst, assuming you would torture me too, and got lost in… memories.” He was practically whispering by the time he finished. He didn’t add, he expected to be sent back to Odin, fearing he would plant thoughts in Tony’s mind.

Tony paled as he heard Loki talk. “Shit, Lokes, I don’t know what to say. Guess I’m a little jealous of Pepper and you. And I was jealous Trouble might like her more than me. Stupid reasons really. I wasn’t even aware of the knife. It was just something in my hand to fidget with. Pepper left, I ended up drinking. Jarvis tried to wake me, I don’t remember it, but I ordered him not to talk until I talked to him. When he told me, I came here right away. I don’t want you to be afraid of me, in fact I want you to be able to trust me. God, you need to feel like someone’s on your side. I want you to feel I’m on your side. Damn. … I’m sorry.” Tony felt so bad. He had caused this. He realized what he said was right though. Loki had no one else. He knew Loki feared the Hulk and was nervous around Bruce. It always made him feel good to comfort Loki. He didn’t want to lose that. It was one of the few things that helped him sleep at night. But he shouldn’t try to keep Loki from making more friends it was wrong, even if it was Pepper.

Loki sat up a bit. He had been surprised at the confession of guilt from Stark. “I’ll be alright. Just give me some time. I am not interested in Pepper. If it will ease your mind, I have never been interested in someone in a relationship. I have… there are… too many problems...” He hesitated.
Then he suggested, “Perhaps, we should go to the lab and work to get my mind off this.” He wasn’t sure how much help he would be, but it would get him away from the mess and perhaps he could convince himself Tony wasn’t angry with him. Maybe help him forget some too.

That idea was music to Tony’s ears. “Sounds like a plan. Now, I know why I like you best.” Tony joked. He ordered Jarvis to get the room cleaned up and fixed while they were in the lab. He helped Loki get dressed and walked with him to the lab, keeping a hand on him as much as possible.

Trouble stayed behind feeling the need for a nap.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Troublesome Doombots Make an Appearance

Chapter Summary

July passes and August brings a new threat to the city.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

Several things happened in July:

Tony had rebuilt his building so that the upper floors were for use by him or the Avengers. He had a pad built for a helicopter or a quinjet. Each of the Avengers had their own suites, with areas to build out for additional members. One floor contained a full gym, Olympic sized pool, and a shooting range. Another had a huge obstacle course and laser tag style training areas. The common floor had a kitchen, dining rooms, and an entertainment room with a TV that took up most of the wall. There were conference rooms plus open areas that could be built out as needed.

With each floor being many thousands of square feet they had more than enough room with the top ten floors. He had fixed it so Clint could not spy on the top two floors which included his personal lab, Loki’s suite and the penthouse. But he did make a pathway to the roof for him. All other vents were set up so that Jarvis could now see and block off part or all of any area. Jarvis also had eyes in the elevator shafts and any crawl spaces in the walls. In fact Tony with input and urging from Loki designed two inch robots. They were controlled by Jarvis and would wander in the walls continuously searching for anything that didn’t belong. They quickly got named B&C Zappers, because they would zap unwanted Bugs and pests, and Jarvis could use the zaps to herd Clint if he started trying to go places he shouldn’t.

By this time Trouble had everyone but Clint and Natasha wrapped around her paw.

Natasha took every attempt at manipulation from Trouble as an invite to pick her up and cuddle.

Clint had bought a locked cabinet to keep his arrows in as Jarvis seemed all too willing to let Trouble in his suite. Now they found Clint’s socks and underwear dragged randomly around the place.

Steve took Loki to an old fashioned ice cream parlor. Loki found out he was lactose intolerant.

Tony introduced Loki to frozen yogurt which he immediately loved.

Bruce arranged to volunteer at a local clinic. Tony bought him a gallon sized thermos for his tea.
Loki and Natasha had a discussion while training about what knives were the best Earth had to offer. Tony did a double take at the price tag when two large sets of new throwing knives showed up.

Fury got angry because his scientist could not convince Loki to explain how to detect magic and wasted SHIELD’s day.

After a particularly nasty mission for SHIELD, Pepper showed up to talk to Tony. She stormed in ignoring the fact everyone else was in the room.

“You didn’t even tell me you were going on this one Tony!” She said.

“Nope, you would have just tried to tell me not to go.” He said mixing himself a drink with his back to her.

“We have talked about this before. You were going to give up being Ironman for me.” She said sounding hurt.

Tony sipped his drink. “No, I believe you told me I was giving up being Ironman for you, for the company, and for all the people who depend on me. That I needed to be more responsible and pass the mantle onto someone else. I said I would eventually retire. I didn’t say when.” He still didn’t look at her.

“But you said it. So when are you going to give it up so I can make an announcement. We can work on finding someone to take your place-.” Pepper was more businesslike until she was cut off.

“No one is going to be using my suits, I don’t trust anyone. There is not going to be an announcement because retiring eventually is a long way away. This is what I am Pepper, you can’t expect me to just give that up.” Tony said looking at the others rolling his eyes.

“Rhodey has a suit.” She countered.

“And he’s older than me.” Tony said flatly.

“I can’t live like this Tony. You are an adrenaline junkie, can’t you see that. It’s going to get you killed. Then what will we all do? What will I do?” She tried to convince him.

“Pepper, you’ll get the company. You can’t expect me to be happy living like that. I get bored way to easily, need something to do.” Tony was trying to be nice. “Look around you are the only one telling me to retire.”

For the first time Pepper noticed their fight was public. “We will talk about it later, Tony.” She said and left.

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In August a new threat came to New York. His name, they would discover was, Victor Von Doom.

The group had been on several missions for SHIELD and had a bit more experience working together when Jarvis set the alarm off. The threat was in New York City.
A bunch of robots were on the street attacking people in front of a Federal building. By the time the Avengers got there, several people were dead and dozens wounded.

“Tony and Clint distract them and try to figure out their weak points. They have some sort of ray weapon. Natasha, you and I get the civilians out of the way. Bruce try to stay calm and watch from a distance. Give us warning if you see something.” Steve ordered.

Clint learned his normal arrows didn’t affect them except when shot into joints. His explosive arrows placed in the neck area would blow off the heads and stop them completely. Tony took several hits to his armor getting close, and determined that in addition, the arms were weak at the wrist and the weaponized hands could be broken off there. Steve and Natasha had to take a couple down, as the robots attacked the groups of civilians they were moving. Natasha proving that her surprise kick could take a head off in one blow.

Before long they were all non-functioning. Tony grabbed one and took it back to his tower to study.

All told there were six dead and 34 injured. There had only been 10 robots. They were dangerous and an unknown. No one knew what their objective was but if they would have been allowed to continue the death toll would have been much higher.

S.H.I.E.L.D gathered the rest of the robots up and took them away. Fury brought them in to be debriefed immediately.

Loki had seen Tony bring the bot back. He got a familiar sense of magic and before Tony left for debriefing he asked if he could look at it. ‘Sure just don’t touch anything.’ So Loki looked at it. He held his hand a few inches from it. Damn, he needed to actually touch it. He was at least sure that he was feeling a residual magic from the robot, just a tingling sense he always got around magic. An interesting data point that the cuffs didn’t stop that detection.

He requested that Jarvis ask Tony if he could put his hand on it. His phone buzzed. ‘Nope! My toy. I’ll be back as soon as I can.’

Meanwhile at S.H.I.E.L.D, after reviewing the facts, they had tried to figure out what was really going on. The building had been a court house where civil trials were held. Judge Judy stuff. They had attacked when jurors were arriving with many pedestrians walking past toward their jobs. It was hard to tell if they intended to enter or not. None of the bots had talked. From a cursory glance, the weapons they used shouldn’t have worked according to S.H.I.E.L.D techs. The apparent power source was an unknown, a mystery. Tony fidgeted and was biting at the bit to get out of there.

Fury noticed. “Stark what are you hiding?”

“He took one of the robots back to his lab sir.” Natasha told him.

“It is S.H.I.E.L.D property, I’m sending someone over to retrieve it now.” Fury told them.

“Fuck you, if you think you are going to take it. I fought it, you have nine others. And I’m going to figure out what is going on before your whole team of scientists do,” Tony swore at Fury.

“Fine, but I want a full report on what you find Stark. None of this half assed shit like you gave me on the Chitauri technology.” Fury growled.
“Whatever.” Stark said and stormed out.

“Banner, make sure I get the information on this for me.” Fury ordered as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

“I’ll do what I can.” Bruce answered.

The meeting ended shortly thereafter.

“So Reindeer Games, I’m back. You said you got something? Explain to me what you want to do, and how you’re doing it?” Tony said excitedly when he got back. “Jarvis I want you to try to detect what he is doing.”

“Yes Sir.” Jarvis answered.

“Because of the suppression cuffs, I have to touch this robot enough to make it think it is part of me, or attached to me.” Loki said not taking his eyes off the pile of broken machinery in front of him.

“Want to feel up the equipment? Get attached? Kinky.” Tony said as Loki rolled his eyes.

“Do you think you need to wait for Dr. Banner? Sir?” Jarvis replied.

“No, he’ll be along shortly and time is of the essence.” Tony responded. “Anytime Dasher.”

“Stark, how many times do I have to ask you not to call me those ridiculous Yule animal names? If not, someday you will find out what it is like to be one.” Loki snarled as he set his hands on the robot. He couldn’t access anything. So he proceeded to move his hands around. Finally he tried to slip one of his hands into one of the forearms where the weapons were located. A smile broke out on his face.

“What? What can you tell?” Tony was excited.

“The power source is indeed magic, I can feel the residue for sure now. Unfortunately it is going to be nearly impossible to get much as long as I am wearing these.” Loki said pointing to his cuffs.

It had taken some time to find a way to interact with the arm, allowing time for Bruce to arrive. He had been brought up to date and had watched as Loki search in frustration.

“We could use the Oath medallion.” Bruce suggested.

“I do not need the medallion due to growing up in Asgard. Clearly you have forgotten. Now can we get on with this?” Loki sneered at them.

And after a few minutes they worked out an oath that would last a couple hours, granting Loki time to work without cuffs. Loki took the oath and they removed the cuffs.

Being without the cuffs was like being outside and breathing fresh air after spending months in a sealed room with a bag over his head, breathing stale air. Oh why did he agree to this again? Oh yes, Asgard. He was going to have to figure out a way to gain these mortal’s trust soon. Being in them all the time was just unacceptable.

“What are you waiting for Princess? Let’s get on with the show.” Tony quipped.
It didn’t take long to figure things out. There was a small block of a gold containing metal compound, not unlike the one Tony used in his suits that had been holding a magic charge. It was crudely made and would only last a few days even without being used.

Loki told them. “Whoever the idiot was that had imbued it with magic has no idea what he is doing. This person has a moderate amount of magic for a mortal.”

“You mean mortals, I mean humans, can figure it out on our own?” Tony sounded surprised.

“You did hear me say he was an idiot with no idea what he is doing right? Tell me again why you think you are a genius?” Loki teased then went on. “The power supply is accessing Yggdrasil using a crude catch and release method of diminishing returns.”

“Yggdrasil? Isn’t that the Norse world tree or something?” Bruce asked.

Loki rolled his eyes. “It is much more but that will suffice for now.”

Okay….Damn I’m gonna have a million question to ask you later. So is there a reason it is using a metal with gold to hold the charge?” Tony asked.

“Yes, gold has a natural hook that allows magic to be attached to it. In Asgard everything that uses magical protections has varying amounts of gold in it.”

Tony was soon looking at the robot mechanics, finding them to be crude and laughable. “I could have done better at six!” “Although I do remember some stuff I saw a few years back that resemble this coming out of Eastern Europe.”

Jarvis of course could not detect magic at all. Nothing Loki had done had registered on anything.

“So how do we know you are not bullshitting us about it being magic. I can’t detect it.” Tony asked Loki as they were putting the cuffs back on. He was really curious.

“Actually, I have already looked into that and know the reasons.” Loki said with a smug smile and crossed his arms and waited.

A few quiet moments later. “And?? Come on you selfish bastard, share with the class.” Tony looked pointedly at Loki.

“You can’t detect Dark Matter either, perhaps this is too complex for your tiny brain.” Loki hinted.

Tony frowned, then his eyes lit up in understanding.

“Wait, are you saying magic is made up of Dark Matter?” Bruce asked, now used to some of Loki’s insulting hints.

“It is more complicated than that. Imagine an xy-graph where everything you know is above zero and positive. What you call Dark Matter is everything else. Magic is part of that everything. It is a whole different system. You theorized its existence due to fluctuations in gravitational fields, from unknown sources of mass. Most of magic is not affected by gravitational fields at all, and is tied together by what we call Yggdrasil which strangely does have mass, and it, is what is causing the discrepancies that you see when you run the math.” Loki explained.

“And you are going to teach us all about it.” Tony’s eyes were dancing.

Loki looked serious now. “I am not allowed to give that information out, it is so far above your
current level of understanding. Remember when I said something about being my apprentice? Only then could I teach you about Magic and things far above your tech level.”

“So how do I sign up? What do I need to do?” Tony was very sure he wanted this before, now he had his first real clue as to what knowledge he could learn. He saw whole new possibilities and his desire could hardly be contained.

“Wait a minute Tony. I really don’t think this is a good idea right now. Just because he helps us a bit doesn’t mean we should agree to trust him completely.” Then turning to Loki. “I assume that you would have some control over us if one of us decided to be your apprentice.” Bruce objected.

“Very good Dr. Banner. Yes, I would have quite a bit of power over you. And as much as I would like it, it would require me to have these cuffs off almost all of the time. It is just as well you wait.” Loki had Stark hooked. He could tell. The man’s desire for knowledge knew no bounds. He might be able to work with that. But to convince the others he needed to earn more trust. Also he wanted to know Stark better before then. If he would have an established working relationship with the man, it might not get weird when he became an apprentice. He had never had a real friend before and was willing to withstand the cuffs in order to build a loyalty between them.

“How much is almost all of the time? And how much power over us?” Tony persisted in knowing.

“To be a proper apprentice it would require a magical bond where I would be aware of what you were doing at all times. In addition it comes with magical controls on you so that you cannot explain what I teach you to anyone else. You would also feel the blockage of the cuffs when I had them on or was far away. Being mortal I am not sure how it would exactly affect you, but at a minimum you would feel like your senses were dulled all the time, and have a drive to rescue and release me.” Loki told him.

“Could I stop being an apprentice?” Tony asked.

“Yes, but unless I released you as completing your training, I would be forced to block the memories of what you had learned.” Loki answered.

Tony looked frustrated.

Bruce said. “He’s going to be here for a long time Tony. If you really want to do something that crazy you have plenty of time to do it later.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Tony agreed dismally. Then, “So what about the dude who made this. He has magic, he must know.”

“The child is playing with fire. He has no idea what he is doing and is clearly doing a trial and error with his magic. I have seen this before, it rarely ends well.” Loki shook his head. “I have been looking for Midgardian tomes on magic but have been unable to find any that are real. Perhaps I need to get help with the search.”

“That’s a great idea, Jarvis start researching magic for us. Bruce, you can help too…” Tony started but was interrupted by his AI.

“Yes Sir, I do need to remind you about your date tonight with Ms. Potts.” Jarvis announced.

Tony exhaled loudly and asked “Bruce, can you send that report to Fury. I think we got everything out of this we can for now. I gotta go get ready.”

Bruce agreed, Tony waved goodbye whistling a dark tune, as he left while looking over the data on
his tablet. When he got to the elevator he turned his head and looked at Loki. Something was turning in his brain. Both the men noticed, Loki smiled, and Bruce frowned only guessing what it might be.

Several hours later the group had settled into the common room to watch a movie. Steve was always trying to get Loki to socialize with the group more. Loki had finally agreed and was trying to build up some acceptance and was also there in the back corner. Trouble was curled up on the back of the oversized love seat Loki was sitting on.

The last few weeks they had tried a new method of choosing a movie. They had all selected a word and then Jarvis would pick a movie based on what they choose. The words this week were: action, older, nature, thriller and classic. Natasha had discovered without classic or theatrical success they could get some pretty bad movies. Jarvis had chosen Jaws.

Half way into the movie Tony showed up. He wasn’t just drunk he was very smashed.

“HiiiYa guysss,” He said as he stumbled into the room. He plopped down into Bruce’s lap and tried to kiss him. “How bout suum Luvin for ur sci bro.” Tony said.

“Get off me Tony, you know I don’t like it when you do that.” Bruce said while he pushed Tony to the ground.

“U doonn wan me.” He looked forlorn. Then he crawled toward Clint.

“That is so not happening.” And Clint got up and moved away.

Tony sat on the floor and looked at Natasha. She just glared at him. “Nope, nop reabby to die yep.”

He looked at Steve. Who rolled his eyes and said, “You should be ashamed of yourself getting drunk like this again.”

Tony noticed Loki was there, watching everything unfold. “Wut abouts U Pincess. U got sum cumfurt fur pur ol’ Tony?”

Loki was sitting on a couch in a back corner. He shook his head and said. “You remind me of Thor right now. If you can get here, you can put your head against me.”

Tony half got up and stumbled over, mostly walking on his knees and curled up next to Loki. “Thinks, ur a rel pil.”

“You shouldn’t encourage him.” Steve said.

“He fought hard he needs a shoulder for comfort.” Loki answered. Thinking this was the least he could do for the man who had spent so very much time comforting him.

“What does fighting have to do with it?” Natasha inquired.

“Don’t you comfort each other after battle?” Loki purred as he said. “My people… rather the Æsir usually sleep with shield brothers embracing each other all night after a fierce battle. Unless they already have a lover with them at camp. It releases the stress of killing and the overall horrors seen in battle. Some would form small groups to do it. Thor and I did it all the time. It is pleasurable, enjoyable.”

“Gag me with a spoon. That’s gross.” Clint barked out.
“Did you do that with your brother?” Steve asked looking horrified.

“Yes, and we whisper softly to each other. Why? Do you find it gross?” Loki said clearly trolling them knowing full well he had implied sex.

“Brothers? Hot sticky men, with hot sticky men. Not for me.” Clint said now looking horrified at the thought of incest.

“We really don’t touch that much in the military. It used to be a crime to sleep with other men in the army. They did it, but got in trouble if they were caught. Now they are allowed to as long as they are quiet about it.” Steve provided.

“It is not like we have sex… Oh, is that is what you are thinking?” Loki laughed having enjoyed his game. Suddenly everyone looked much better.

“You mean you just hug and cuddle and sleep holding each other after battles?” Bruce questioned, actually trying to understand.

“Yes, exactly, plus a bit of talking. Shall I assume, that is not acceptable behavior in Midgard? What do you mortals do to relieve the trauma caused by battle then?” Loki questioned back, actually wondering this time. He had assumed that it was common since Stark was always willing to help him when he had nightmares.

Steve and Clint were suddenly quiet and looked down.

Bruce said. “We don’t do anything for it. Instead we have something called post-traumatic stress syndrome or PTSD, and it can be a real problem.”

“Imbeciles. So because you don’t want men to hug each other, you don’t deal with it. And people call us barbaric.” Loki shook his head in disgust, as he stroked Stark’s hair. The drunken man was already asleep. Trouble put his paws out and batted Loki’s hair at the same time.

They finished the movie and Loki put a pillow under Tony’s head and covered him with a blanket. Loki wondered again why this man was treating him so well. But then again it had been a couple of months now and the inventor really didn’t have a lot of people he spent time with. It was curioser and curioser.

Trouble stayed with Tony that night, curled up and keeping watch.

Late the next day Tony watched the conversation. He wondered if Loki would have been so helpful if he know the reason he was drunk was because he fought with Pepper and not due to the fight with robots.

He remembered the day before when he had left the lab. Tony had known right then. Loki wasn’t going to betray them. He had been watching, looking for evidence that Loki might turn. He had wanted to trust him but he wasn’t stupid either so he had looked. Loki had been given a serious opportunity and rather than take it, he gave warnings. That added to all the little things he had already shared with the god added up to trust. Now, he knew it wasn’t just that, Loki had just been promoted to ‘trusted friend’, a group which previously held only Pepper and Rhodey.

Chapter End Notes
Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
September 2012

Four months had passed since Loki took up residence in Stark Tower or Avenger’s Tower as some people were calling it. There had been more robot attacks since the first. Two had done major damage to the tower.

Clint built a trap that sprayed Trouble with water when she tried to eat.

Trouble declared war on Clint and peed on his bed.

Clint peed in Trouble’s litterbox.

Steve caught Clint doing this and assigned him the task of litterbox duty for the next few weeks.

Steve’s picture was once again at the end of Clint’s shooting hall.

One night Tony heard a deep voice saying ‘Good kitty. Don’t die kitty.’ And could only find Bruce fallen asleep on the couch with Trouble sleeping by his head.

Steve and Natasha wouldn’t believe Tony when he said there had been a ghost in the tower.

Loki had taken to teaching them about magical attacks, how to best avoid them and what to do if you couldn’t. He also proved that he was a warrior by beating each one of them in hand to hand. Only Natasha proved a challenge because she used tricks like he did.

One day everyone woke up to washed maple leaves hung on strings all over the common room and kitchen. They were paranoid for six days until Loki made an incredible dish smoked with the maple leaves using maple syrup.

The next morning the alarm went off. Everyone stepped out of their suites to find themselves covered in leaves. The leaves had been dumped over their heads from basket traps over their doors. It was a
false alarm.

Tony did not appreciate it when Steve, who had leaves sticking out of his hair, pointed out they were bushel baskets and Loki did know what a bushel was because he had written it on each basket.

Bruce and Tony were allowing Loki out of the cuffs after each fight to look at the robots. The magic power sources were lasting longer but were no more powerful. The technology had been getting better very slowly. Jarvis had tracked the technology Tony remembered back to Latveria, and Victor Von Doom. The Avengers wanted to go after him directly but were forbidden because he was ruler of a country and it might cause an international incident.

Because of Doom’s power sources, Tony asked questions all the time about magic. Loki gave him occasional snippets of information. Enough for Tony to get a rough concepts for specific things, but he lacked the building blocks to really understand. He also asked constantly about the apprenticeship. He wanted to understand it completely. More than that, he wanted to be able to do it.

Loki finally caved and had told him that not everyone could learn magic. You had to have connections to Yggdrasil, some sort of dormant magic. These were things you were born with. Only in very rare circumstances could one gain these connections if they didn’t have them to begin with.

Loki had noticed the arc reactor in the man’s chest, despite early attempts to hide it. It had a magic feel amazingly similar to the Tesseract. Jarvis had reluctantly confirmed Tony had built it much to Tony’s annoyance. Loki realized Tony clearly had some magic but only alluded to it, giving Tony hints though, with smiles.

Tony of course had to know more, and verify for sure he had magic connections. He wanted to know if the others had them too. Once they started talking about them Fury found out and demanded to know who had them too. Finally Loki agreed to look and scheduled something for the last day of September. Loki himself would take an oath to tell the truth and give a brief explanation about what magic he found, if anyone tested positive.

On the twenty-fifth of September, Loki was just finishing up a meeting with Pepper, Tony, and a couple of prospective clients in the SI board room.

Suddenly the windows broke and five Doombots flew in shooting. Pepper fell to the ground. Tony called his suit and dashed across the room. Loki and the clients headed to the door as the alarm went off.

Two bots immediately grabbed Loki, making it evident he was what they were after. Fortunately for Loki they had not expected him to be so strong. He swung them around and knocked them together getting one to let go.

Meanwhile Pepper hugged the floor and dove under the table in a panic, bleeding from the shoulder. The doombots seemed to have lost her for the moment.

The two clients were moving through the door as two of the bots started shooting at them. The client that was past the door screamed something about ‘this was not the deal’. The other while running through, was hit and killed, falling a few feet just the other side of the door. Both doombots chased the faster client out of the board room into a larger room with several desks.
Tony had glass cuts all over from the broken window and was trying to avoid blasts. His suit coat was already a lost cause. He just hoped his Ironman suit made it in time.

Of the five doombots that had entered the room first, two were focused on Loki, two on the clients, and one on Tony. Two more now entered the room shooting wildly, followed by Tony’s suit. Thank god Jarvis was fast and his suit was nearby. Tony dived away to avoid two more blasts and found himself being rolled over and encased in his metal suit. He was so glad he and Loki had worked out the algorithms to smoothly suit him up while moving.

Loki had grabbed a knife that he kept up his sleeve and jabbed it into the neck of the doombot holding him. It immediately powered down. He grabbed two more knives from his ankles and turned to see the first one he knocked off getting up and threw one knife at it which hit its mark. He noticed the two new bots entering from the window as he ran to the door. He was glad to see the Ironman suit working as it should to encase Tony.

Tony heard screaming from outside the conference room as he tried to stand. His first try failed because he had to roll out of the way of a blast. He noticed a terrified Pepper under the table and knew he had to get up or risk them seeing her. So he rolled past his bot and managed to stand up behind it just as one of the new ones blasted at him and accidently hit Tony’s doombot before continuing on to chase Loki.

Loki was down to one knife and there was still one injured and two uninjured bots in the conference room. He decided to make a stand at the door. He grabbed the dead client’s tablet and threw it like a Frisbee which actually beheaded the damaged bot on Tony. The others were grabbing for him but had not resorted to seriously harming him yet. He weaved back and forth, slowly being pushed out into the office behind, avoiding their attempts at capture while successfully holding the door to keep more from entering the office where workers were panicking and trying to escape. He heard the other client scream and knew he would be in trouble soon, as the bots would probably be headed back.

Having Loki’s throw behead the bot in front of Tony, Tony was able to notice a new one entering the broken window and gave it a blast to the neck that hit just right and took it out. He momentarily felt like hot stuff until he noticed Loki with two on him and remembering two more were on their way back for him. He gave one both blasters and flew full force into the other.

Steve, who had been doing a work out with his shield, had bounded down the stairs at a speed only a serum enhanced human could manage. He saw the two running for Loki on his side of the door and let his shield fly. It was a good hit and one bot fell, his blast missing Steve. The second was mildly damaged and let off a strong blast at Loki.

Loki saw the two coming back from inside the building after killing the second client. One was blasting at him. He ducked down quickly and they managed to hit one of their comrades at the door. Unfortunately they also hit Tony. He was ramming one and pushed it through the door. Tony and two bots were spun by the blast, so that Ironman ended up sandwiched between two damaged bots, one above and one below both facing Tony. They very effectively blocked the entrance.

Tony felt the blasts and the fall and knew that he was a sitting duck at this range. It would only take moments to work himself out but they were moments he didn’t have.

Steve was running toward the other bot inside the main room who was moving toward Loki, the door and its two injured pals. It blasted at Steve, missing him, but kept going toward Loki.

Loki grabbed Ironman and pulled, before the bots above and below him had time to tear the suit apart. He spun and rammed his back through the wall next to the door, ending up back in the
conference room with a staggering Ironman being pulled behind him.

Two doombots reached for him, one from the doorway and one from the direction of the window where another bot had entered. The other one on the floor was twitching, damaged quite badly after being shot, rammed and smashed into the floor. The last one was still in the office and had a very angry Steve on him now.

Loki dropped Tony pushing him away from the door. Then he grabbed the newest bot. With free hand he jammed his last knife into this one’s magical power supplies while curling himself around that part of the bot, turning so he could protect Tony and the further away, still under the table, Pepper. The blast blew up in the direction of the door, destroying the bots there.

Tony gained his footing only to see Loki drop to the floor. He heard and then saw Steve crush the last one’s neck who was probably already dead from the blast of the magical power supply and half fall himself.

Fortunately for Steve the bot had successfully blocked most of the force from the magical explosion.

Tony noticed areas of Steve’s unshielded legs looked as if sandpaper had filed parts of the skin and workout clothes off. And that shield would need a serious new paint job, were those actual scrape marks on it too?

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The fight was over by the time anyone else made it to the floor.

Tony had gone to Loki as soon as he saw the bots were down. Pepper didn’t look really injured just scared and scraped up.

Steve had found a desk to lean against and discovered there was nothing to remove from the scrapes in his legs and they were actually closing pretty cleanly. He was bleeding from one shoulder but it too was well on its way to healing.

Loki on the other hand was on the floor breathing but very weakly. Jarvis could detect no broken bones, so Tony, in his suit picked him up and carefully carried him upstairs. He had to get him out of there in case any more doombots showed up. He was alarmed, he had never seen Loki passed out from a fight. Even when the Hulk smashed him he was still conscious.

Pepper had a few glass cuts but was mostly just in shock. Paramedics arrived quickly and made sure she had a blanket and was laying down. She wanted to get up and see to her people but she was shivering so bad they wouldn’t let her.

Amazingly enough there were very few other injuries. The supposed new clients, they assumed, were hired by Doom and were both dead. Other than that the worst was a broken arm someone had got when they tripped over a chair and landed on a trash can while trying to escape. All employees were gone by the time the magical blast hit the room.

Tony wanted to unlock Loki, but Bruce reminded him that Loki could heal with the cuffs on. Since there was nothing Bruce could find wrong they took him to his room.

Tony decided to sit with him until he regained consciousness. He pulled out his tablet and asked Jarvis to call Pepper.
“Hey Pep you doing okay?”

“Where are you? I’m at the hospital and you’re not. This is why I wanted you to retire. One of these days you’re not going to survive it. You almost got ME killed this time. I don’t want hear excuses now, I’m almost done here. They forced me to go to get my cuts checked. I asked where are you?” Pepper sounded so tired and a rather annoyed.

“I’m with Loki. You saw him fall, he’s still passed out. We don’t know what’s wrong. I’m in his room sitting with him for now. Do you want to come and sit with me when you get back?” He asked.

“No, I’ve got more paperwork…Actually I’ll stop by, some of it you can fill out while you are sitting with him. I’m sure you have nothing better to do right now!” Pepper was pissed, then clearly pleased with herself for thinking of the paperwork.

“Aw Pep, can’t you get someone else to do it.” Tony whined.

“Oh no, I think this is your punishment for abandoning me after the fight. See you soon, have your pen ready.” Pepper scolded.

Tony sighed and petted Trouble who had lied down next to Loki. “She’s right you know, I should be with her. I think I’m better with machines…and maybe cats.” He said looking at Trouble and then at Loki. He put his head against Loki and thought. Damn, he had promised to protect his sweet handsome alien. Wait sweet? Where had that come from? More like a cuddle bunny. Scratch that thought.

But more than that, his friend was lying unconscious and he couldn’t do anything, it sucked. He was nervous, anxious, like patience was something he did…not! What would Yinsen say now? He tried to be objective, had he done all he could? He couldn’t come up with anything that might have prevented this. He thought about going back to his lab but couldn’t bring himself to do it. Even the threat of paperwork didn’t intimidate him enough to leave Loki’s side.

The fight was over and Pepper had come and gone. Tony sat in Loki’s bedroom with a stack of paperwork to fill out; it wasn’t just signatures.

He sat the stack of papers on the side of the bed and started taking pictures so Jarvis could fill in most of the stuff. Then he could print it out on Loki’s printer. He briefly wondered when Loki got a printer but was glad he had.

Trouble seemed to like the stack of papers and very soon was helping Tony by pushing the stacks around on the bed separating it into many more piles.

“Hey, stop that.” Tony cried out the second time he had to pick up and reorganize the stacks.

Trouble of course just sat there and licked her paws. Tony was soon back at work and before long turned and collected a stack Jarvis had filled out from the printer to sign.

This time Trouble yawned and rolled over so she was on top of the stack ready to sign. Tony picked her up gently and moved her off where she stayed just long enough to notice his pen moving and started batting at it.

Now Tony really didn’t care about having his signatures messed up but Trouble was making it really difficult to write. “Shit, now stop that you bag of fluff. Pepper will kill me if I don’t get these signed.
How about you cuddle up next to Loki.” He once again moved her, this time next to Loki on the other side.

Trouble of course sat up and took notice now. Before she was just playing. This time she jumped over Loki and dived into the stacks of papers sending them flying all over the floor, some skittering across the room, some sliding under the bed. Tony had been bent down signing so one hit him in the face. He glared at Trouble, who promptly looked at him, walked over sniffed his face and proceeded to lick his eyebrow.

Tony broke out in laughter. He picked Trouble up and sat her on the floor while he picked up the scattered papers. She of course helped by shuffling some under the dresser and further out of Tony’s reach.

As soon as he got the papers picked up and secured, he took out his phone, which happened to have a laser pointer built in and started to play with the cat. The next thing he knew she had knocked a pile of books off Loki’s nightstand making a tremendous noise. Tony winced, then he heard.

“Stark, what is all the racket? Are you determined to keep me from getting my much needed rest after the fight?” Loki drawled.

“You’re awake! God, I never thought you would wake up.” Tony started picking up the books.

“Stating the obvious I see. At least you are addressing me properly.” Loki turned his head and looked at Tony.

“You passed out. Look, worried concerned friend, sitting by your bed. Now tell me what happened?” Tony declared.

“There was a fight with a bunch of doombots, perhaps you may have seen them?” Loki said.

“Ass, I mean at the end when you passed out.” Tony grumbled.

Rolling his eyes Loki told him. “I exploded a power source and absorbed some nasty backlash so no one else would.”

“Is that going to be a problem?” Tony was concerned.

“Without the magic suppression cuffs I would not have had a problem blocking the magical burst from everyone as it was small. Instead I had to use my body to absorb it instead. I’m fine this time. There is no guarantee that they will explode the same way next time though, they are so unstable.”

Tony picked up Trouble and set him next to Loki again. “Any idea why they were after you?”

“Are you sure you are a genius? I’m a powerful contained sorcerer. If he could control me or gain me as an ally it would be to his benefit. I could teach him things he can’t even imagine. Need I give you examples or can your tiny mind continue without me? I really could use some rest. I will be fine. Now shoo.” Loki sounded exasperated, but was actually pleased to find that Stark was worried and had stayed with him.

“Fine, I’ll leave but don’t blame me when Trouble needs someone to play with again.” Tony grabbed his paperwork and turned to leave noticing that Trouble was already asleep next to Loki. “Devious little monster.” He whispered under his breath, taking a quick moment to scratch Trouble’s head before he left.

Loki smiled at Trouble and also scratched her neck. Soon he followed her to sleep.
Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.

I'll probably put the next chapter out Saturday. Hope you all are having a great day!
Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

September thirtieth came and the training room was set up ready for Loki to test people for magic. It looked like they were having a small party with drinks and hors d’ourves. Loki would be testing the five Avengers, Pepper Potts, Colonel Rhodes, Fury, Maria Hill and five other agents of Fury’s choice.

Fury showed up with a surprise.

When the elevator door opened. Stark yelled “Agent, I thought you were dead!” It took some time for things to settle down after finding out Coulson was alive. He was an extra Fury brought but Loki was happy to test him too. It was to his advantage to cultivate good will with SHIELD and Fury. More importantly it would mean Barton had one less thing to hold against him.

They were told that Coulson had not actually died but had been recovering in Tahiti. There were several hugs and Clint was extremely ecstatic, enough to hide his annoyance at being kept in the dark about it. Tony of course, pointed out it was another reason not to trust SHIELD. No one else seemed to be concerned by the lie about Coulson’s death so the subject was dropped. Soon they were ready to start.

Loki took an oath to tell SHIELD who had magic and more details about it to the SHIELD members who had it. Tony made the SHIELD members take an oath to make sure they weren’t spies.

“All right who goes first? Just so you know I’m going last because I don’t want to intimidate you with my awesomeness.” Tony announced.

“I’ll go first.” Steve volunteered.

“Hey do we get to bet on who has magic? Before we start?” Clint asked, sounding much more enthusiastic than he had for months.

“I don’t think that’s wise. From what Loki has told SHIELD, it’s entirely likely that none of us possess the potential to have magic.” Coulson stated.

“That is not quite correct Mr. Coulson. I said in a sample of normal people you might expect to find at best one in ten thousand. This group is far from ordinary. I’m sure Mr. Fury selected your group with care also.” Loki sneered, clearly unimpressed by Fury’s selection of most likely obedient uncreative minions.

“Anyway, get going Loki. I don’t want to listen to Stark brag any longer than necessary.” Fury said, clearly wanting to avoid more insults Stark would undoubtedly add.
“You’re just jealous Nick. Just for that, you’re getting coal for Christmas.” Tony laughed, proving Fury right.

Meanwhile Loki put his hands on Steve’s head and was concentrating. Then he had Steve start running the obstacle course, hold a lit candle, take a knife and scratch his arm. He had Steve read a couple things meant to entice emotions, then had him pass through a glowing orb. Finally he reached for Steve’s head again, eyes closed, a blank expression on his face. After a while his eyebrows twitched just a bit.

“He found something I bet.” Hill observed.

“Yes, I have actually. And it is not what I was expecting.” Loki released Steve took few moments then asked. “Do you want to know?” Loki asked smirking.

“Yes, of course. Go ahead and tell me.” Steve answered a bit exasperated.

“As you wish. You had a small amount of potential at one point but apparently whatever turned you into Captain America was actually able to hook into it. It attached to your magical connections, changed their form to become an enchantment of sorts. What remains is what gives you your strength and speed. You are very lucky. I can no longer tell what type of magic your potential fell into, but there are many forms that could have destroyed you. Also you would not have survived if you had none. Even more the enchantment is stable, unstable enchantments tend to blow up.” When Loki stopped talking everyone was looking at Steve. This both explained so much but left so many more questions.

“Blow up how? Like the power supply from a few days ago?” Steve asked.

Loki shook his head. “No that was only a small temporary low level power supply. Yours could have taken out a city block or more.”

Steve’s eyes got wide at this.

Fury eyes narrowed and asked. “A person can be enchanted? How?”

“Yes, of course. I shall remind you that this is not one of your days to ask questions and I have no intention of explaining the workings of magic to you anyway. So might we proceed?” Loki said amused that he could get under Fury’s skin so easily.

Next up was Hill. She had no magic.

Clint was found to have a very small amount. Loki was convinced that it was perhaps luck or accuracy based, what made him so good at the bow and perhaps lucky enough to stay alive to do it.

Colonel Rhodes had none.

“Why director, you have a spell on you. A fairly permanent one. Care to tell us how you got it?” Loki said sounding accusingly snarky. “Other than that you have none.”

“Thank you for the information, I have nothing further to share with you about that.” Fury informed him.

Pepper had a small amount of magic too. Although hers fell into the category of protection, still not enough to train. None of the five other people Fury had brought showed any potential.

Natasha made the orb fizzle, spark and turn black. Loki took more time.
“Are you aware you have a dark magic attached to you? Perhaps even death magic?” Loki asked before he put his hands on her.

Natasha after going through the orb, was for the first time not quite as unfazed as her normal calm and cool self would have one believe. She answered steady but slightly slower than one would expect. “No, what is it?”

“That will take a great deal more time and research, my dear. I can tell you it has been with you a very long time. Do you wish to know more?” Loki looked at her.

Once again back to her cool self. “I’m good.”

“Other than that you have no magic.”

It was Bruce’s turn to do the exercises. Finally Loki put his hands on his head and they waited. When he stopped he told Bruce. “You also have some magic that is changed. It developed suddenly not unlike Steve’s, yet quite different. Do you want everyone to know?”

“No, let’s talk about it later. After Steve, I expected something, but I don’t want anyone else to know.” Bruce answered honestly clearly relieved that Loki didn’t just announce what he found. Fury agreed to Bruce’s request for privacy, since he had been occasionally giving Fury science reports.

Phil was next.

Loki put his hands on Phil. A moment later he glared at Fury. No one had ever seen the face Loki used. He was furious, fuming with what he had found. Then he continued to look. When he finished, before he had time to talk. Fury said. “Just tell me if he has magic.”

“Tahiti, really? I know what you did to him… He has no MAGIC links… anymore.” Loki was angry. Seething with rage.

“What did you find?” Tony asked ignoring Fury’s glare.

“Something that was a crime, something I didn’t agree to answer or explain. I am quite sure I know more about what they did than they do. It counts as way above your tech level.” Loki glared at Fury and added. “One day playing with artifacts or things you don’t understand is going to backfire on you very badly director. Wait, it already has once. Pray the rest of Midgard does not pay worse for it next time.”

That left only Tony, who already had an idea he had magic because of things Loki had hinted at. Loki took a few minutes to regain his composure before moving on. Everyone was looking at Fury, even Natasha showed a slight amount of concern on her face. Coulson was silent and looked thoughtful as Tony ran the circuit.

Loki finally put his hands on the genius’s head and looked. A few minutes later he removed them. “Yes, you have some magic Stark.”

“Well tell me about it.” Tony grinned.

“Talking to you and answering all your questions will take entirely too long. I will talk to you about it later.” Loki said and Tony realized that Loki didn’t want SHIELD to know what he had found. Actually now that he thought about it, he didn’t want SHIELD to know either.

“Yeah, just tell me later. I don’t need everyone to know.” Tony looked at the SHIELD group.
“How much does he have? He asked, you took an oath.” Fury asked sternly.

“I agreed to tell you all who had magic, and more about SHIELD members who had it. Not everyone here is actually SHIELD. Stark specifically is not SHIELD, he holds me by contract, and I am not bound by the oath to tell you more about him other than he has it. But I will, if you agree by oath, to tell me about ALL the artifacts that you know of, in which the origin is not clearly Midgard.” He was still seething about whatever he had found when he examined Coulson.

“I don’t need to know that badly. You should watch your step you don’t want me as an enemy.” Fury said.

“You are hardly worthy enough for that threat director. You need to heed my warning.” Loki responded.

With that Fury left.

Bruce and Loki slid out as soon as the elevator closed on the SHIELD group.

Tony smiled to the rest of the group and saw Natasha collecting money.

“How could you have possibly guessed?” Rhodey asked as he handed her a fifty.

“It answered a lot of things I know about Steve and Bruce. Tony was just a little bit too smug the last few days. It was a calculated risk with Clint. I didn’t guess Pepper or the spells.” Natasha answered.

“I wasn’t included in the bet? And I asked.” Clint objected.

“Happened quick in the elevator on the way up.” Rhodey answered.

“I’d just as soon we all had nothing.” Pepper said.

“How can you say that Pep? This is so exciting.” Tony chimed in.

Pepper looked at the group and then Tony and said. “I really don’t understand why this was so important to know. Well I do sort of understand it from you Tony. But none of you can do anything about it. Don’t get me wrong, I like him but it’s not like any of you are going to become a ‘mage apprentice’ to Loki.” She huffed at the thought.

“What makes you so sure honey?” Tony asked.

Pepper looked at him. “You’re actually thinking about it aren’t you. You stupid fool. Even if he was controlled when he invaded, we know nothing about him or Asgard or even what magic does to a human. You are always pushing the limits on danger, Tony. And after the attack last week it should be obvious the catastrophic danger magic poses. It is bad enough that you won’t retire Ironman. Must you always go for broke when danger is in front of you? Please promise me you will not pursue this.”

The tension in the room suddenly jumped. Everyone held their breath expecting the room to ignite. Tony didn’t look at Pepper, unwilling to agree to the promise.

“We will discuss this later Anthony Edward Stark.” Pepper left, her heals clicking on the floor as she retreated.

“Really Tony, she has a point.” Rhodey said.
“How can you guys not understand the opportunity here? Risks are part of invention. His knowledge is so vast. Where’s Bruce? Surely one of you sees it?” Tony exclaimed looking around.

Steve sighed. “She’s just worried about you. Loki is still an unknown to us in many ways, an alien. Give it time. Until a few months ago we all thought magic was a fairy tale. We don’t even know if it can be used for good.”

“He is still the God of Lies. How do we know he isn’t just lying to us about everything?” Clint cautioned, although for once there was no heat in his steam, Clint was clearly feeling good about Coulson being alive.

Tony looked bewildered. “I thought you guys believed in second chances. He’s done nothing to even hint that what he told us after the invasion wasn’t true. As for being an alien, he’s no stranger than me, just older and knows more.”

“You’re pretty strange too, now that you mention it. You an alien?” Clint teased. There were several laughs.

“You are giving him a second chance Tony. But that’s different than selling him your soul. I agree with Pepper. Learning magic is just one more thing to kill yourself with.” Rhodey maintained.

Steve and Clint nodded in agreement. Natasha remained still. She knew there was no way Tony could resist this especially if he had enough magic to do something with. She briefly thought about taking bets on how long Pepper and Tony would stay together, but realized the variables were too high to make a proper guess, for now.

“Well, aren’t you a fucking bunch of hypocrites. You were more than willing to find out about your own magic, learn about it. Hell, we even have an enemy that is human who is using it untrained. But no, it’s too dangerous for me to learn from a highly skilled and knowledgeable teacher. Fuck you all, why don’t you go back to your safe baby bottles because all you seem to be good at is sucking.” Tony stated indignantly. Then looking around he left them stunned at his words.

Tony had realized that Loki left with Bruce. He felt left out for some reason, he knew Loki was probably telling Bruce about his magic but he had wanted to be there too. Those that remained didn’t understand him, so he left and went to his lab and started drinking.

While in another room, behind a closed door.

“Jarvis can you keep this conversation private unless Bruce gives permission to see it?” Loki asked.

“Let Tony see it.” Bruce answered, knowing he would be asked and it would be easier if Tony had already watched it.

“Yes I can. Mr. Loki, Dr Banner.” Jarvis answered. They had spent a great deal of time getting Jarvis to use Mr. Loki. Loki had not wanted to use Odinson, Laufeyson, Silvertongue, your Highness, Prince or anything else. He just wanted to be Loki.

“Bruce, you were correct that you have similarities to Steve in that it was changed by an event. But unlike his, your magic is greater, it has not enchanted you and it is active in more than one area.” Loki said.

“Am I better off not knowing?” Bruce asked looking sort of defeated.
“On the contrary, I think it is very much to your advantage that we found this out now.”

“Ok tell me.” Bruce said.

“First off you have a physical form of magic. This gives you your strength and power and shape as the Hulk. The best way to describe this is that it is a form of energy that is either active ‘on’ or inactive ‘off’, a toggle switch of sorts. When you turn into the Hulk you are using it to change your body and the magic is in an active, awake state. When you become Bruce Banner you are once again using the magic to become inactive and almost everything is asleep.”

“Ok, go on.” Bruce said.

Loki continued. “When your accident happened, by all rights you should have died or turned into something that destroyed your personality. Instead you accessed a very, very rare type of magic. One that even I do not possess and have only seen once. When you call the Hulk the other guy, you are not completely incorrect. You have created a secondary personality within yourself. It is grounded in Yggdrasil. This is different than creating an identity and acting. When you become the Hulk he takes over. This personality is very new and like a child, but still you.”

“So you are saying I’m stuck.” Bruce sounded lost.

“No, it is possible to open a pathway between the two personalities, make the magic partially active all of the time. That way you can talk to yourself as the Hulk and he can talk to you when he is not out. If you put some work into it and if you live long enough, you will eventually have two minds and the ability to use either body, but they are both basically you.” Loki looked at Bruce’s concerned face.

“Would this require me to be an apprentice to you?” He still didn’t look very happy and now somewhat confused.

“No, this is something I can do for you because I am an old and powerful sorcerer, who has spent his life studying.” Loki grinned as he said it. Bruce was reminded of Stark’s narcissism.

“What would I owe you for doing this? What would it cost?” Bruce asked.

“This is a good question to ask. When magic is concerned, always be careful of a gift. There are way too many balances that need to be made especially when making a permanent change. Magic can be very dangerous if you don’t know what you are doing. I would have to think on this and get back with you on that.” Loki said then added. “You have a third type of magic. It is a life magic. It has activated and ceased being dormant. It uses its energy to keep you from dying. Because the Hulk is rooted in Yggdrasil, killing you is near impossible. I can tell you that it is what heals the Hulk and keeps you from killing yourself. It is also complicated. I would advise you just trust that it is there.”

“So you’re saying that you might be able to help me be aware and have some control over the Hulk?” Bruce verified, still looked puzzled.

Loki agreed. “Yes, that is correct. If you want me to that is.”

“Maybe later, if you don’t mind. I don’t feel comfortable or trust you enough to mess with me yet. I may not agree to the cost depending on what it is… I assume you can’t turn it off and get rid of the Hulk?” Bruce had to ask.

“No, even if I could, it would be more like murdering part of your soul, and your life magic would stop it. You, similar to Steve, have managed to freeze your magic into abilities in certain pathways. But yours are flexible abilities and actually use magic for changes unlike his which are a static
enchantment.” Loki finished explaining.

He remembered the files about Banner. One report suggested he might have developed a secondary personality for dealing with his anger as a child. They were probably linked. Little was known about how this form of magic developed.

When they returned to the common area Steve was the only one left. He had stayed to make sure the cuffs got back on Loki. He told Bruce that he thought this had been a mistake. Bruce disagreed and told him that the knowledge he had gained would eventually help him a great deal. He also pointed out Coulson was alive and Clint had been overjoyed. It made Steve feel better.

Loki left and went looking for Stark. He found him in his lab drinking and working on something. Trouble was sleeping on the desk next to him. Tony apologized but he wasn’t up to talking right now. Loki scratched Tony’s and Trouble’s heads and left.

That night Loki couldn’t sleep. At first, he found himself mentally beating himself up. Then his mind started going into deep dark places with memories of psychological torture. Eventually he got to the point where he was afraid to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

    Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Magical Worship

Chapter Summary

Tony sulks, Trouble gets bacon, and Loki finally tells Tony about his magic.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki hadn’t slept at all that night. He was worried about Tony. Had he screwed up again? What was the inventor doing? Since he was on the same floor he had gone down to the lab several times that night only to find the door locked, music loud and Tony unwilling to look up when he knocked. Jarvis told him that Tony was not to be disturbed, but had inquired about sir’s health and stated, he was fine.

Trouble tried to calm Loki but even the cat couldn’t break his mind out of the deep hole he was swirling into.

The next morning he went to the lab door only to find it locked. Tony was welding something and had his loud music still going. Jarvis once again repeated that Tony’s lab was on lockdown and he was not to be disturbed.

A tired Loki sat down on the floor next to the lab. What now? If he waited here would Stark be angry with him? He was just starting to feel like himself again and now he had gone and screwed it up again. He finally picked up Trouble and went back to his rooms and asked to watch anything he could about last night after he left with Bruce to figure out what he may have missed.

It took Trouble two hours to get Loki to remember he had not fed her. She finally resorting to becoming destructive in order to get him to notice, only to discover he had no cans left in his own kitchen. She was rather disgruntled.

He and Trouble went to the common floor where he knew there was always extras stored.

He passed Pepper and Steve waiting for the elevator on his way to the kitchen. She smiled and greeted him and he could hardly bring himself to look at her giving her a nod of acknowledgement before dashing towards the kitchen.

He found Bruce in the kitchen making tea.

“Would you like some tea? You look worse than Tony.” Bruce offered pulling a second cup from
the cupboard.

“Yes, thank you.” Loki said pulling out a can and emptying it into a bowl for Trouble.

It was quiet as Bruce finished making the tea and Loki sat down at the table watching Trouble gobble down whatever expensive cat food Tony bought for her lunch.

“Is this about Tony?” Bruce guessed sitting down and placing a teacup in front of both himself and Loki.

“He is ignoring me. He wanted to know so badly, now I fear rather than making him happy I have destroyed his life.” Loki sounded morose.

“You know whatever’s happened it’s not your fault.” Bruce told him taking a sip of tea.

Loki stared at his tea. “He won’t see me, he is ignoring me.”

“He is ignoring everyone, Steve and I tried earlier to get into see him. He does this everytime he has a fight with Pepper.”

Loki looked at Bruce and in a soft yet indignant voice said. “He has never ignored me.”

“Well, either you didn’t notice or you are special. Most people aren’t allowed into his lab when he’s like this.” Bruce took another sip and make a slight slurping sound.

Loki finally picked up his tea and blew across it. “Most people have less to lose.”

“What do you think he might do?”

“I don’t know. Give me to SHIELD, or send me back to Asgard.” His hands tightened around the teacup as he looked at Bruce.

“Tony’s not like that. He takes care of those he cares about.”

“He may just stop caring. I am an alien, a monster, someone who is barely hanging onto his sanity. I would not blame him for cutting his losses.” Loki practically whispered head drooping, eyes once again glued to his teacup setting it down again.

Bruce set his teacup down and put a hand on Loki’s shoulder. “That will never happen. The fact he lets you in his lab whenever you want, despite everyone’s warnings about you being an unknown, should prove it. He likes you, trusts you.”

“Ah but I have broken a major rule. I have made Lady Pepper angry with him. She is his woman, his rock, his loyal lover. A powerful woman in her own right. He will not want to harm that relationship over me. Even she will be angry with me.” Loki had let go of the cup now his voice was quavering.

“Are you listening to yourself? Have you really been watching Tony? They fight all the time. In fact he usually goes to you after those fights. She’s not even allowed in his lab as much as you are.” Banner couldn’t believe Loki.

“Yes, But.” Loki started slowly.

“No, Loki. He likes you a lot. Pepper came over earlier to explain to Steve and me, that he barricades himself in his lab regularly when he gets upset. He has for years. It’s his stress relief. In fact she’s surprised he’s done it less since you’ve been here. She thinks you’re good for him. He’s even been drinking less since you showed up. Trust me she is not angry with you, only Tony.” Bruce felt like
he was ranting a bit, but he could see that Loki needed some serious reassurance.

“Oh dear, that only shows Tony is angry with me.” Loki said nearly spilling the teacup.

Bruce took a sip of his tea and shook his head. “Yeah, right. He’s not angry with you. Pepper says she’s never seen him get along with someone the way he does with you and I agree.”

“Really, you think so?” Loki put his hands on the teacup and actually picked it up looking like he might take a sip.

“I know so. He’s always looking for you, always wanting to know where you are. I probably shouldn’t be saying this but he gets this dreamy sometimes creepy look on his face when you’re not looking.” Bruce said.

Loki took a sip of his tea now. “What do you mean by dreamy sometimes creepy. Are those not rather opposite?”

Trouble had finished her food and had jumped up on the table, keeping out of Loki’s reach sniffing at Bruce’s tea.

Bruce exhaled. “Tony looks despite Pepper.”

Loki was sitting taller now. “What do you mean looks? Can you not be clear? Am I that strange to look at?”

Bruce blushed a bit. “I knew I shouldn’t have said it. I mean he stares at your body and clearly fantasizes about you being naked and thinks about having sex with you.”

Loki for once had not been quick on the uptake. He had been too deep in his own fears for that. He looked at Banner. “Surely not. He must be thinking of Natasha or Steve.”

“Definitely you Loki. I tried to forget him saying in the lab, ‘I really wish I could tap that or let him tap me. That is one fine man.’ While looking at the door you just walked out of.”

“So he wants to have sex with me?” Loki looked amused but confused. “Lady Pepper will not like that. I thought he was interested in friendship.” Loki held his teacup again.

“He is, you fit him very well in many ways. The important part is he still likes you. Pepper told us to just ignore him because he’s sulking. When he doesn’t always get his way, he sulks.”

Pepper stormed into the kitchen followed by Steve now. “He is being stupid. He needs to give this up. Look at what he is doing to poor Loki.” She pointed at Loki who really did look rather shabby. Having not slept, bathed, changed his clothes or combed his hair since the night before. His eyes looked sunken and dark his skin paler then normal.

“What do you mean?” Loki questioned.

“Jarvis said he isn’t even letting you in and you are obviously worried. He is sulking and making everyone else worry about him.” She grabbed Loki and gave him a big hug. “Don’t give up on him. He needs you, you seem to ground him. You are the only one keeping him sane. Please for me.”

Loki nodded and she left, only stopping to sweep her hand across Trouble and scratch her chin.

The three men watched her leave.

“Did I just hear her correctly?” Steve finally said.
“I believe you did.” Bruce answered.

Loki finally said what they were all thinking. “Me, the tortured, insane alien invader is the one keeping, arguably the most powerful man in Midgard sane?”

And with that Trouble broke the silence by knocking the teapot to the floor.

Two days later found the gang eating dinner. Steve had finally dragged Tony up to eat. He was still morose. He found a chair next to Bruce across from Clint. He’d been avoiding Loki. He hadn’t slept and only eaten part of a smoothie Dummy made since that night.

Trouble had followed and discovered they were having bacon sandwiches amongst other things. Then to her delight she discovered that everyone but Loki could be persuaded to give her small bits of it. Even Natasha, although it required sitting in her lap for it.

Her antics of begging and Loki being rebuked for trying his best to explain that feeding her from the table was a bad habit they would all regret, kept things from being uncomfortable.

After dinner they moved to watch a movie. Tony took a bottle with him and after looking over the options, sat down next to Loki but didn’t look at him. The movie Jarvis showed tonight was an old 80’s flick called Cat People with a theme song written by David Bowie. Trouble climbed up on Tony’s side and curled up to lick her paws and groom her claws. Eventually Tony leaned over without saying a word and curled up next to Loki, then falling asleep with his head on Loki’s lap.

“Why do you let him do that to you?” Clint asked.

“It does no harm. I also find the physical touch relaxing. It really does release stress Clint.” Loki answered.

Clint proceeded to snuggle up next to Natasha and ended up with a bruised shoulder.

“I didn’t think I needed to remind you, to either ask or establish permission first.” Loki said and everyone laughed.

Then Steve said. “Tonight though? He’s been avoiding you, maybe even angry and you still comforted him. Honestly you keep surprising me in good ways.”

Loki wasn’t sure how to take this. It was a compliment. There had been so very few of them in his life. “As with most living things when one treats it well, it will treat you well back. He has treated me very well and is angry with himself more than I.” He deflected, feeling very reassured and happy that Tony had picked him to lean against.

The next day Tony finally went to Loki, who was surfing the Internet in his room.

“So Merlin tell me about my awesome magic.” Tony asked boldly breaking the silent treatment he had been giving Loki.

“Are you sure you want to know?” Loki asked carefully. The man had opened his home and given Loki refuge. He didn’t want to be the cause of him losing Pepper. Besides he liked the strong
woman, she had earned his respect. He had earned her respect and obvious trust too. Well mostly, he was still guilty of tempting Tony into doing something she considered stupid.

“Yes, this was my idea in the first place and I’m the last one to find out.” Tony moaned.

“And whose fault do you think that is?” Loki smirked.

“Mine, you’re not supposed to rub it in you asshole.” Tony scowled.

“You have it.” Loki smiled at him and returned to his screen.

A few moments passed. “And? God, I hate you right now.”

“An appropriate title. But you really need to work on your worship prayers. That will never work.” Loki teased glancing up.

Tony looked at Loki who was sitting on his sofa, computer tablet in his lap. Tony turned around and looked at the empty desk behind him. He hopped on the desk, got on his knees, folded his hands and smirked. “Oh great God, whom I look down upon. Would you be so impressed with me, such that you would grant me a boon? The one you just gave everyone else! And please tell me about my fucking magic… Amen!”

Loki laughed. Tony could be so very entertaining. “Ok, you don’t just have magic, you have a lot for a human. I’m actually quite surprised. It’s in many areas. And if you were an Æsir woman you would be sent to apprentice with a real teacher.”

“Why an Æsir woman? Not good enough magic for an Æsir man? Or are male sorcerers extra special for some reason and get privileged training? Do women get subpar training in rainbowland or something? Or do they just train all men and women only when they have enough?” Tony said, defending what he took as a slight to women.

Loki looked startled for a moment, then laughed. “For once it is my cultural references you do not get. Men are rarely taught magic, very unmanly. It is considered a womanly art. I may have even mentioned it once.”

Tony whistled. “I remember now, thought it was just a prince thing, not the whole race. Something that interesting and useful only for women? You guys really are screwed up. Feminists would probably love that idea. Anyway, do I have more than the asshole who makes the robots?”

“Yes, most likely. I have not actually examined him.” Loki laughed as Tony shot a rubber band at him that he had found on the desk.

“So, if I wanted to, does that mean you would take me as an apprentice now and teach me magic?” Tony asked being serious now. He had adjusted and was sitting on the desk with his legs hanging off and swinging.

“Yes, but you really need to think about it. Besides I still live in these cuffs most of the time.”

“That can be fixed.” Tony smiled and pulled a key out from under his shirt.

Loki looked skeptical. “Aren’t Bruce and the others going to be mad when you have it in your pocket instead of your safe next time?”

Tony smiled even bigger. “It’s not that key and I put a fake one in its place so Steve and Bruce will never know.”
“Jarvis approved?” Loki asked.

“Jarvis helped.” Tony answered smugly. “I made fake cuffs too.” He jumped off the desk, ready to retrieve the cuffs if Loki asked.

“How long have you had it?” Loki found himself wondering what he would do if something happened to Tony.

“Couple months. I don’t trust them. You are my shit and no one else gets you.” Tony was serious for a few moment.

“Your shit? I take offense at that Stark. You may be my warden but that does not mean you own me in any way. Remember someday I will be out of these cuffs. More so, I will be your ‘Master’ then, if I actually choose to teach you. Will you feel so confident then?” Loki threatened. But he wasn’t serious, he had gotten used to the way the inventor talked and knew it meant he cared about him.

“Master, huh? I kind of like the way that works. I own my ‘Master’, Great oxymoron. I’ll have to remember that, Master.” Tony laughed, wiggled his eyebrows and did a bow rolling his arms to Loki.

Loki laughed at the absurdity of it. “Fine, so you have both keys. And what if something happens to you?” Loki asked.

“Jarvis will take care of it til I’m better. I’ve got it handled.”

“And how will he let me out? Especially after they discover the other key is a fake?” Loki raised his eyebrows.

“If I am in a life threatening situation. Jarvis can immediately give you access to the key in my lab in hopes that you will attempt to save my life. If I’m gone and the safe in Steve’s room is opened by Steve and Bruce, Jarvis will try to find me and evaluate the situation. Then determine who should have access to the key. Likely you for that matter, might take some time though as there are more conditions and I don’t trust SHIELD not to be up to something. You will always be safe in my lab if need be, it will be locked down if you are there and in danger. Jarvis also knows how to fake things so you can break into my safe too, eventually.” Tony was momentarily serious. “Now, back to the apprenticeship.”

“It is too soon Stark. The agreement says I need Bruce and Steve’s trust too, as much as I desire to be out of these cuffs. Give it a few more months… Perhaps there is a way to prove that magic is not all bad.” He really didn’t want to bring up Pepper, but Jarvis had shown him what she had said when Stark was avoiding him and he kept remembering her face.

Laughing. “Patience is not one of my virtues Bambi. So what are you proposing? How do you prove magic is good?” Tony questioned.

Loki glared at him. “I know what you are referring to with the Bambi. Either I am being insulted as a small naive baby deer. Or you are referring to me as a female sex object. I do not appreciate either.”

Tony just smiled slyly. “Sex object huh? I’m not sure if I’d like you better in a BDSM outfit or in tight bikinis spread out on my bed.”

Loki decided to continue his thoughts, ignoring Tony who made sexual jokes to anything that moved despite being in a relationship. “I’m not doing much with my magic and I’ve got a lot of energy in my storage devices.” Thinking he said. “I could enchant some permanent protections into your building, since it is currently my home. Making external and internal changes to the structural
supports. It would of course become almost impossible to alter major features of the building after that, but it would save you on upkeep, repairs and protect your building from being broken into by smashing an outside wall or window. ” Loki offered. “In addition the others might get used to me being out of the cuffs a bit.”

“Then I would be the first billionaire to have his own enchanted building. Oh yeah.” Tony’s eyes sparkled.

“You make this too easy. Can’t you tell I’m manipulating you?” Loki laughed, he just couldn’t hold his tongue this time.

“Not manipulation, if I want it done anyway Mr. Wizard. Beside I see your games. Genius remember.” Tony smirked. “Oh and I decided you are definitely the BDSM game playing type.”

Loki knew Stark was sharp he wondered how many levels the man thought. Was it really as many as he did? Yet he seemed to make instant decisions without a care of the consequences. Laughing, he smiled, the man was definitely entertaining, he was glad Stark had been the one to take and accept his deal to stay on Midgard.

They agreed to enchant the building and soon worked out the details of exactly what would be reinforced and protected and what would not be, and from what. Tony found it amazing that you could let rain hit the building while not allowing any acid and even prevent weather damage. It felt like programing! He spent the next few days convincing the rest of the Avengers of the advantages. It really didn’t take much after the attack Doom had done the week earlier.

October- early November

It took over six weeks to enchant the tower even with the power Loki had stored.

Clint got a dog. After Trouble jumped it, it ran and hid every time it saw Trouble.

Clint found a new home for the dog.

Steve took Loki to the Natural history museum. They got thrown out when Loki started arguing their ‘historical facts’. He apparently had visited earth many times over the years.

The museum apologized and three history professors showed up at the Tower wanting to question ‘Prince’ Loki.

Bruce wrote a paper on healing mental trauma.

Stark industries introduced a new limited edition phone ‘THE PRINCE’ that featured Loki’s name as a runic symbol, it sold out in hours despite being overpriced.

Loki got pissed at Stark for it and wouldn’t talk to him.

Pepper settled it by giving Loki a portion of the profits.

Loki donated it all to help rebuild New York and got mega kudos for it.

Coulson also started showing up for dinners to visit Clint, now that they knew Coulson was alive. When he showed up Loki seemed to be kept on task talking about Asgard. If he didn’t know better
he would think Coulson was spying, but he knew better. Coulson was definitely spying!

The group learned that Odin was an all-powerful dictator and ruler. His word was law. They were the peace keeping force of all the nine realms and not all the realms appreciated it. Even Queen Frigga had been taken hostage as a child and forced to marry Odin. They had learned to love each other and she had become a major influence on him, but it didn’t make it right. Class differences were very clear and it was not at all a fair system, although earth’s history was full of similar systems.

The dichotomy of many things confused the humans. How could a people that took so much care of the wellbeing of the mental state of their warriors be so oblivious of bullying those who were different? Loki simply explained warriors were important. It was the only way to raise your class if a man. Only honored warriors, or the upper class who mostly consisted of warriors, rich honored business women, and spouses of said warriors, could be on any council or part of the court.

People who were different were not important and really not wanted. Æsir knowledge of magic and technology was so advanced yet they used swords, axes, hammers, and bows, not guns and bombs. Of course this was because they cared very much for the environment which they could easily destroy with magic and tech.

Magic was a highly skilled job for women. Few women became warriors and were usually looked down for it, rarely succeeding, just as men were looked down on for using magic. Skilled women were honored as much as well-known warriors though. Women could run businesses become architects but not really blacksmiths. Doctors were nearly all women.

Child rearing was shared, perhaps done more by warriors when there were no current wars to fight, women taking over only for the hours each day they spent practicing.

There was much less prejudice of women in general than they had expected. Women were expected to be strong, make decisions and be equals to their husbands. It was strange despite the distinct differences in which jobs each sex could hold.

Both Clint and Natasha found the idea that the Æsir thought stealth, guns and magic to be cheating, dishonorable and requiring no skill, to be appalling.

Marriage was often arranged but also got a blessing from the Norns first. The whole concept of beings that could see the future and were tied to fate, led to very lively conversations.

They talked about ergi and homosexuality. Where it was not illegal, people where shunned for it, or if one had enough status people would look the other way and pretend it didn’t exist. That view was not held in all realms, in fact many things varied a great deal from realm to realm.

One night Clint told Loki that Coulson actually appreciated knowing Fury had done something funny to him and one day he was going to talk to Loki about it. Loki was surprised. Clint had barely talked to him since he had shown up. In fact when he had Jarvis look for him, Fury’s picture now held the honored spot at the end of his target hall. He figured out Coulson and Clint were very close, as close as the archer was with Natasha. It made sense now why the Hawk had been so angry.
Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Learning Some Trust

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Tony learn more about magic. Tony has a one track mind and Bruce talks about the Hulk.

Chapter Notes

There is a small section where Tony talks about the punishment he was given by Howard. It is far from the worst child abuse, but I don't want to trigger anyone.

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki was finally sleeping in his bed most nights, Trouble curled at his feet. He still sat in his corner when he was alone sometimes, and only occasionally spent time in the back of the closet. Tony’s visits to wake him when his nightmares got too intense were less frequent too. No longer nightly as they had been at the beginning.

He missed the touch some, but he wasn’t about to say anything. Getting used to having someone that was not his mother, who seemed to care about him was rare. With the ‘still to be determined’ exception of Thor, he always ended up being betrayed or abandoned by the few who seemed to care, after they used him. The inventor’s friendship seemed to be real, but Loki certainly wasn’t going to mess it up by acting like the clingy friend or even trust it would last.

At any rate, even then, on movie nights Tony always curled up, leaned on and spread out all over Loki. Occasionally sitting in his lap with his arms around him, undoubtedly because it seemed to make someone (cough, cough, Steve) uncomfortable. Even when Pepper came over she would end up next to Natasha giggling as Tony snuggled his ‘cats’ Lokitty and Trouble. Loki told himself he allowed it because Stark enjoyed the physical touch too and Pepper really didn’t seem to mind, even found it amusing at times.

Trouble also seemed to have a sixth sense about it. On nights Pepper looked anxious and seemed like she might be thinking about taking Tony away from Loki’s side or complaining about it, the cat would rub up against Pepper insistently. So much so that it was impossible to ignore her, leading Pepper into cooing and cuddling Trouble, forgetting about whatever she was on edge about. And since Natasha was usually next to Pepper the cat would for some reason even endure Natasha’s overenthusiastic attention for the duration.

During this time, Bruce continued to watch Loki and asked many questions about magic, and the
balancing of magic. It was easy for an item like the tower. For something not living and stationary it meant a permanent attachment to Yggdrasil a simple cost. That in turn gave it a non-mobile presence there. Only humans who were magic users could learn to see Yggdrasil, the great tree. Traveling through Yggdrasil was difficult at best for anyone. Only the most skilled sorcerer could see to navigate from one place to another. So the risk of attaching the tower was minimal.

There were many things that had a presence in Yggdrasil as it was one of the most common ways to stabilize non-living enchantments. Living things that had magic had a presence there too. All Æsir had a presence in Yggdrasil as the race as a whole had a bit of magic. Finding anything in specific was much too difficult, even for the very skilled. Seeing things embedded there was problematic, vexing and exhausting. Noticing an anchor such as the building was impossible unless an extremely powerful sorcerer knew exactly where to look. A person was literally looking for a particular grain of sand in the desert or a droplet of water in the ocean.

Tony and Bruce continued to talk about the amounts of magic they had. On a scale of one to ten, a one couldn’t do much of anything. But the scale was geometric.

“So Cupid, how much magic would it take to say bend a spoon? People have been claiming to do that forever.” Tony asked Loki. The three of them including Bruce were in Bruce’s lab that day.

“Perhaps a two if it was in the right thing. It is much easier to use a trick spoon than to train yourself in magic if that is all you have.” Loki answered.

“Thought so! What about lighting a fire or opening a lock?” He asked.

“About the same. Those are more likely to show up because of a high stress situation.”

“High stress can make magic appear?” Bruce looked at Loki.

“Appear isn’t quite right. It would be more like activate it. You have to have it first.” Loki said stirring something over heat for Bruce.

“So that dildo Doom stress activated it into power supplies? How could that work?” Tony who was just sitting on a stool watching asked.

“He is undoubtedly above a two on your scale. He more than likely activated it to start something, say to get away from a great danger. Then he played with it and found it could be used as a fuel then stored as energy of sorts. Remember he wears that mask? At this point I feel confident that he caused damage to his face with his magic.” Loki said.

“I’m a little curious. How much would Brucey Bear have on our scale?” Tony asked.

“You are always a lot curious Stark.” Loki said taking the mixture off the heat and setting it aside to cool.

“I’d kind of like to know too. If you don’t mind that is.” Bruce set down what he was working with.

“Very well, let me put my hands on your head I’m going to run some magic through you. You will feel a tingling sensation.” Loki said and walked over to Bruce who calmly sat so Loki could better access his head.

“I’m jealous. You don’t put your hands on my head.” Tony said smirking.
“I hope you are referring to the one your face is attached too. Because if not, I don’t intend to put my hands on where your brain is currently residing. Now shush!” Loki growled a bit standing behind Bruce.

Bruce’s face turned pink and he crossed his arms in his lap. Loki didn’t notice but Tony did, barely able to hold his tongue.

“I would guess about a three point seven to four point zero.” Loki said taking his hands off of Bruce then looking at Bruce’s blush and Tony’s eyes. “Did I miss something?”

“I think I really, really, really want to know what my number is too.” Tony said smiling.

“I am not sure you need a more of a swelled head.” Loki said.

“I believe that is what you gave Bruce.” Tony grinned at Bruce.

“Tony!” Bruce sounded exasperated as he put his head into his hands.

“Ah, I see. I’m not sure you need to know Stark.” Loki smirked.

“Not fair! You can’t tell him his number and not me! I’m gonna be your apprentice. Please! I’ll buy you anything you want! Do anything you want.” Tony had to know his number. Plus he wasn’t about to have Loki give Banner a hard on and not him. Well he had already gotten a few from sitting on his lap but he didn’t count those. Loki was hot and he noticed sometimes, especially during movies.

“Anything? Fine you call me Loki from now on.” Loki grinned evilly.

Tony’s face dropped. His eyes got wide glassy even and he answered very slowly voice shaking. “It won’t work. I’d forget. Then…. ” He was breathing hard.

“Breathe Tony.” Bruce said as Loki reached out and took Tony’s hands.

“We’ll talk about what you owe me later. If you relax now I’ll find your number. Just breathe.” Loki assured Tony.

Tony took a few breaths and good old dependable Bruce smiled and said, “Think about that tingling feeling.”

Loki glared at Bruce and responded with, “You are not really helping you know.”

Tony of course took a deep breath and said. “Actually that helps a lot Hot Stuff. Brucey I’m so proud of you.”

“Bruce turned and said. “I think I feel cheap and dirty. I’m going back to my rooms. I’m sure you’ll tell me later what your number is.” Then he walked to the door.

“Aw, stay for the fun. I got to watch you!” Tony yelled after him.

“Goodbye Tony.” Bruce said without looking back as he closed the door behind him.

“You’re still really going to find out my number right?” Tony said hopefully.

“Yes, I suppose. Shall we move to your penthouse rather than stay here in Bruce’s lab?” Loki suggested.
“Oh, yeah.” Tony grabbed Loki’s hand and led him to the penthouse.

Once there Tony wiggled his eyebrows. “Should we get more comfortable?”

Loki rolled his eyes. “I really don’t think Pepper would appreciate it. Now let’s get this over with.”

“Spoil sport.” Tony said sitting down on a bar stool with his back to the bar.

“Do you want to turn around?”

“Nope I want eye candy so I can enjoy this.” Tony was still smiling.

“Fine but then you are required to tell me why you started panicking when I asked you to call me by my name.” Loki sounded serious and perhaps a bit concerned.

“Damn I thought I’d slip that one through. I guess I can tell you. When I was very young I was too busy to learn people’s names so I started giving everyone nicknames. Howard despised the habit. He made me promise to stop it several times. Every time I messed up, he beat me and made me sit in the corner of his lab my face to the walls in just my underwear. I was only allowed to do school work. My mom came home one time and found out. They had a huge fight. After that I called him Howard because he hated it and I hated him. Since then whenever someone I care enough not to blow off asks me to stop using nicknames I start panicking. I rarely call friends simply by their real names, only when I need to for emphasis or for really serious shit. Real names are usually an honor reserved for people I don’t know or hate.” Tony explained looking at the floor.

“Thank you for your honesty Tony, I am glad you told me.” Loki said and he moved up to put his hands on Tony’s head and stand between his legs.

“Well, wow me with your magical prowess.” Tony looked up at Loki and smiled.

Loki groaned and let his magic flow through Tony.

Tony felt the magic. It was like a tidal wave of feeling flooding across his body. He was hard before Loki was barely started. The magic swirled and tingled across his skin intensifying in areas that were most sensitive. Oh it felt heavenly all his erogenous zones being stoked at once. He resisted the urge to stroke himself in front of Loki. That would be too much wouldn’t it? He was definitely having some ‘me’ time after this and if Loki’s tingles were the star, well that really didn’t count as cheating he told himself. All too soon Loki was finished.

“It was harder than I thought with you. Your arc reactor was interfering with my search.”

“It is harder than I expected too. You want to do that again? Maybe take longer? A better answer might not leave me so frustrated.” Tony joked.

“You are insatiable and I plan on leaving you frustrated for now. If you are not good I will not tell you what I found.” Loki threatened teasingly.

“I’m very good.” Tony teased back. “Fine what’s your best guess for my number?”

“As I said that thing in your chest didn’t help. I can tell you it is at least a five point eight. It could be higher or not. I am unable to tell at this time.”

“Five point eight. Hmm. What are you? On our scale of course. Just asking so I have something to compare to.” Tony said thoughtfully.
“I am the most powerful sorcerer in the nine realms and as such I feel no need to put myself on your scale.” Loki said a little irritated at the question.

“Can you tell me if I’m above average or not?” Tony hedged.

“Yes, you are quite a bit. That is sufficient enough of an answer for you.” Loki had walked away from Tony and put his cuffs back on.

“And you haven’t even seen me naked. Hey J, did you hear that Loki thinks I’m way above average. Lokitty, I knew you liked me best!” Tony grinned.

“I feel the need to work on a head shrinking spell. Or a way to remove your ego. Why don’t you go take care of your overactive imagination whilst I go work.” Loki said pointing to Tony’s very obvious hard-on.

“Your fault you know, completely.” Tony called out to Loki as he was leaving.

“Enjoy yourself Stark. Don’t think of me.” Loki was shaking his head as he headed down to his suite hearing a ‘I will’ in the distance. Once there he did work on how to remove the tingling side effect of this particular magical search.

Later they encouraged Steve to started asking if Loki could try to give him more details on his magic. Loki agreed to examine Steve again to see if he could figure out something more. And he was successful. Steve was originally about a two point nine. Steve found out he could currently expect a much longer life. Even if he hadn’t been frozen, he would have still not aged significantly.

Bruce confided in Steve about what Loki’s offer. Now both Steve and Tony knew about the Hulk merging idea. They happily offered whatever support he might require and were there when he next talked to Loki.

“You remember what I told you about being able to be aware when the Hulk was out? Also that he would be aware some when he is not out?” Loki reminded them

“Yes, I do.” Bruce said, while Steve and Tony just nodded.

“In order to make this happen, his presence will be aware enough for him to talk to you. He will also have to be out in green form for several hours every week.”

“Hours! But we can’t control him.” Bruce said and looked very upset. This was not what he was hoping for. “Why couldn’t it be something like giving up meat or my non-existent sex life or having my eyes and hair green?”

“Non-existent sex life. Brucie baby, why didn’t you tell me I can arrange to fix that dry spell.” Tony looked shocked for his friend.

Bruce closed his eyes and for a moment. “That is not the point. I don’t need you to do that for me.”

“But you need help! Or are you saying that you want to arrange your own sexual experiences. I’m sure I can find a madam who deals in both women and men for you to talk to. Or I know a couple of hook-up fetish groups online that you could use. If that isn’t to your liking there is a very discrete toy shop that has also has explicit movies.” Tony said, then noticing Bruce trying not to get angry he
“Are you saying you’re asexual? You should have told me I’ve probably said some pretty insensitive remarks that I need to apologize for. I’m really sorry, I just assume that everyone wants sex like me.”

“Tony I am not asexual and if I was, you still would have said those rude and insensitive remarks.” Bruce shook his head and looked for his teacup. He grabbed it and took a long relaxing swallow.

“Yeah, you’re right, I would’ve still said stuff, then said sorry. Anyway do I need to find you a girlfriend or a one night stand? Maybe boyfriend?”

“No Tony, I’m more worried about the Hulk coming out. That could hurt someone.” Bruce tried to explain.

Tony suddenly paled and cringed then exploded with questions. “Oh shit. You mean Hulk would come out because you got excited while you were cumming?... Can I assume it gets bigger when you do? I mean when the Hulk is out. Not that I care, just for scientific research and all… Does the Hulk ever come out when you jerk off?...Maybe we could measure…”

Steve who was already red shouted at the same time as Bruce, who had pink visible in his cheeks yelled. “Tony!”

They turned to Loki and looked for help with Tony.

Loki’s whose amused look went back to an emotionless face. “I assure you Dr. Banner, in a controlled environment the Hulk will not be as angry. Remember he is still like a child. As for payment, as discussed, you will owe me two mutually approved favors.”

Bruce’s face still looked disturbed but had added thoughtful to it. Tony’s mind was whirling again.

“So we give him a room with toys and crayons?” Steve asked not really believing.

“Actually, that might work. Someone would have to be with him.” Loki said then closed his eyes. “I would even be willing to work through my fear and take some shifts with him.” You could see a very tiny shudder go through him.

“I could turn that safe room of yours into a playroom, non-sexual of course, unless you want.” Tony said already taking out making notes on a tablet.

“Tony! Stop it now!” Steve was looking very upset now.

“Fine, fine. A large tricycle, firetruck and stuffed bears. Maybe I can add floor puzzles.” Tony added them to his tablet.

Bruce took a long sip from his tea. “Remind me again why the cost is so low? Owing you two favors in the future that I can veto for nearly any reason doesn’t seem like much.”

“Trust me, they could be quite a bit depending on the favors. And because Hulk is rooted in Yggdrasil I am only opening a channel that would eventually form on its own given a century or so.”

Loki assured them.

“Why are you doing this? Helping us?” Steve asked.

Loki looked into the distance. What should he admit? It was a risk. Was it too soon to say anything? Would they believe him? See it as a weakness? He was a prince after all. If they would trust him more it would be worth it. Admitting anything like this would give them an advantage to exploit though. He had been betrayed so many times.
Suddenly, there was a clatter and they turned to see a trashcan had just been knocked over. There Trouble had found some turkey from a partially eaten sandwich, clearly meant to be shared. She held her head high holding her prize and walked over to the group.

Loki bent down to pet her and continued to think. Tony thus far had been true to his word with Loki. Sure, he deflected questions and lied perfectly to the press convincing any but a skilled observer like Loki. To his friends though the genius was also about a subtle as a tornado. No, Loki was sure about Tony. Bruce was naturally quiet and didn’t trust himself very well, so he would not betray Loki. Steve was genuinely a nice guy and didn’t seem the type to use someone.

They were waiting for an answer. He knew trust was two way and he desperately wanted out of the cuffs permanently. They were all so different than Æsir, maybe he would trust them not to use him.

At this point Trouble dropped the turkey at his feet as if presenting a royal gift. Loki smiled.

“Six months ago you gave me refuge. We drew up an agreement. Since then all of you have not only kept to the agreement but you have not treated me like a prisoner, and asked little of me, very divergent from what I expected. Most of you have tried to make me feel…” He hesitated for a moment. “Welcome, allowed to belong. Because of this, I have found myself wanting to become…,” he looked down, then at their faces for a reaction as he said. “Friends.”

Tony looked shocked, “That’s because we are your friends you moron!”

“Loki, of course we are your friends.” Bruce said picking up the turkey and tearing it into bite sized pieces for Trouble.

Steve looked sad and asked, “Loki, you say that like friends are not very common. What did you expect us to do?”

He had said too much. The soldier had seen through it. That he was vulnerable with no friends. That they could be using him for more and he would give it, just to enable his continued existence here. Odin would most assuredly break his will and make him a slave. Yes, the scientists had bonded with him, he was sure but Steve was another story. Sure, he was nice to him, but he didn’t trust him. Not really. And now he had given him a weapon to use. He didn’t know how to answer. What to say that didn’t give him more power over him.

Loki looked at Steve but he really didn’t see any malice there. “Friendship requires trust and honesty. People who are different in Asgard are not looked upon with trust.”

“And because of your magic you were different.” Tony grimaced.

“Not just magic, I have black hair. I am a scholar. I am not built like a warrior nor do I fight like one. I am a bit weaker, but much quicker, I use knives and tricks in battle. I didn’t get along well with Odin and many considered me a mama’s boy.” He could sadly admit that, because he knew on Midgard these thing did not matter and Steve was a mama’s boy.

He did not admit that none of the people in Asgard would trust him. Nor did he point out that his pranks and tricks made the entire upper classes hate him. He of course couldn’t count the common folk who laughed at his tricks and seemed to even enjoy being on the receiving end. He treated these people as equals, once again annoying the upper classes because he was setting a bad example. Sadly, he could never be friends with commoners as it was not allowed, not for a prince.

“I’m sorry Loki, I tend to assume that your world is like ours. Sometime I’d like to sit down with you and talk more about the differences if you don’t mind.” Steve answered.
Damn, he saw pity in Steve’s eyes. It hurt. He did not want pity, not from these people, but what could he do. He didn’t want to anger the man or remind him to ask what Loki expected. He had to hide his anger. “Coulson asks many questions already. Not now, perhaps you can ask when he is here.” No, he did not want to risk giving the man any more fuel to use against him. He already knew that Tony and Bruce were important to him and he trusted them to some degree. He had even inadvertently admitted to Rogers that he was beginning to trust him too. He hoped it would not be used against him.

“Fair enough. But when you are ready, I want you to know more about you personally. And even though I don’t fully trust you yet, I consider you a friend.” Steve answered.

‘What a strange thing to say. How can you be a friend to someone you don’t trust?’ Loki found himself confused by the mortal, wary of him. What kind of motives did he have to say such a thing?

Trouble having finished the turkey rubbed around Steve’s legs.

Bruce interrupted Loki’s thoughts. “Anyway, I have a few more questions for you. Like do you really think the other guy could exist without being angry? And I really need to know more about how it would affect me, his being in my head all the time?”

“You told me he has been out for days at a time in the wilderness. I am quite sure you were not rampaging the whole time. Is this not correct?”

“Yeah, I guess it is, I haven’t really thought about that in a while.” Bruce admitted.

They continued the conversation for a bit. Bruce said he needed to think more.

Loki picked up Trouble and was leaving the room when Steve said. “As long as you keep up your end of the bargain Loki, I’ve got your back. You can count on that.”

Loki did not respond but relaxed slightly, cooing into Trouble’s face.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
Thanksgiving Day Massacre

Chapter Summary

Loki has a really bad dream and Tony shows up to help him. New York is attacked by Doom. Guess who gets left alone in the lab?

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony’s relationship with Pepper was on the outs more often than not and when things got bad he would seek Loki out for a hug. They didn’t even have to exchange words now. Tony had become so comfortable, he didn’t even feel he had to be drinking first. He would just find Loki and Loki would see it in his eyes, holding the inventor until he felt better.

Loki had never had anyone act like they wanted to be around him because he made them feel better. It was oddly comforting to know Stark sought him out when there were so many other options. It was also confusing as he had no experience with individuals, and didn’t know if he was doing it right or conversely if he was crossing boundaries that would mess things up. Tony didn’t act concerned about everyone knowing, even telling people he had gone to Loki for his ‘snuggle treatment’. In the end Loki finally convinced himself to trust that Stark would tell him if he crossed a line.

One evening, it was late, 3:00 am, just after the tower enchantment was finished. It was early November. Tony had been at a Benefit with Pepper, and it had been bad. The press was angry at the Avengers for not getting rid of Dr. Doom. As always the disaster of Long Island was brought up, along with the pending lawsuits. Pepper was pressuring Tony to retire, give up drinking and go to AA. He’d been drinking and was thinking about continuing into oblivion when he got home. Then he remembered Loki and went looking for him. He entered Loki’s suite and went to his bedroom.

Loki was thrashing around in his bed, whimpering desperately ‘no stop, please no more, AHHHH.’ The pain on his face was something that read torture. Tony stopped for a moment. This was way beyond a normal nightmare. Loki was strong. Tony realized he could get hurt but he had to do something. He grabbed Loki and held on despite his fears of getting hurt. Trouble was nervously hiding under Loki’s bed.

“It’s not real, it’s a dream. You’re not alone, I’m here.” Tony chanted as Loki tossed them both around. Tony would definitely feel this in the morning.
Loki could hear someone disturbing his torture session. Was it the Other? Or Thanos or one of the other bastards. He didn’t feel more pain. Had Thor finally found him? Come to rescue him? He looked around, things were fuzzy, a nightmare perhaps. But he was not alone. Had the Chitauri come after him? Found him? He flailed a bit more. What was being said? He finally heard Tony, and wakefulness started taking over. He looked at the small concerned man now starting to smile, holding him, with a bruise forming on his cheek where Loki had hit him trying to get him off. “Tony what are you doing here?” Loki uttered with worry.

Tony’s smiled faded just a bit. “I came here for a hug.”

“Do you realize I could have truly injured you? Grabbing me was foolish.” Loki scolded, but made no move to remove Tony. In fact he actually leaned in to Tony’s arms allowing his own anxiety from the nightmare to show.

“Not the first time I’ve woke you up. I have nightmares and I’ve also been tortured too, remember sweetheart?” Tony volunteered and felt Loki’s arms go around him to hold him back. He was holding on pretty tight too.

They held each other for a while. Tony felt good. He had been able to help Loki. For some reason this time it felt so much more intense since he had been so miserable. It was not the first time he had helped but it was the first time Tony also needed it at the same time. He could feel the tension leave the god as they lay there. Tony found himself reflecting about his loneliness. He was no longer feeling alone in the universe which had been the case just before coming here.

Finally Loki said. “Thank you, but please be careful in the future, I am much stronger than you. Now let me see the damage I have done to you.” Loki leaned back to look and moved a hand to Tony’s face then checked for other damage.

“Don’t worry about it Samson. If it gets too bad I’ll just cut off your locks. Besides I’m not hurt, just glad I was able to help.” Tony smiled warmly. He felt like he had genuinely supported someone instead of supporting his ego. The opposite of what Pepper often accused him of.

“What does cutting my hair have to do with anything?” Loki sounded confused.

“Samson was super strong. Old story about a guy who’s strength’s in his hair. A wily seductive woman cuts it off and he becomes a weakling. Feeling like he’s lost his manhood or something.” Tony said

“Don’t be silly strength isn’t kept in one’s hair, although there are a few Æsir you might think would lose their manhood if they lost their braids.” Loki said then smirked. “Are you implying you want to be a woman to enthrall me? I might be able to make that happen.”

“I’d be a woman for you anytime princess. You should see me with scissors.” Tony said and made a crude snipping motion way too close to Loki’s vitals.

Loki swatted Tony’s shoulder with his hand and Tony winced because of a new bruise from.

Distress filled Loki’s face again as he squeezed Tony to him. “I don’t understand why you help me. I have been nothing but trouble to you. I have hardly given you a return on our agreement. Yet you continue to give. I fail to see why, especially when I hurt you like this.”

Tony felt the god’s grateful arms around him. “Trouble? You’re not a cat, but you did make me buy her. She’s in charge of causing me trouble.” Pointing to said cat, then He smiled again. “I just don’t understand ASS-Gard. They messed you up good. When I’m drunk or down who else but you can I
go to? You are always willing to give me a hug. Shit, you even listen to my crap. God, I find myself trusting you more than most of my so-called friends. That by itself is probably worth way more to me than anything you’ll do for me.” He laughed. “Fuck, you even make me feel better when I help you. You know, I may not be willing to ever let you go even when the contract is up.” Tony joked but knew there was truth to what he said.

Loki stilled for a moment lost in unbelief. Then. “You are such a fool Anthony Stark. Willing to trust me so much? Before long I will have your mind, stripped and naked, a willing slave to do my bidding.”

Tony smirked and his eyes sparkled. “Well you are easy on the eyes. I might be willing to be stripped and naked in front of you. I’ve done the sex slave kink before.”

Loki rolled his eyes. “Really Stark? I threaten you and that is your response? Your friends would be appalled.”

“Nothing new. They are appalled by me most of the time. Besides you enjoy my appalling side.” He had an all-knowing grin on face now.

Loki huffed refusing to admit Tony was right. “Anyway, Stark let me look at your face and shoulder. I will not allow them to blame me for damaging you.”

Loki looked Tony over and Tony unlocked the cuffs and let Loki heal him. After the cuffs were back in place and Tony had left, Loki realized that this was the first time he made no oath involved with their removal. ‘Stupid man, really did trust him.’

Doom showed up again with a few bots, they were stronger, but the tower enchantment had finally snapped into place. Things changed. The robots couldn’t even scratch the building when they attacked it. The Avengers marveled at that. The press noticed, so did SHIELD.

Fury was angry because he wasn’t told about it first, and because Loki had been out of the cuffs. Loki had been watching him though. The angry man was not surprised about it. Someone had told him what was going on, so this was an act. Fury had an agenda. Loki just didn’t know if it was more than spying. Fury also wanted details on how it was done but Loki just told him it was above his pay-grade. Fury only made some rude comment on Stark rubbing off and then left.

Thanksgiving Day people got up early. Pepper was in the kitchen with Loki, Steve and Bruce. The rest were watching the Parade on TV. Loki had been invited to be in the Parade but politely refused saying he was not ready to be in such crowds, perhaps another year.

Suddenly the cameras were no longer showing just the parade but rather Doombots attacking everyone, shooting spectators and parade marchers in mass. A shout had everyone moving from the kitchen to the TV and off to once again deal with Doom. The disappearing Avengers left only Loki and Pepper to watch as people were falling right and left from the attack. They paused all food preparations and went to watch the coverage. Jarvis added a couple of holo-screens so they could have a better view. It was clear Pepper was nervous, tears were running down her face before Tony left. Loki put his arm around her and held onto her shoulder as they watched. Trouble sat on the back of an easy chair, tail flipping back and forth quickly.

There were only four Avengers as Bruce was not letting the Hulk out in such a crowded area.
were hundreds of thousands of spectators and hundreds of people in the parade itself. There were a lot of Doombots spread out along the parade route, more than they had ever faced before.

It was complete chaos on the streets. The police on hand were trying their best to get civilians to safety, but most places were closed. Starbucks and the few open places had breathing room only. The avengers couldn’t spend time trying to get civilians to safety with so many bots attacking. Steve was glad there were extra cops on hand to take that duty.

“Damn, the necks are better protected now, they have a ridge that block most my shots. Doom must have something against us eating turkey.” Clint said.

These bots were tough. Most of Clint’s arrows had no effect on them at all unless the angle was just right. He usually had to resort to using tricks, causing things to fall on them, utilizing the explosive arrows, the best of which were too dangerous to work in crowds like this.

“Probably his cousins. That turkey doesn’t seem to have enough brains to learn he shouldn’t be attacking us.” Tony responded to Clint. He was having better luck as head on blasts could get around the collar.

Steve’s shield could still take them out with properly placed hits. Doom had yet to find a way to stop his attacks. That had the unfortunate result in Steve being overwhelmed having to dodge attacks. Fortunately, Loki had given him some pointers on avoiding the magic and what parts of his body could take some of the blasts better than others.

“Clint, get to a higher, better vantage point. Tony, distract them enough to give him time.” Steve ordered then muttered, under his breath. “If these things will just co-operate.”

Natasha tripped them and could eventually take them out but it took time. There were so many she had to watch to keep from being cornered.

“Boys, Doom seems to have gone weak on the brains this time. They can bet fooled into destroying each other.” Natasha reported after discovering it and being able to use it again immediately.

“Definitely turkeys, too bad they don’t roast well.” Clint added having reached the top of a building for a better angle.

Tony was effective but found himself surrounded. His armor maneuvered around to avoid most of the damage but it gave him very little time to take the Doombots out. There were just so many of them. As soon as Natasha pointed out their current ‘brain’ weakness, he started using that technique too.

“Take that you assholes.” Tony said, then. “Of course brains naturally wins over brawn. Damn, Jarvis how many are there.” He quickly created a gap and flew out after luring several into attacking their mates.

“It is hard to count Sir, but from several security cameras along the streets there are likely close to one hundred. Not all of them are fighting you yet. Many are still chasing civilians.”

“Fuck! How the FUCK did the fucking bastard get so fucking many of the fucking power supplies? How did that fuckhole make them?” Tony swore.

“Tony, language.” Steve startled, after having missing one of his marks due to the comment.

“Really Steve? That’s important? Fuck you.” Tony was angry, flying with eight bots on his tail knowing more were still attacking innocents who had come to watch the parade.
“New York’s finest aren’t up to dealing with these guys Steve. We need help.” Bruce said over the com.

“Sir, it appears that the group you have been watching led by Reed Richards is fighting down the line. If my monitoring capabilities are correct, which they always are, SHIELD has also dispatched aid.” Jarvis informed them.

“Guys, the civilians are about gone in this area. I’m going to let the Hulk out now if you think it’s okay?” Bruce said moving out from his cover.

“Go ahead Bruce. See you when it’s over” Steve told him.

Bruce let the Hulk out. He worked with Natasha at first smashing the ones she downed that were still alive and then going after the ones on Steve. Finally the tide was turning.

A Doombot appeared from above Clint and noticed his hiding place on a building, coming straight at him and alerting a comrade. Clint was forced to use one of his super explosive arrows at close range. He was blown back and hit a building air conditioner behind him. Wincing he looked up and saw another bot coming from the side.

“Guys, need some help here.” Clint yelled.

He twisted out of the way of a blast, and jumped off the building, as he shot an arrow with a rope attached to swing by, planning to get to another roof. But the Bot changed course and smashed into his shoulder forcing Clint into another direction. The arrow had safely lodged into the correct building. Clint was not going to make it to the other roof, he had barely managed to keep from being knocked senseless. Instead he swung toward the building with the arrow, having nothing to land on he used his feet to protect himself from smashing into it. He hung there with the rope hooked to his belt, dazed from pain and hoping he was enough out of the way that the bots wouldn’t find him.

“Damn… I think they broke my shoulder. Can you idiots keep them away from me? I’m a useless sitting duck here.” Clint sounded very angry. One could tell he was in pain with a possible concussion.

“Already on it, Hawk.” Tony said. He had seen the bot hit Clint and had destroyed it before it noticed Tony was there. “These guys are definitely lacking in the smarts today.”

Tony’s suit was very beat up and starting to run low on power. There were still several chasing him. He missed seeing another bot shooting at him. This one knocked him into yet another bot. Fortunately at this range he was able to use the repulsors from his feet to destroy it. He was going to be very sore.

The Hulk continued to smash and took out a few store fronts as he swung bots around. Natasha lured them into his reach in an attempt to both destroy the bots and keep him from causing more damage as he looked for them.

But the tide had turned. Soon everyone was drawing bots into firing on other bots.

Shortly after that they won. Tony picked up Clint and took him back to the tower. SHIELD had disappeared as quietly as they had showed up. Natasha was able to calm the Hulk down and she and Steve took Bruce back along with a couple of bots for Tony to look at, much to Fury’s displeasure.

Loki and Pepper had watched it happen. Jarvis was much better than the TV at keeping the
Avengers in view switching from one street or surveillance camera to another, in addition to tuning into their communications. Trouble had spent a good deal of time yowling and hissing at the screens. Pepper was crying into Loki’s shoulder before it was over.

They had moved to the landing deck level and watched on screens there near the end. Trouble appeared to have given up snarling because the doombots were not listening to her. She had gotten Loki to pick her up and had her paws across Loki’s shoulder.

When Tony returned with Clint, Loki had one arm around Pepper trying to hold her against one shoulder, the other holding Trouble across his other shoulder.

Tony was exhausted and now angry. Loki was holding Pepper. He felt a moment of jealously, ‘shoulda known she liked him.’ He had to get them separated. Then he saw her tears and the worry on both their faces and realized he was an idiot. He really hoped the stupidity from the doombots wasn’t contagious as he stepped on his own brainless green-eyed monster.

Jolted back to reality by a meow, he remembered Clint was badly injured. Loki had said he could heal. “Loki, you can fix Clint. Come with me, he thinks his shoulder’s broke.” Tony took Clint to the elevator.

Loki released Pepper and put Trouble down. They all followed Tony down to the infirmary.

“You know, I won’t be able to do much with the cuffs on.” Loki reminded Tony.

“At least watch him and look at his shoulder until Bruce gets here or I get the key?” Clint was not in bad enough shape to risk revealing the second key.

Tony was trying to take Pepper’s hand. She looked away, he saw her red eyes with more tears threatening. Oh, this was definitely her overly worried again. He looked down at his suit. Shit it was a mess, he would be in for a lecture again. At least the cat still liked him as Trouble was trying to get him to give her attention. “Come with me to the lab, Pep.” He said after Loki nodded agreeing to watch Clint. He felt like a schmuck being jealous of Pepper and Loki. They went to the lab followed by Trouble.

Pepper was so upset. “Tony, why do you have to do this? I don’t know how much longer I can take it.” Pepper had picked up the cat in the elevator, and now she set Trouble on the lab desk.

“You really shouldn’t watch it. Just trust me to come back afterwards. You know I always do.” Tony assured her. Trouble went to Tony’s hand attempting to get a head scratch but he was focused on Pepper and failed to pet her.

“Until the one time you don’t. It only takes ONE TIME Tony.” The tears were rolling again, she was looking at the ceiling.

Tony felt bad. They had argued, yelled, she had shed tears, and begged but he couldn’t give up Ironman, he couldn’t be the Tony she seemed to need. He held her from behind. “Let’s agree to try to come up with a new strategy after the holidays, ok?” He really hoped she would compromise this time. Recently she seemed to be less and less inclined to even listen to him though. Digging in her very sharp heels with no room to wiggle. Perhaps the massive number of Doombots would convince her that Ironman was needed.

Trouble tried but failed to get Pepper’s attention, rolling around on the desk looking cute.

They said a few more things completely ignoring Trouble who was now making bubbling purr, purr, purp sounds
Pepper did notice Bruce and Natasha enter the lab as she said “These reasons are a stalling tactic Tony. You’re still trying to avoid our issues.”

Bruce reminded them gently, “Clint is hurt and needs healing. Can you talk about this later?”

Pepper finally agreed, “Fine, we’ll talk about it later, but we do have to talk about it Tony.”

They retrieved Loki’s key and went to med bay leaving Trouble alone in the lab.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter, healing Clint and Loki starts using magic to heal them.

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Howard was a Bastard

Chapter Summary

The Avengers learn that Loki is skilled at healing and Tony tells Loki some of his secrets.

Chapter Notes

Descriptive Violence. This chapter may trigger some of you. The Howard Stark of this story became an evil child abuser and I describe a terrible event.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki looked at Clint’s shoulder. It was shattered. Not only that, he noticed the beginnings of arthritis in several joints the Archer used. He started working, carefully explaining what he was doing as he did it. He didn’t want them to be suspicious. He had everyone’s attention. Even Pepper was fascinated watching Loki work and listening to the commentary, explaining exactly what he fixed at each step.

Jarvis was using sensors to record the process of the bones knitting themselves back together, even using a screen if anyone chose to look. Coulson showed up too. Clint readily agreed to let Loki work on the joints and old breaks where the arthritis was. Soon, Loki was going over those areas.

The procedure hurt. Loki explained that speeding up healing didn’t remove the pain associated with the damage. In fact it intensified it momentarily because it happened very quickly, jarring the nerves.

Bruce ended up giving Clint a liquid painkiller that worked almost immediately.

In no time Clint was fine. Once something was healed, the pain there was also gone, like it had never been there. He flexed his arms and hands. They moved smoother than they had in years and he told everyone so.

For the first time, Natasha asked about magic. She too had some stiff joints on rainy mornings. She didn’t really trust Loki but wanted to see for herself how it worked. Loki agreed and reversed damage that remained from a single old break. Maybe she needed to re-evaluate her opinion of Loki. She would think on it.

Loki moved on to Tony. He was beat up. But in much better shape than Clint.

Bruce commented. "Loki, you never told us you could heal like this?"
Loki laughed. "I have studied all kinds of magic. Do you really think I would ignore healing magic? It was one of the few types of magic I got praise for."

Loki turned to look Tony in the eyes after looking him over visually. "You are going to agree to let me heal everything right?"

"Yes, wait, what about the shrapnel?" Tony’s eyes widened, he hadn’t told Loki everything about his chest yet, only that the arc reactor kept him alive. Loki had politely avoided asking until he was ready.

Loki looked at Tony pointedly. "I will need answers and I expect you to answer my questions, truthfully. We are going to go slow. Sometimes knowing how you got something and how long you’ve had it means the difference between full recovery and permanent damage."

“We need to talk. No, wait, I’m not sure I want everyone here for this. Can you all go except for Loki.” Tony sputtered then ordered.

“I’m not sure we should leave you here alone with him right now. We’re still learning about his magic and how it affects humans. Sorry Loki.” Steve voiced his concern. Several of the others nodded, while Loki waited.

“Nope, I trust him. Jarvis will give you updates every fifteen, no every thirty minutes. Now go. You too Pepper. Please.”

“Oh Tony, Can’t I just stay and watch? I am your girlfriend.”

“It would be better if you had someone else with you, just in case.” Steve added.

“No, Steve, it won’t” Tony told him. Followed by, “Please Pepper. You’ll be tense and upset, you already are. You don’t wanta be here. I’ve gotta tell him about Afghanistan. It’s gonna be hard. So go, for me?” Then again. “Please Pep, everyone, I can’t talk about this with an audience.”

“That’s about the only thing.” Clint huffed and walked out the door.

They rest finally agreed, even Pepper. Bruce left several pain killers. Depending on what Loki was going to remove it might hurt a lot.

Loki held his hands on Tony’s head again and massaged a bit. “Now can you tell me?” He started healing the new bruises.

Loki had asked once or twice about the arc reactor, but Tony had been very cagy about it. Only that it helped keep him alive and not much more information than the first talk about his torture way back when they first met Loki. Now he decided to go for broke. Realizing if he wanted to be an apprentice, learn magic, and learn advanced knowledge about the universe, he was going to have to trust Loki. He actually felt relief rather than fear and wondered if it was Loki’s healing doing it.

He’d already trusted him, but this was what kept him alive. No one really knew exactly what it did. Pepper and Rhodey knew the most but not all. And after Obie, he had never dared tell anything but a brief overview. Tony finally gave Loki all the details about Afghanistan.

When he finished his story Loki assured him. “I’ll talk you through things as I go. I’ll explain everything I heal in as much detail as I can give you. Do you think you can you trust me?”

“I trust you but it’s so sudden. Maybe you can look me over first, I’m not sure I want you messing with the arc reactor yet. Can we start on other stuff, let me get used to the idea? Please?” Tony warily
agreed and mentally cringing about how many of his secrets were about to be revealed.

Loki nodded and having healed that days injuries first as planned. Then he moved on and found Tony’s liver.

“Your liver is very badly diseased. Did you know that?” Loki asked sounding surprised and quite disturbed.

“Had my suspicions. Don’t think it can be healed. Never had a real doctor look at it.” Tony laughed nervously. God, Loki was going to strip him bare. There were multiple reasons he didn’t want anyone else here. “Jarvis has scanned it though. We did some research. I figure I’ve got a couple years before it starts to give out. Then there are things to prolong it for a while.”

Loki looked at him poignantly, “What were you planning? Just going to let yourself die?”

“Yeah probably, I wasn’t willing to give up the alcohol, so getting a transplant when someone else needed one and would treat it better, seemed selfish. I’ve been looking at trying to make a mechanical one, not much luck so far. Figured it’d become a bigger priority when it got closer.”

Tony admitted, feeling so pitiful.

“And what about your talk about apprenticeship? What about your agreement with Thor to watch me? Do you have any idea how much my life actually depends on you right now?” Loki was very angry, but he did not remove his hands from Tony.

Tony sighed. “Sorry man, I try not to think about it. I live life fast, always knew I would die young. I still want to do the apprentice and learn as much as I can in the time I have. I’ve already arranged for Jarvis to take some of the responsibility for you. I’ve been hoping someone else would be up to the job, maybe Bruce.”

Loki was seething now. He hissed. “You ARE going to owe me. You ARE going to listen to me from now on when I talk about YOUR health. And you ARE going to be honest with me about YOUR health. This is not an option. You WILL do this if you want me to even consider you as an apprentice. Now agree to this and Jarvis will record it. Then be quiet so I can repair your liver.”

“You can fix it? I agree.” Tony said, fear, disbelief and shock behind the words.

“I will keep you informed of Sir’s health from now on Master Loki.” Jarvis chimed in.

Tony and Loki both looked startled. “Master Loki? Where did that come from J?” Tony asked.

“He appears to have the power to help keep you alive Sir. I have decided to award him the title. I find it much preferable to Mr. Loki.” Jarvis said clearing the air. “Besides I believe you talked at some point about you calling him ‘Master’ too. I have decided that it is appropriate. You clearly both have a degree of ownership of the other.”

Tony wailed. “Jarvis, you are definitely a traitor! And don’t you dare remind me that your prime objective is keeping me alive and healthy!”

They both knew Jarvis never liked the title, Mr. Loki.

As Loki healed his liver, Tony gave Jarvis permission to let the others know that his liver was being healed and it would take a long time. He figured that since it was being healed they would laugh now, ask less questions, and just end up teasing him later. He wanted time with Loki for the questions he knew would come soon.
Tony liked the feel of Loki’s hands on him. The healing made him feel safe and cared for, even if it hurt a bit. It was different than when Loki held him when he was upset. He felt relaxed, safe, happy yet vulnerable in an open trusting way. Now he wondered if it was because he already had an established ‘snuggle treatment’ time with Loki or if healing had this effect on everyone.

Loki finished repairing Stark’s liver and was looking elsewhere for other damage and asked. “Who beat you when you were younger?”

“I got into lots of fights…” Loki made a growling sound, he was not buying it and Tony had promised to be honest. He took a deep breath while Loki stared intently at him. Finally he gained enough courage and simply said. “My father.”

“Most of this damage comes from when you were a child Tony. Didn’t anyone stop it? Or do they allow people to beat children here?” Loki answered quickly and huffed, clearly expecting more.

Tony looked away he hated talking about it. It made him feel weak and worse, it made him remember. “No they don’t. It’s called abuse. My father had power and money. You can cover up and silence lots of Illegal shit with those.” Now that he had started to tell Loki some, Tony hoped he found it easier to talk about the rest. He braced himself for the question that he was sure was next. He was not disappointed.

“This leg what happened?” Loki had found the really bad place. The worst memory.

Tony closed his eyes, and let out his breath which he didn’t know he was holding. He knew he had to tell Loki. He was surprised to find he actually wanted to, despite his fear, it had been so long and he had never told anyone, yet he remembered that night so well. He took a few breaths and knew his heart had started to beat a lot faster. Loki grabbed his hand to calm him. Tony finally spoke, the words coming slow. “My dad was drunk. That was a normal thing. Hey, guess I take after him.” He snarked ashamedly. “I don’t remember what had gone wrong with his day. Probably something about failing to find Captain America again.” He grumbled.

Loki remained silent giving Tony time for the words to come. Tony had mentioned on several occasions that he had father issues. Loki had also read about it some and that Howard had been associated with Steve.

Tony squeezed Loki’s hand and continued. “I had just come home from school. I was late, I was only thirteen. I was in high school and I had just won the regional science fair and was progressing onto state competition. I was so excited. I had to tell someone. Jarvis our butler was out. He had attended the fair long enough to see me win. But had left before I could talk to him because he and his wife had to be somewhere that night, for Howard I think. My mother was in Paris again. She spent a lot of time there. I don’t think she liked being around us… The only one left was Howard. Oh yeah, I remember, he really had just heard that they had failed to find ‘Captain America’ again, they were talking to him about giving up the search. I was so sure he would be happy with me this time, maybe I could cheer him up.”

Tony licked his lips and went on. “I told Howard while he was still standing, just very drunk and not ready to pass out yet. He started chasing me. Kicking me. Yelling at me. I was too smug. I would never be like Steve Rogers, now there was someone who was not arrogant, allowing others to be proud of him. Not a narcissistic shit faced, wanna be, street urchin, using his name, his reputation, and his accomplishments to make a sad attempt to be something.” Tony moved his other hand so both were gripping his friend’s hand, pulling it against his chest.

Tony closed his eyes. Loki saw tears form as Tony continued to recall his past. “He had been swinging at me. I was small for my age. I fell, tripped really, over something, I don’t remember what,
just that one leg ended up higher off the ground leaning against something. I looked up at Howard and tried to move but he was stomping, one foot coming down on my leg. It broke at a right angle when he landed on it. Yelling at me that he wished I was dead and Steve was alive. I screamed at him to stop, pleading with him that I was sorry I wasn’t Captain America, I hurt so fucking much. He kept kicking me and yelling. I really thought I was going to die that night. Finally the driver heard us and stopped Howard.” Loki had healed the scar tissue from the break and brought his other hand up to Tony’s chest so he too had both hands there.

Tony opened his eyes that were now red and very wet. “And you know what that bastard did when he saw how bad I was?” He tried to lean up.

“What?” Loki asked gently. He helped his friend sit up using one hand, allowing Tony to continue to clutch the other one.

Stark leaned into Loki who was standing next to his bed and went on. “Fucker fired the driver. Paid him off not to ever say anything. Took me to a back road rigged a car to hit a tree and made an anonymous call to the police. Then left me, broken, bleeding and next to the door. Like I had taken that car and hit a tree. I was unconscious by the time the ambulance got there.

Can you believe that Fucker acted shocked when the hospital called him? Didn’t even show for two days. Only came after Jarvis insisted they come visit. After he told Jarvis I was in a car accident when questioned about my whereabouts.” Tony’s tears melted into sobs. He had held that in so very long, not even Jarvis had known.

Loki had moved to hold Tony tightly now as Tony bawled into Loki’s arms. ‘How could a human do this to his child? His father Howard, might possibly be worse than Odin. It was his own flesh and blood. Not an adopted monster, like me.’

Time passed, finally Jarvis interrupted “Sir, the natives are restless. How long do you want me to tell them it will take to finish healing him?”

“Tell them Tony had a couple broken bones from childhood that I cleaned up.” Loki ordered Jarvis, then suggested. “Tony you still have the key. I can continue this another time. Perhaps we can tell them you didn’t want any painkillers to explain your red eyes.”

Tony nodded. His tears had barely stopped and his eyes were very puffy. It was Thanksgiving after all, but he wasn’t hungry, blaming everything on his liver. He went to his room for a shower and forced himself to focus on Doombots and the debriefing Fury was sure to ask for.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter we find out what happens when Trouble was left in the lab. I promise it will be a much happier chapter.

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Loki tried an Asgard style post attack group cuddle. Tony finally goes to see his lab!

They called it the Thanksgiving massacre. The death toll was higher than when Loki had attacked New York. The Doombots were efficient: if they aimed at you, you died, with those around injured. There were a thousand dead and many more wounded. A small consolation was that the property damage was at least minimal compared to the alien invasion.

SHIELD had sent agents in to fight, and while they helped against the Doombots, they had actually wounded almost as many civilians as they had killed robots. They were just not used to working in crowds. The Hulk had not hurt a single civilian, but much of the structural damage to the area could be blamed on him.

Loki would actually determine that Doom had spread his power too thin and made the power sources too weak to support everything. He had them prioritized attack over target recognition and they were overwhelmed with the number of targets. The result, in fact made them stupid.

The public didn’t know what to think. While the Avengers were not the darling of the public, they received praise for stopping the Doombots this time. News stations had noticed there were the unknown fighters that had showed up to help. The public didn’t know what to think of them. Who were they? People’s reactions were all over the map being angry, confused, grateful, mournful and scared.

It turned out the unknowns who helped with the fight were calling themselves The Fantastic Four. When it was discovered Reed Richards had a history with Doom they took the majority of the blame. He hadn’t informed anyone about it. In fact the feud was the reason Doom had chosen New York.

SHIELD managed to continue to keep a low profile about their help. Starting rumors that it was some sort of U.S. military reserve group.

Loki suggested he help Bruce in the aftermath by volunteering with the wounded. They had him give a quick oath, then allowed him to use his magic to heal. He carefully hid it, using it to find and heal victims with internal damage. The press speculated that he seemed to have an amazing healing
effect on people. There were several lives saved ‘miraculously’ that may or may not have been properly credited to him. Others that no one would ever realize might have died if they had not found themselves being worked on by Loki.

The rest of the Avengers helped too. Tony helped Bruce and Loki, by bringing them medicine, bandages and whatever they needed as they evaluated and worked on people. Steve and Natasha helped by carrying and identifying those that might have life threatening internal damage to Loki in the makeshift medical area. Clint helped identify and deal with removing the dead from the streets. Pepper, and Coulson, who had planned on showing up for dinner, calmed people who were worried about missing and injured friends and family.

Pepper ended up leaving early to deal with the media. Damage control was still a nightmare. Pepper would finally decide if Tony was going to continue to be Ironman, she was going to have to distance the company from him a bit. Tony was actually happy about that. It meant she didn’t need him at as many meetings or press conferences.

Laughably though, she still wanted Loki despite his association with Tony. He was a prince and a skilled negotiator and she was sure he made a better figure to represent the company than Tony. He reluctantly agreed and they officially put ‘Prince Loki’ on the payroll.

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After working hard with little sleep and food, Saturday night came. Loki gathered them all together in the common area. He had arranged the furniture in an informal circular grouping tables reachable from all seats. Jarvis had ordered Chinese food and Loki was in the kitchen. Colonel Rhodes had come to help with the disaster relief and was also there. Pepper was very angry and had declined the offer earlier.

Tony was lying with his back on a sofa seat he and Loki often sat on. His feet were propped up along and over the backrest of that couch. Trouble, who had been aloof for the last couple days, was finally being a bit friendly, lying on his chest, not purring, at least not very much, as Tony massaged her neck and ears wondering what had put her in such a bad mood.

“What does Loki have planned? Does anyone know?” Steve asked.

“I think whatever it is it’ll be great.” Tony responded with excitement, as Trouble got up and started walking around the floor.

“You know Tones, you still haven’t grown up. Always looking for ways to have fun.” Rhodey laughed.

“Growing up doesn’t mean you stop having fun!” Tony objected.

“What are you nearly forty, yet stuck with a twelve year old’s mind.” Clint teased.

“Definitely delayed maturity.” Natasha teased, as Trouble jumped in her lap and pushed her face into Nat’s face.

“Aw are the Little Rascals jealous of me because I’m having more fun?” Tony teased back.

Loki brought out a tray of assorted drinks and carafes for refills and starting handing each a person one of each.

“What is this crap? You trying to poison us?” Clint took the carafe and set it next to him on the table.
“I would find it hardly polite to thank you for all your hard work by poisoning you.” Loki said calmly.

“Oh, I don’t know. Lead us into a sense of security where we don’t expect anything and are no longer on guard. Just because you healed me doesn’t mean I like you.” Clint said as he raised the glass to sniff at it.

“Clint, if you can’t say anything nice. Thank you Loki.” Steve said taking his carafe and glaring at Clint.

“I didn’t say I hated him anymore, just didn’t like... Woah, there’s whiskey in this!” Clint took a sip, suddenly he was smiling. “And good stuff too.”

Natasha had a cute little smirk and said, “Mine has vodka and some sort of herbal tea.” Trouble looked around at everyone from her lap as she took another sip.

Tony sat up and took a long pull from his. “You used good scotch, it works. What you got in yours Brucie bear?”

Bruce’s looked a bit creamy. He smelled and smiled. “I believe it is Bailey’s Irish Crème with the herbal tea.” Then took a relaxing sip.

Rhodey took a sip of his and said. “I think mine is like Clint’s. The tea and whiskey.”

“So what kind of poison do you have Spangles?” Tony smiled leaning over.

Steve smelled his. “It smells like cinnamon and I’m not sure what.”

“Steve don’t tell me you don’t know your drinks. You’ve lived with me how long now? I can’t believe Howard didn’t teach you that much with all the drinking.” Tony ribbed. He was clearly in a good mood he thought to himself, if he was actually bringing up Howard and drinking.

“No at all, I only ever drank with the Howling Commandos to be social. I didn’t spend much time drinking with your dad, we always had too much normal stuff to talk about without needing to drink.” Steve answered.

And that was enough. Tony suddenly shut down and looked at his drink for a moment before downing it all at once. ‘Spangles had spent time with his dad and they didn’t need to drink.’ He mentally promised himself he would never again mention Howard in front of Steve again.

Loki rolled his eyes and sat down next to Stark. “Come now we are here to relax. As Stark would say, let our hair down.”

Trouble had spent time with his dad and they didn’t need to drink.

After a waiting several minutes for everyone to relax, drink and socialize some, Loki announced, “Tony agreed to let me try a relaxation party after the fight. Similar to ones done on Asgard.”

Trouble had left Tony and was moving from person to person rubbing against each of them.
They were all drinking it quickly now. Phil noticed, not being much a drinker himself. He had sniffed his drink and only took the smallest of sips from his sweet fruity drink, for the toasts, trying not to drink too much of the delicious mix. He sat back to observe and hopefully learn.

“So, we’re here to do what? Relax? Please tell me you and Tony didn’t rig this mixture up so I’d fail my next military required drug test.” Rhodey gave Tony with a suspicious glare, realizing he had just refilled his tumbler and started his second big glassful.

“No, no, nothing like that. We’re all wound tighter than that energizer bunny. No, it’s a psychological experiment.” Tony grinned.

“Tony, the last experiment you tried with people took three lawsuits and one act of congress to fix. You promised not to try to mess with psychological shit ever again.” Rhodey reminded him.

“I know, not my forte. I really don’t know what Loki has planned, but he’s usually fun.” Tony winked at Rhodey.

Trouble was moving across laps now getting many hands rubbing against her soft fur.

“I thought we might talk about what happened Thursday.” Loki said smiling just a little bashfully.

“We’ve already been debriefed. You’ve seen the tapes. It was bad Loki. I don’t understand why we need to talk about it again.” Bruce said sadly but sipped some more of his tea drink.

After taking another large swallow of her drink, finishing it, suddenly Natasha picked up Trouble and hugged her. The cat was acting unusually friendly toward her. “I’ll never forget a set of twins killed in their strollers with the dad trying to beat the doombot with the diaper bag.” She said surprising everyone. Trouble poked her nose into Natasha’s nose again and she burst into tears.

Rhodey grabbed Natasha and said. “You never get used to seeing the dead. It’s harder when it’s your home. People just aren’t supposed to die like that. Not here, not in the USA.”

Steve took another big gulp of his drink and went to help hold. Natasha.

Clint added, “Yea, those clowns reminded me of people I used to know. Most the time, I felt like no one cared about me in the circus.” He cuddled up next to Coulson who was quietly observing but did put his arm around Clint.

“I could kill that asshole Reed Richards for not telling us last August about Doom. D’he think we wouldn’t find out? Fucking bastard. I should sic Fury on him! I don’t know whether to be glad someone is as bad as I am or angry that he is.” Tony said with more truth than he expected.

It wasn’t long before everyone was sharing deep feelings about the last few days, about their pasts and how they privately felt. There was a lot of hugging and comforting going on. Bruce had also joined Natasha on the crowded couch.

Steve was soon talking about how certain things reminded him of the good old, bad miserable days of WWII that this reminded him of. Apparently he and Howard would talk openly after battles.

The only problem Loki saw, was whenever Steve mentioned Howard, Stark would withdraw for a while before speaking again. He was clearly becoming distant with the group that seemed to be hugging Natasha. On the other hand, it would have taken a crowbar to remove Tony from Loki. His face was cemented to Loki’s shoulder, arms held tight around him. Occasionally he would mumble something knowing Loki heard.
Loki mostly paid attention to his little ball of Stark, but didn’t forget the other groups and continued interjecting with encouragement to keep them talking.

Coulson added a little, when Trouble seemed to weirdly indicate it was his turn by glaring at him. He had only taken a few more sips of his first drink. He wanted to pay attention to the group, what was happening and his own group with Clint. After a while he looked around the room and said. “So in Asgard do they need the tea to make everyone open up?”

Clint’s head shot up and he let go of Phil and turned to Loki. “You talked about this. About how warriors would hug after a fight. Talk and cuddle, sometimes all night. You did this to us, with magic.” He accused but remained in physical contact with Phil.

Natasha also seemed to snap out of it and after giving Trouble a momentary look of regret, actually pushed her away. “You manipulated us. How do you expect us to trust you when you do this?” She failed to dislodge herself from the group though.

Loki looked around the room, at disappointed and expectant faces. Shrugging and reluctantly saying, “There is no magic in use. Sometimes we use this tea to start talking. Actually, I have never seen it work so well or quickly. It usually only helps people relax, not make people talk, at least not like this. It must affect humans differently.” He even held up one of his wrists to show the bracelets still in place.

Phil was more curious than angry though. “I would like to know the recipe for the tea. Do you mind if I have our scientists run some tests on it? Several reliable experts have told us we could use a way to defuse anxiety in our agents. They have a hard time talking about trauma and their feelings.”

“Certainly Mr. Coulson. Bruce helped me mix the herbs.” Loki made a failed attempt to stand up but he appeared to have a growth attached. One with brown hair and eyes that only squeezed harder when Loki had been accused.

Bruce who was still in the Steve-Natasha pile explained. “I can help you with that. It’s mostly readily available herbs. Even the less common ones aren’t too hard to find.” But made no move to remove himself from the warmth of the group.

Clint was looking at the Natasha, Steve, Rhodes, Banner pile. Suddenly he burst into hysterical laughter. “You win Loki. I’m looking at an Avengers puppy pile. Or maybe a Tsum-Tsum pile. I’m having visions of ten big guys like Thor all snuggled together unwilling to move and risk losing their warm spot in the pile. Better yet whimpering like blubbery babies, rubbing the snot off each other’s faces.” He described, still laughing and leaned back onto Coulson.

Steve looked up and laughed. “If only we knew about this in WWII.” Finally he stared to dislodge himself.

Rhodey said sitting up embarrassed. “I want a copy too, might be good for a medal. Besides they really do run regular blood tests. I need to know.”

Natasha made a grab for Trouble but missed as the cat dashed back to lean into Loki and his new body adornment that had somewhere in there managed to completely fill Loki’s lap.

The others slowly left the room and Loki picked Stark up bridal style with Trouble, who was now balancing on top of Tony’s lap looking around swaying to keep her balance. “I’m sorry I did not realize Steve would talk about Howard. I have some more tea in your kitchen where Bruce helped me mix it. This is why there are many warrior groups. We’ll make our own two man cuddle pile.”
Trouble turned around almost falling off as Loki walked and meowed in Loki’s face.

“Correction two men and a cat cuddle pile.”

==================================

It was Monday before Tony went back to his lab. He opened the door to a disaster.

“What the fuck? Jarvis what happened?” Tony said noticing that both Dum-e and U were down, having failed to plug into the wall to recharge.

“You left the cat here alone on Thanksgiving after ignoring her. I could not bring myself to tell you she was causing, excuse my wording, trouble, while you were being healed and crying on Master Loki’s shoulder. By the time you finished helping out with the disaster it was too late and I chose to let you just discover it yourself, Sir.”

Tony shook his head having waded over to the wall where his bots normally recharged, only to find the plugs blocked with welding scraps and remnants of fire extinguisher foam. “Jarvis, please tell me you videoed this?” Tony shook his head not able to believe the mess his lab had become.

“Yes Sir, I believe the area next to that door is still clean enough to project upon.”

Tony turned and wiped off a chair to sit down. Then having second thoughts grabbed a bag of dried blueberries from a desk drawer sat and said. “Give it to me, J.”

It started when he and Pepper had left with Clint and Natasha. Trouble had been left on the desk where Pepper had set her down. Trouble had meowed as they left. She watched from the desk as they disappeared toward the elevator, then tilted her head and looked around expectantly, as if she thought they would come back for her. Jarvis fast forwarded for Tony.

Ten minutes later Trouble jumped off the desk and started investigating. It was innocent at first but soon she was jumping to look in boxes. The force of her landing on the edge of a box sometimes caused it to tip over. She promptly started trying to see how many boxes this worked with. Discovering she could knock things off shelves by pushing. She quickly had half-full cans of lubricant and other fluids spilling out on the floor, lids coming off on impact.

Meanwhile Dum-e and U where trying to pick up the parts from the first couple of boxes.

One of the boxes that fell, knocked over the acetylene torch which rolled and banged into U who turned around and tried to righten it. Unfortunately as he spun, the bot slid on the oil and skidded into a barrel of swept up welding scraps and metal shavings which fell over sprawling across the floor.

Trouble had moved onto one of Tony’s work areas and sent all the papers flying across the floor. The hot plate also went onto the floor landing upside down managing to turn itself on without being unplugged.

She moved on finding the bottles of booze Tony kept in his mini bar. He winced as he watched as she tested these, proving they too could be made to fall and shatter. ‘Ouch, some of that was expensive.’ Sadly, she miscalculated as she reached up for the last one sitting on a shelf above her and managed to get vodka all over herself. This would not do and she immediately jumped back to Tony’s desk and started to groom herself.

Meanwhile Dum-e had picked up two boxes and noticed smoke, sparks and even a small flame coming from the hot plate. At least one of the fluids on the floor was flammable and the torch was not far from it on its side. Dum-e went for the fire extinguisher as the fluid started to burn.
U was still trying to get the torch back to an upright position when Dum-e started spraying the fire. The hot plate had been sitting in a small fire. That fire had melted through the plastic protection on its electrical cord before the fire was put out. But while much of the liquid on the floor wasn’t easily flammable, the splattered alcohol was. Those broken bottles of booze had also caught on fire and soon there were flames jumping from splatter to splatter and heating up some of the other material that might ignite if hot enough. Of course some of the boxes were cardboard and there was the paper on the floor too. Still not much flame yet though.

Trouble, now feeling groomed enough, got up to investigate. She found herself wobbly and managed to tangle some string, and tape around her legs and tail that just happened to stick to and drag a piece of cardboard box behind her. Tony felt a pang of guilt because he knew she was probably a bit tipsy from the vodka. But not too guilty because of the state of his lab and the fact she had seemed just fine since.

Then she jumped down and looked at the fire, her tail and the cardboard attached landed in a puddle of alcohol. While she had looked at the fire the box had soaked up spilled alcohol and was now actually on fire. He watched as she tore around the lab dragging a flaming box behind her. Tony was very glad he knew she had not burned herself.

Dum-e noticed the cat and started chasing her spraying the extinguisher at her. His reaction time was never really great so he continually missed, hitting the walls, ceiling, Tony’s sensitive equipment and everything left out in the open as she ran around. They both knocked more things down and sent things flying in the chase. She finally fell into the sink, which had water in it as something had been put in there to soak by one of the bots earlier. This successfully put out the fire on the string and helped her succeed in untangling herself from the string and tape.

The result ended with a wet cat who, in her scrambling to get out of the water, pulled the lever and turned on the cold water. Once out of the sink she managed to stagger very non-gracefully to and up a cat tree that they had put in the lab. There she fell asleep to sober up and dry out.

Dum-e had covered the lab in fire repellant by now. It was a mess but the fire was out. U found a broom and was trying to sweep some of the mess up from around the torch. Fortunately it had not exploded and was finally back upright. Then Dum-E who was having a grand time sliding around the floor while putting the fire out, bumped into U and made him slid across the floor spreading the filings he had been sweeping.

U annoyed, slid back into Dum-E. Soon they were both sliding across the floor involved in a chase game, swinging brooms around hitting the ceiling and knocking down wiring, blissfully ignorant of everything. They were oblivious to the fact they had inadvertently pushed trash into their recharging units.

Now water had started overflowing onto the floor from the sink. They didn’t notice until there was enough water to prevent them from sliding.

Trouble woke up and looked at the water and meowed. This grabbed Dum-E’s attention, who to his credit noticed the water and turned it off. But not before U performed one more slide and bumped over the still plugged in hot plate whose cord was now exposed.

Electrical current ran across the lab and because everything was wet nearly everything was shorting out. U started running in circles and tried to plug himself in only to find it jammed then shorted out. Dum-E, not even noticing, did manage to unblock the drain before he too shorted out.

Trouble’s cat tree was made of wood which didn’t conduct electricity. She meowed a few times, waiting patiently as the floor drained. As Jarvis fast forwarded the video she relaxed occasionally
batting at some dry ceiling wiring within reach, that had been pulled down by a broom during the sliding game. When there was a dry path she heading to the door, which Jarvis readily opened for her grand exit.

Yes, Tony’s coffee maker would need to be replaced too. Fortunately the spare suits were in enclosures and protected. He had installed circuit breakers into both U and Dum-E because it was not the first time they had ‘played’ with electricity. So it was a quick fix to get them running again. After making sure there was no more dangerous electrical accidents waiting to happen. Tony fixed the bots and set them to the long job of cleaning the lab.

“Jarvis, tell me immediately if I or anyone else ever leaves Trouble alone in the lab again. In fact don’t give me time to shut you down if I’m busy just tell me code C. A. T.” He figured it would be another two days before his lab was usable again.

“Yes, Sir. I will also refuse to let Miss Trouble into the lab by herself.” Jarvis replied.

“That should go without being said J…. Wait have you been letting her in here without me?”

Jarvis took a moment to answer. “Well the bots have enjoyed her company at times and I felt she was harmless.”

Tony stared in disbelief thinking. ‘No one is allowed into my lab when I’m not there, that should have been hard coded in.’ Saying, “But you can’t open the door for her alone. How?”

“I’m afraid to, as you say ‘squeal’ but Dum-E and U are able to open the door, Sir.”

‘Did Jarvis sound like the kid who got caught with his hand in the cookie jar?’ ‘Final result J. If they want to play with her the answer is no, unless I know about it, and give permission, and never alone in the lab.”

“Yes, Sir.” Jarvis said steadily.

“Oh and J. Make a copy but edit out or blur anything proprietary from it and cut some of it down. It might perk up everyone on movie night after what happened on Thanksgiving.” Tony smiled thinking about everyone’s reaction to it.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo’s tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
The Yule Season.

Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

Chapter 16 ended up being over 8000 words. I am breaking it into 3 chapters. This one is short. So I'll post the next part early next week and the last part next Friday!

There is one scene at the end that shows Thor and friends being bully/abusive to Loki. If you have triggers be warned, it's not too intense though. I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Pepper was furious with Tony, and refused to take part in the double secret Santa. She made arrangements to be with friends for Christmas. She didn’t want anything to do with the Avengers, any of them. She even told SI that she wouldn’t see any new proposals until further notice which would be sometime after the holidays. Including a meeting with one Aldrich Killian that was postponed until the end of March. Once she was calmer, she joined them and forced many of them to attend several events during the month. But she refused to change her Christmas plans saying she would join them all for New Years.

Tony had finally given up on being jealous of Loki and Pepper. Loki would be just as much trouble as he was. The god’s nightmares made his own look pleasant in comparison. Pepper would never accept that, just not happening. Loki was his again. Wait that just came out wrong. Well not his ‘his’ but he wasn’t worried about sharing him with Pepper. Only the rest of the team. Damn his mind was going places it shouldn’t.

Pepper was at least not as frightened of magic as she had been. Loki’s healing, rather than enchanting defenses into the building, had assured her magic was not all bad. Tony felt sure he could convince her to let him learn it eventually.

Natasha had watched the couple; she had enough data now. After Thanksgiving she decided it was time to take secret bets on how soon Tony and Pepper would finally be over.

Natasha was also sure Tony was being ignorant of his compromised situation with Loki. Fortunately, Loki was still suffering too much to take advantage of the situation, and he appeared quite unaware too. Fury did not trust either of them. If they ever got their acts together they could end the world as they knew it. So Natasha observed mindful of signs that might proceed them opening a Pandora’s Box.
In December

One night after way too many drinks Natasha let slip Clint had a girlfriend or at least someone special. Loki didn’t believe she ever let her tongue run; she obviously wanted it out. Natasha just smirked when they asked Clint.

Steve took Loki and convinced the rest of the gang plus Pepper and Coulson to go to a ballet. The Nutcracker. Loki liked it. Afterwards Tony ridiculed them for liking it. Pepper chewed out Tony because, “The fine arts are important, you donate every year.” Everyone looked on as Tony just kept walking and making faces that Pepper supposedly, ‘couldn’t see’. At least until she started chewing him out for that. Natasha changed the subject by saying she was hungry and wanted food.

Clint was learning to appreciate Loki’s sharp remarks. He joined him occasionally on pranks. They laughed together.

Tony found his newest coffee maker filled with cooked pasta that had been left overnight to dry and stick.

Bruce ordered a sandwich from the local deli, only to have it delivered inside a glass bottle. Tony finally admitted he had let Loki out of the cuffs for a minute to help.

Steve woke up to find a bald eagle in his living room. Later he found out Loki had arranged to watch the rescued bird overnight. The caretaker had it in New York for a fund raising event and his hotel wouldn’t let him keep it there.

Clint pressure trapped the rug outside his suite to have a strobe light and loud obnoxious noises go off if something that weighed over two pounds and under twenty-five pounds stood in the area.

Trouble jumped the first time.

Clint and everyone on his floor were awoken by six dead birds weighing just over the limit on the floor outside his room the first night. The second night, a package, that should have been delivered earlier, set the alarm off. The third night his own quiver was there. It had been in his suite before he went to bed.

Coulson tried to convince Clint that a prank war with a cat was stupid.

Natasha pointed out to Clint that Trouble was winning.

Clint agreed to stop trying to mess with Trouble.

Loki went looking for Coulson one night, to ask about what the next day’s visit with SHIELD might hold. He discovered through a reluctant Jarvis that Phil had been spending his nights with Clint. Loki returned to his room chuckling as he remembering Clint’s negative comment about sweaty men with sweaty men. No wonder Natasha was so amused.

Tony found out what itch powder in his boxers felt like.

Loki’s learned what Itch powder was when Tony blamed him for the prank.

Loki walked around in only a fig leaf for two days, which Tony enjoyed immensely, until for ‘Pepper’s sake’ Clint confessed.
Clint spent the next few days on high alert jumping at everything, expecting to be tricked back. Turned out, keeping him on high alert was the prank.

Natasha found herself receiving boxes of small plastic flies three times a day for three days until she put a sign in the kitchen threatening death if the extra delivery problem was not solved.

Tests that Coulson and Rhodey’s organizations independently ran on the herbal tea, that had seemed to make them all spill their feelings, proved only slightly useful alone and only a bit more useful when mixed with alcohol. Neither group could come up anything close to the results the Avengers had experienced.

Loki blamed the Norns saying they used fate to make them share because the ladies enjoyed meddling.

Steve learned real fear, when Darcy came to New York with Jane for a conference and took him out with some of her friends… twice.

Meanwhile Jane and Loki managed to miss each other for the whole trip despite many attempts to get together.

Then they started to badger Steve about dating. Turned out he had actually gone on a couple of dates but he was too old fashioned. He wanted things to move slowly, claiming things were different when he grew up, women were too fast for him now.

They tried to pin Loki down as to what type of person he might like to date, offering to fix him up. When he didn’t answer fast enough. Tony shut down the conversation. “Cool it guys. Loki needs more time to heal.” Then quickly changed the subject. Loki actually looked relieved.

On Yule night Loki had a dream visit. Frigga appeared.

“Happy Yule my son. I hope you find the solstice more to your liking there on Midgard.” Frigga said.

“Happy Yule mother, we shall see as they are holding their celebration on the twenty-fifth.” Loki answered. It had been some time since she came to him in a dream.

“How is the building of the Bifrost coming?” His worst fear was they would finish it and come for him.

“Not well, I am sorry to say. Your father is too bull headed. He knows your knowledge could repair it faster. I informed him and made it known that I forbade you to help unless he forgave your crimes.” She told him. “No one else has the knowledge or skill to make it progress with any speed.”

Loki smiled. “Thank you. I am not surprised, he is not my father and has never really acted as my father, but you will always be my mother. And I will always love you.”

She put her hands out to him. “Thor asks of Jane Foster? What can you tell me?”

“I am sorry, we have failed to meet up several times, but I understand through written text she is well.” Loki said sadly, ashamed he had disappointed his mother.
“There is still time. I have had a vision Loki.” She warned.

That got his attention. “Yes, mother?”

“As you know, things are never clear, but you must watch out for SHIELD, something bad is happening there. Also, your Man of Iron is someone you should trust. He is important and will aid you in the future, you have my official permission to use the life force strengthening potion on him. Please do so soon.” Frigga urged him.

“Really? I did not expect that. He must be significant for you to grant me that.”

“He is, my son. I have seen much, but it is very confusing. A dark time is coming to Midgard. He will play an important part with you.” She sounded more distressed than Loki would have liked to hear.

“He has magic mother. He wants to learn it. He wants to become my apprentice. What do you think?” Loki asked.

Frigga thought for a moment. She reached out and touched his head with her ghostly dream hand. “Do it. That gives me a very good feeling. He will serve you well.”

“Odin will not kill him because of it? You know he really doesn’t like Midgardians with magic. Learning it from me will only make it worse. You know how he feels about me and teaching someone.” Loki considered the mortal his friend, and didn’t want any harm to come to him. It was one more reason he had been delaying, undeterred by Tony’s continuing requests to start.

“Odin is busy. I will ensure that he doesn’t harm your friend. You will need some of your things to teach him. Is there any way you can use your magic to retrieve a few boxes? I can leave them in the room you used in Frey’s castle in Alfheim?” She asked him.

“I might, but how will you get them there if the Bifrost is broken? Odin will miss you if you travel the branches of Yggdrasil?” Loki asked.

“I have always had a private portal so I could visit my brother. I just never used it because the Bifrost was easier. Odin will understand a visit without questions if I tell him I had a vision. I will have all the boxes and the ingredients for the potion all there tomorrow night. They will wait there for you.” Frigga told him.

They talked a bit more and she finally closed the dream.

The next day he talked to Tony about retrieving the boxes and that his mother had given him her blessing to teach Stark magic. It didn’t take ten seconds for Tony to agree and start planning. That night Tony unlocked the cuffs and Loki disappeared. At dawn Tony was starting to get nervous. What if Loki had left? Was this all a ruse to get him to let him go? But that didn’t feel right. Tony had let him out quite often now, hell he had enchanted the tower. The sorcerer could have left any time.

Tony got some coffee at nine am and went to his lab at eleven. Finally at one thirty Loki appeared. Loki had said a couple of boxes. There were more than thirty that he pulled out of a hidey hole. Poor Loki looked exhausted.

Tony was amazed at the hidey hole and asked about it, only to get growled at by a drained and frazzled Loki, who said he would tell him more after he was an apprentice.
He did tell Tony he needed to hide the boxes and talked about a special addition to the tower. He would make it after Christmas. They had Jarvis lock down Loki’s rooms so only he and Tony could enter for now. Loki also put a special protection over them so Heimdall wouldn’t see them. Then he threw Stark out and collapsed into bed, not even noticing Trouble curling up to nap with him.

Christmas Eve.

They started drinking. Soon they were playing a drinking game.

Loki was clearly down. They managed to get him to agree to play attempting to brighten his mood. Most questions were pretty innocuous. He mentioned how Thor would drag him to Yule events only to find himself being ridiculed or at best left out.

Clint asked later when Loki was quite drunk. “I dare you to tell us what kind of things they did to make fun of you?”

Loki looked mournful and reached for his glass.

Rhodey who had gotten up for something from the kitchen got to Loki before he reached it and said. “We really don’t know what kind of things they did to you. It’ll help us understand.”

Tony put an arm around Loki. “Yeah Princess, we promise not to make fun.”

With nods all around Loki reluctantly agreed figuring this would prove how like Thor’s friends they were. “As a child. Thor and his friends would play ‘Pin the Tail on Loki’” he swayed as he lifted both hands to make quotes. “They would slip me something that made me temporarily blind and I had to try to avoid having pins shoved into me that had tails attached.”

Steve was taken aback. “With real pins? Why didn’t you tell the adults?”

“At first. Most did not care because of our fast healing. Occasionally adultss would cheer Thor and his friends because I was quick and could avoid them. They made so much noise. I learned to end the game. Justt find the adult women who would scream when I got blood on their gownss. If Mother ssaw us sshe would ssstop it and Thorr would get yelled at.” Loki was slurring a bit.

Bruce looked ill. “Oh Loki, that’s terrible.”

“Now I kno why you don’ wanta be his brother.” Tony hugged him. He too was pretty drunk.

Loki shrugged and saw that no one found it funny. Even Natasha looked sad and far away perhaps remembering her childhood. His drunken mind decided to share a bit more. “Odin alwayss gave me giftss that were appropriate for Thorr. He usually ended up with them too. Only my mom got me real giftss.”

“You know Loki the more I hear about Asgard the less I like it.” Coulson said.

There was an all-around agreement with that.

Chapter End Notes
I hope you all liked this. I fear I am taking too long to get places, I've been told the first million words one writes are crap. Well hopefully you are enjoying my crap,

Next time is a fluffy Christmas morning. I hope you will enjoy it. I contemplated getting rid of it but my husband said a nice slice of life Christmas Morning wouldn't drag the story too much.

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Loki awoke Christmas morning with a cat on top of him, kneading him with her paws. He ran his hand across Trouble's soft fur. He really dreaded Yule. It had always been so bad.

When he was younger he remembered being excited about giving and getting gifts. But as he started to grow up, gifts to his father or Thor were never appreciated. At least they could have pretended to like them.

It hurt to see the disappointment on their faces when they received things he had made by hand or later small enchantments he had made himself. They would even complain about the little enchantments or handmade gifts he gave Frigga. It destroyed the joy he got from her smiles, when she had to scold Odin. Loki would hold it in and often go back and cry alone because he could not seem to make his family happy.

Even as a child he had estates and an income. He was told he should have gotten better gifts for his parents. He should use the money he gifted to the people who worked those estates at Yule, they got paid for their jobs already. He refused to stop giving them money though because they would send him letters of thanks, or pictures of happy people with things they needed and were able to buy because of his generosity. More than once he had fantasized what Yule would have been like in those peasant homes.

Later it was especially discouraging. His unappreciated gifts turned out to be useful. His not-brother or the Allfather would use those enchantments until they broke or wore out. They never said thank you or that they were useful. Thor just told him he needed a replacement asking when Loki could have it ready without even a please. Odin would have Frigga ask for a replacement for him.

The gifts he received from them were atrocious too. His father got things that were designed for a 'proper Asgardian warrior'. Loki had told them general things that he might like, things involving scholarly or magical learning. Only Frigga ever heard him. Occasionally there would be a gift that was obviously something meant for Thor. Frigga would give Odin a look and he would say, ‘Thor will end up with the gift anyway’.

Loki didn’t know how he put up with things for so long. As a child it had ripped his soul apart. For
years he had continued hoping that Yule would be better. It never happened. In fact it only got worse when Thor’s friends started to do gift exchanges. He was a prince so he was expected to give them gifts as they were his ‘friends’ too, even if only Thor got gifts.

He finally became disillusioned with Yule sending servants to buy weapons or shiny things that had no meaning as gifts. Then one year he felt crushed that Odin had been pleased with a gift that Loki had not picked out or even wrapped himself. For the last several hundred years he had gotten them all the same things that were useful but wore out and had no meaning.

To be honest with himself, since he was doing self-reflection, and trying not to be too morbid in his attitude, Thor did occasionally did get him useful things, just not at Yule. Like after battles, Thor usually let Loki pick what he wanted first. Thor really did seem to get a thrill out of the smiles it brought Loki to go first. Of course he knew Loki rarely picked anything the rest of them wanted.

Loki took a quick shower and became presentable. Trouble practically tripping him as he used the bathroom. He finally smiled. At least one of them was in a good mood.

Jarvis informed Loki “Gift opening will not be happening until noon, due to Sir and many of the others being debilitated this morning.”

This cheered him up a bit. “So do they all have hangovers Jarvis?”

“No, both Miss. Romanoff and Mr. Rogers are perfectly fine and making breakfast. Shall I inform them that you will be joining them Master Loki?”

“Yes, that would be fine Jarvis, thank you.” Loki answered.

Loki readied his gifts and put one under the tree and went to the kitchen. Most of the others had put gifts under the tree last night.

The tree had been put up just a few days before and Trouble had not been allowed access to it until now. It was a real tree, very tall, and smelted wonderful. It didn’t take long before she was moving around through the packages.

Natasha, Loki and Steve had finished their breakfast and were sitting at the table talking. Bruce and then Phil had showed up for coffee, neither being hungry.

Around eleven when there was a loud squeaking sound followed by a loud crash from another room. They all got up and ran toward the noise. Jarvis informed them that Trouble had climbed the tree and was batting at one of the ornaments making the tree swing to better reach it and knocked it over. It had fallen on a table lamp which had shattered, and brushed the wall knocking down a couple of paintings, before settling on the floor.

Trouble looked up from the branches, shook her head and meowed. Then after seeing her audience she hopped out from the tree, turned around and hissed at it, before gracefully jumping up to sit on a chair. Then she looked up at everyone, happy and cute, like she expected her audience to clap or shower her with attention.

Tony and Clint had heard the noise or perhaps Jarvis told them and had dragged themselves into the room. After passing out the aspirin to be washed down with coffee or tea they all sat down.
Bruce looked around and suddenly asked. “Loki, is it possible to heal a headache?”

Loki smiled and simply said. “Yes, it is.”

Minutes passed until Steve asked. “Can YOU heal them?”

“Yes, I can.” Loki answered. This was Yule. He was not about to volunteer anything. At least for once, he was going to have fun and maybe get a few pleases and thank-you’s for his effort.

“Well, God damn it why don’t you?” Clint bit out then winced at his own noise.

Loki looked annoyed and Trouble jumped into his lap.

Fortunately Natasha had picked up on what was going on and very politely said. “Loki, I would really appreciate it if you wouldn’t mind helping these rude boys with their hangovers. I think we would both enjoy the day better if they didn’t spend it whining and complaining. “

Loki smiled. “Why thank you, Lady Natasha for asking, as the rest of this group seems to have no manners left. But if I do heal them, do you think they might be able to be both courteous and appreciative of my help?”

There was suddenly a quiet roar of; “please Loki, could you please do this Loki, I’ll be very grateful Loki, I’m sorry I yelled at you and promise to be nice for the rest of the day.”

“I think that answers your question.” Natasha smiled back at Loki.

Bruce said, “I don’t think Tony is up to it, so let’s go get the other key Steve.” And stood up.

Steve did not get up but looked hesitantly at Tony. “Tony’s not?”

The walking dead inventor suddenly shot up. “Wait, I’m fine, I’ll go get mine.” He said as he hobbled toward the elevator.

Natasha tilted her head just a bit at this, but said nothing. Bruce returned to sitting and took a relaxing sip of his tea. No one else took note of anything.

Loki healed everyone and as a thanks they agreed he could be out of the cuffs for Christmas. It was actually one of the best gifts Loki had ever got.

Now that everyone was cheerful it was time to open presents. They had done a double secret Santa so everyone got two names. Tony volunteered to pass out the presents.

Tony suddenly had a long white beard, dressed in a red and white suit and looked rather plump.

Loki laughed. “This is what the spirit of Christmas is supposed to look like is it not?” Everyone laughed but Tony, who was looking down unable to see his feet, until Loki added. “Don’t worry it is just an illusion.”

“Whew, thought I might have to do the Ironman/reindeer, crash diet.” Tony said doing a bump into Loki with his new belly.

Tony moved again and grabbed Trouble who was once again playing in between the packages. “The first present is for Loki.” He said handing her to him. “Your job, should you with to take it, is to keep her out of the presents.”

Then Tony brought a box to Loki. “This one is for ‘Trouble, a peace offering’ from ‘Clint’.”

It contained several kitty teases and a quart sized container of what sort of looked like parsley.

Loki opened the box and took a sniff along with Trouble who was very curious and with her paw scooped up part of it and spilled it over the couch and floor.

Phil who was sitting on another sofa with Clint, looked at him saying. “Clint, I am really hoping that you did not get her catnip.”

Clint just smirked as Trouble started rolling around in the stuff.

Tony said what everyone else was clearly thinking. “You gave her CATNIP! You saw my lab. Do you really think she needs to be more wound up?”

“It relaxes some cats, makes them mellow. That’s what the lady told me.” Clint said.

“Give Loki the one for Trouble from me next then.” Steve said and picked it up out of the pile.
Inside was a grooming kit for cats, including cat nail clippers which Loki used, requiring very little encouragement, after she started to knead him using her full claws.

Tony handed Steve a box. “From Phil. Who’s Phil? Oh yeah Agent. Why don’t you use your real name Agent?” He grinned.

Steve opened it and stilled and looked up at Phil. “Thank you, this is incredible, I didn’t know it existed.” He turned it around showing his framed enlistment papers with pictures. It was not the top original with ink but the second made using carbon paper. The top part belonged to the Smithsonian.

Phil smiled. “I had some connections who helped.”

“To Natasha from Clint.”

Natasha opened up a set of stacking Matryoshka dolls.

“They’re from Budapest” Clint said laughing.

Natasha gave him a half smile, half squinty wait until later look but said nothing. Then she who was never surprised shrieked. Trouble had launched herself off the sofa Loki was sitting on and landed on Nat’s head and tumbled off into her lap, clawing at her hair all the way down.

“Steve, thank you so much for the grooming kit for Trouble.” Natasha said then glared openly and growled one word. “Clint.”

Trouble having moved on, was now on the floor playing with the wrapping paper.

Tony had Bruce open the next one to find a ‘Grow your own tea complete with dirt and compost’ from Natasha.

Tony said, “Oh look, one for me, from Brucy boy…. A case of assorted coffees, Yes!... and Armor Polish?”

Loki laughed. “That is more like what I used to get from Thor minus the coffee.”

“I figured you might need some given how often you bang up your suits.” Bruce said laughing too.
Clint opened his from Tony. It was a set of remote control programmable bird sized flying targets. “Cool. Thanks Tony.” He said and started setting one up to fly.

“To Loki from Natasha.” Tony handed him a heavy package.


Tony’s eyes widened. “You got signed copies of both editions of the Hobbit! I’m so very jealous. Hey how could you afford all that?”

Natasha smiled as Loki took a card out tucked in the front of one and read. “From Natasha and Pepper your movie night girls.”

“That’s how you afforded it.” Tony sighed.

“I don’t understand why there are two copies of The Hobbit.” Loki asked.

Bruce answered. “When Tolkien started writing the Lord of the Rings he had to go back and make some changes to the original. They published it as the second edition.”

“Ah. Thank you Natasha.” He said and pulled out his phone to text Pepper a thank-you. He was stunned to receive such a well thought out gift. He might even forgive Natasha for continuing to spy on him for SHIELD. When they talked she really didn’t deny it and they got along well. Humans were such very strange creatures. So very complex. Each one of them different.

Loki carefully put the books back in the box and sealed it.

A crash was heard behind Tony. He turned around to see Trouble jumping in the tree again trying to grab the flying target that Clint was baiting her with.

“Clint you give her catnip and then fly those things around. Are you asking for Trouble?” Bruce teased.

Steve grabbed the flying target and Loki fished Trouble out of the tree again.

“I was just playing with my new toy. She’s already played IN hers.” Clint half giggled, referring to her rolling around in the catnip.

Tony shook his head. “To Phil from Steve.” And since the boxes look so much alike “To Clint from Steve.”

Phil opened it finding a beautiful sweater set.

Clint opened his and his mouth fell to the floor. “Okay who told you? How did you know? I thought we’d kept it hidden from everyone.” Inside was the exact same beautiful sweater set only in his size.

Steve looked confused. “What do you mean? What were you keeping hidden?”

Loki just couldn’t help it. “That Phil is the girlfriend we were told Clint has.”

“They are?” Bruce said.

Steve looked shocked. “I didn’t know that.”
“Jarvis why didn’t you tell me they were doing the nasty?” Tony quipped.

“You mean you just happened to buy us the same gift?” Clint said realizing he had just outed them with Loki’s help.

“I liked the set enough to get it for each of you. I really didn’t know what you liked.” Steve looked embarrassed.

Phil smiled and put his arm around Clint now that everyone knew. “It will make things easier in the long run.”

“Fine.” Clint turned into Phil and pulled him into a very long and passionate embrace. Phil was rather stiff at first but soon gave in and returned his attentions with passion. They kept it mostly clean but didn’t stop.

The other waited, and waited. Steve got Trouble’s attention and was playing with the cat. Bruce was looking over his tea growing set, noticing Trouble had already clawed open the dirt bag. Natasha had pulled out her tablet and Loki examined his new books. Tony crossed his arms and stared at them.

At six minutes Tony said, “Enough already, I have more presents to hand out.”

Bruce and Steve both looked relieved when Clint and Phil finally came up for air.

“I think Clint’s been into the catnip too.” Natasha smiled evilly as Trouble started rubbing her legs.

“To Phil from me.” Tony said handing it out with a knowing grin.

“Tony there are tickets for two to Tahiti. Plus hotel, is everything paid for?” Phil sat there calm, reserved and except for his kiss swollen lips you would never have guessed he was just making out.

“I decided you might want to actually go to Tahiti. It’s such a magical place… Never expected Clint to go probing around down there with you. Can I ask, who does the probing?” Tony teased.

Clint was saying as he threw the nearest box at Tony who ducked. “You just wait, I’ll get you when you least expect it.”

Immediately Trouble started running back and forth around the room. Launching herself from chair to lap and off again.

Clint shook his head after Trouble bounded across his lap. “You win, the catnip was a bad idea. I still hope she finds your naked ass one night after her claws are sharp again Stark.”

Tony grabbed Trouble and picked her up, purring. “You wouldn’t hurt your daddy like that would you sweetheart.”

“You mean mommy, Stark. I am her father, you are clearly her mum.” Loki said grinning.

Trouble meowed and licked at Tony’s chest in the general area of his nipples.

Bruce laughed. “I think he’s right Tony. She looks like she want to nurse on you.”

Tony pulled Trouble to his face. “Don’t listen to them sweetheart, I’m still your daddy.” Then he put her on the floor and grabbed a present. “For Steve from Bruce.”

Steve got a book of cultural references and a set of tickets to see the Yankees from Bruce.

Trouble got a very fancy collar from Natasha and an interesting running water fountain sculpture
from Bruce who claimed it could be used by all for meditation.

Clint got Bruce a Hulk sized stress ball and three pair of pants that really stretched. Trouble actually managed to roll the ball through the wrapping paper.

Loki gave Natasha a dress with several hidden pockets, one containing a non-metal, yet well balanced throwing knife. It was designed to not be picked up on metal detectors.

Tony was looking confused at the last present. “This one is for Loki from Phil.” Tony had only got one present.

Loki opened it. It was a numbered limited edition figure of ‘Controlled Prince Loki’ with a working staff that lit up. “I don’t know what to say.” It was the truth.

Loki had no idea what message Coulson was trying to send him. Was he making fun of him or did he think Loki would like it or find humor in it. Or was it something else much deeper given as some sort of test?

Phil said. “It is a gift that is near and dear to my heart. “

Clint groaned and swatted him.

Phil added “I wanted you to have the number one, it may be worth more in the future. So I grabbed it before SHIELD released and marketed them.”

Tony looked incredulous. “When and how is SHIELD marketing them?”

To that Loki did have the answer. “I believe you slept through the board meeting that it was discussed at. Pepper and I took care of the contract months ago. SHIELD owned the Avenger’s name and SI wanted to market them to help our images. Though I don’t know if this one actually helps.”

Just then the elevator opened and Dummy pushed out a very large stuffed rabbit. It had a large card that said ‘For Tony’ on it.

Loki smiled as Tony went to look at it. “Pepper suggested it for you. For some reason she seemed to think you might want it. There is a smaller box taped to the back of the card.

Tony shook his head, he had originally ordered that same bunny for Pepper, well maybe one a bit bigger, one that didn’t fit in the elevator. He had canceled it after Thanksgiving deciding she could pick her own damn present. He wondered how she found out about it, then figured they probably called about it. Well some children’s ward was going to be very happy after Christmas.

Tony took the large card and found the box. Inside was a one half inch cube of metal. “I’ve been called a metal head but this is taking it a bit far.” He looked at Loki inquisitively. Loki had given him a useless stuffed rabbit and a small cube of metal.

“Tell me what you think that metal is Stark.” Loki said.

Tony looked at the cube. His brain quickly dismissed things. He looked more inquisitive and then held up the cube. “Jarvis scan this, what do you find.”

“Sir, I do not recognize the metal.”

Tony looked at Loki now with fascination. “What is it?” His mind whirled, this was exciting. He
should never had doubted his little reindeer.

“It is called Uru. It is rare and only found in Nidaveliar. The dwarves guard it religiously. It is prized for its many unique properties. Mjolnir is made of it.” Loki informed him watching as the man’s eyes light up. Yes, he felt happy. He was glad he had taken the time to retrieve a hidden extradimensional pocket he had hidden in another realm where the cube was stored. It was clear Stark adored the gift.

Tony also had a surprise for Trouble. He had installed a cat sized tunnel that went to several rooms around the penthouse and also into Loki’s apartment and one tube that led down to the common floor. Trouble immediately jumped up to it and started running off to who knew where. Clint told everyone he was jealous.

Tony gave everyone stockings. They all had Ironman boxers in them, Loki’s had four pair.

“Just wanted you all to feel like I was close and personal with each one of you.” Tony winked.

Steve shook his head. “Tony do you really have to make everything about sex?”

“Why yes Steve. Everything’s better with sex.”

Chapter End Notes

I have been told that the first million words a person writes is crap. For myself I agree. I am glad some of you like my crap. I hope it will improve.

This weekend I'll post the last section of this holiday section.

Thanks for reading this. If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment. I appreciate all of you.
A Guilt Filled New Year's Eve.

Chapter Summary

Stark's New Year's Party happens with a bit of fallout.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

TRIGGER WARNING—There is mentions of a very poor failed attempt at suicide from Tony's past.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Christmas was over. Loki couldn’t afford to hide part of his suite from Heimdall for long. It was now time to hide the boxes for real.

Tony watched as Loki planned an enchantment that attached to the building. It would be a secret room, a hidden pocket in Yggdrasil. It took him five days to create it.

Tony stayed diligently, afraid to leave just in case he missed something. For the most part there really was nothing to see. Early on Loki nearly threw him out for asking too many questions but eventually Tony retrieved his tablet to work.

When it was finished Loki escorted Tony in lighting it using magic.

“By god, this is a walk in extra-dimensional Pocket!” Tony exclaimed.

“Of course by me. What did you expect?” Loki glowered a bit.

“Maybe something the size of a closet for the boxes, you know like the personal one you brought them in. This is more like a hotel room. Wait are those openings. Yup bedroom one and bedroom two. How is it so big?” Tony walked around looking at the silvery walls, floor and ceiling.

“Where’s the bathroom? We gotta get a bathroom in here.”

Loki told him, “The hardest part is creating the opening into Yggdrasil. Of course the interior size is determined beforehand. Once the opening is made the interior expands much like a balloon, where I do the shaping.”
“Well it’s gonna need carpeting and beds. Definitely beds. We could seriously hide our secret sexual liaisons together in here. Without fear of getting caught because I make you scream too loud.” Tony continued to look.

“Who says it would not be you screaming Stark. Besides I didn’t build it for that.” Loki dismissed Tony’s statement.

“And a bathroom with a shower, gotta be able to clean up afterwards if we are going to hide it. Just you and I would know.” The inventor’s grin was stretched from ear to ear. Silently he thought it would also be a great place to avoid being found especially when boring meetings were scheduled.

“I suppose it could be turned into a safe house at some point. I will think on it.”

“Oh and we gotta figure out how to get Jarvis in here. I can’t live without J.” Tony added.

Loki laughed. “That is something you may have to invent or discover, for I have not even an idea as to how to complete such a task.”

It was New Year’s Eve. There was a party of course. Clint brought Phil. They wore the matching sweaters. Loki smirked again remembering this was the man who had complained about ‘hot sweaty man on man stuff’. Loki and the gang managed to get them under the mistletoe several times. Pepper was pleasantly surprised in finding they were a couple.

Tony was drinking pretty heavily. He and Pepper had hardly talked alone since Thanksgiving. Only once on the phone. She called him to thank him for the jewelry she had picked out for herself for Christmas, and even then her friend was in the background. But hey, it was New Year’s, time to party.

Clint was talking to Loki. They were slowly moving across the room.

Then Clint yelled, “Hey Tony.” Loki looked around and saw Tony smiling and coming at them. Pepper was following snickering.

When Tony reached them he put his arms around Loki and kissed him. Not just a dry peck on the lips. He grabbed him bent him backwards and went in for the kill. And Loki let him, too shocked to stop. Pepper was laughing loud now. Loki finally pushed Tony away and fell to the ground with Tony looking at him from above. He wiped his mouth and noticed the mistletoe hanging from the ceiling.

“Don’t worry he gets at least one person every year.” Pepper said trying to calm her laughing handing Loki a napkin to wipe up his spilled drink

Natasha looked crossly as Clint held out his hand.

“You lost?” Steve said sounding rather shocked.

“He cheated, I bet it would be you.” Nat said matter of fact.

“I had to do something, you won like the last fifty times. Nat” Clint defended himself.

“You would have blushed so much better,” Tony jested, puckering up his lips and leaning over Loki toward Steve.
Tony was drunk and Loki was still on the floor wiping up the drink that had spilled on his shirt.

Trouble had been sniffing Loki and was suddenly spooked by something and dashed between Tony’s legs.

Suddenly Loki sort of had another kiss from Stark in the form of a face smash. Also a full lap as Tony tripped and fell on him.

Steve shook his head and laughed. “Couldn’t happen to two better people. A toast to our resident clowns.”

Even Tony and Loki giggled.

“Steve you spilled my drink!” Tony looked at his tipped over tumbler that, up until he fell, had Scotch in it.

“Oh, do shut up. Most of it ended up on me along with mine, you drunk miniature human.” Loki teased.

“Miniature?? You’re the giant blue smurf!” Tony uttered with mirth.

Loki dumped Tony on the floor, suddenly seething. He stood up and glared before he turned and started to walk away.

“Wait, Loki, he’s drunk he didn’t mean it.” “Come on man, don’t go, you’re the life of the party.” “We really want you here. Don’t go.” They were all telling him to stay including Pepper. “Loki, I’ll help you get cleaned up while Tony remembers what he’s done wrong.”

Tony looked at him from the floor. “Please buddy, I’m sorry, I’m an idiot sometimes. I really want you to stay.”

Loki stopped. He was angry, but these people really wanted him. It was a strange experience. He had never been wanted like this. Not once had anyone cared enough to try to bring him back. He turned around and looked at them. Tilted his head again. These people kept surprising him. They had just been reminded that he was a monster and were begging him to stay. He just stood there with anger that was turning to confusion.

Finally Pepper just came and grabbed his hand and pulled him toward a sink, disregarding his angry body language. “Let’s get you cleaned up a bit. Fortunately scotch doesn’t stain. Do you mind a wet spot for a while? It won’t take long to dry.” He let her. Stunned that they cared enough, he found his anger dissipating. It didn’t take long for the party to get back in swing.

Midnight came, everyone cheered and toasted except for Tony and Pepper, who were arguing and missed it. Loki noticed Clint and Phil sneak out. Bruce also excused himself, leaving Steve and Loki. They could hear the argument. So they each other a Happy New Year again and went to their respective beds.

Just after two am, Loki felt Tony crawl into bed beside him, he was much, more drunk now. He briefly wondered, ‘Does Stark have a death wish? Death by poison.’ Obviously the argument had not gone well. Loki was glad his mother had given him permission to enhance Tony, it would at least protect his liver. He held him tightly.
The holidays had not ended well for Tony but Loki had never felt more wanted, needed even. He thought of the Æsir peasants from Asgard. Perhaps this was what family was supposed to be like, if so he could get used to this. Then reality set in. They were mortals and would leave him all too soon. He held Tony tighter. He would just have to appreciate them now, because if he never again had friends like this, he was going to remember what it felt like.

Tony was still there when Loki awoke. This was unusual. He held his friend and soon realized that Stark had also awoken. Warm tears were making his night shirt wet.

“What’s wrong?” Loki finally asked.

“Can you heal me some more? That worked pretty good last time and we never really finished.” Tony’s voice was shaky and weak.

“Alright.” Loki answered hesitantly.

Tony unlocked the cuffs with the key from under his shirt again. Loki noticed that Tony had attached it to the frame of the arc reactor in a hidden compartment. He wasn’t sure he approved of the design but Tony did what he wanted.

Tony laid on the bed as Loki put his hands on him. “Can you tell me what is wrong now?” He felt the dehydrated brain and started working on reversing the alcohol induced lack of liquid in that sensitive organ. Hoping it would not become a routine for him to fix hangovers.

“I’m losing Pepper. Worst part is, I’m not sure why, or if I’m really upset. I keep trying to tell myself I love her, have been for months, never told her though. She’s done so much for me. She’s stood by me. She’s taken care of me, tried to clean me up, deals with my bad press and she cares about me so much. Hell, she even runs my company so I don’t have to. I owe it to her to love her, but I can’t seemed to feel it. I can’t be what she wants or needs.” Tony sounded guilty. He was beating himself up with guilt.

“Have you tried to talk to her honestly, like you are with me right now?” Loki inquired.

“We have a couple of times... sort of... maybe... okay, not really. It’s hard. I really should love her. It’s so very confusing because I’m also not sure I’ve ever loved her. She thinks she knows me better than anyone else. Sometimes we even agree that we should call it quits. But I’m not sure I can take care of myself anymore. When we fight nothing makes sense enough to talk calmly.” Tony confided weakly. “I’ve never had a real relationship before her. Nothing that lasted more than a couple weeks. I’m not even sure I know what love is, my parents didn’t show me any... Sometimes I think I’m only in it for the sex... and to have a nanny... I think you and Bruce understand me better than she does.”

Loki continued to look at Tony’s body. Tony was silent for some time, content with petting Trouble who was sitting on him and had butted his hand for attention while he had been talking. Then inquired. “You find anything else Reindeer Games?”

“Yes, how old were you when you tried to kill yourself by slitting your ankles?” Loki carefully asked not sure if this was a good time but Tony had asked.

“Fourteen, I had just finished healing from my ‘car accident’ and had caught up on all my school work. My mother was home and both of them were drunk. I overheard them arguing about me. Howard accusing her, saying I wasn’t his. Which was stupid because I looked just like him. My mother wishing she had never married Howard or had me. I couldn’t take it. She was usually pretty
good to me when she was around. I didn’t really expect to die because I remember thinking I didn’t want to be teased if I had wrist scars and I had to be careful not to cut tendons. Biology wasn’t my thing then, I didn’t do much research. Jarvis found me and took me to the hospital. After that, we had a long talk, and he made me promise not to do it again, and come to him or his wife if I felt that bad. I already knew Jarvis liked me. After that I stopped trying to tell my parents anything. I just went to Jarvis. I stayed with him and his wife lots. He’s the reason I’m still here. That’s why I named my AI after him… I think I loved Jarvis.”

Loki healed old damage from a couple old breaks and the ankle scars. Tony had a couple more horror stories for him. Not as bad as the leg one though. Loki wanted to work on the shrapnel. They agreed he would take one out. They were all in dangerous places and Loki wanted everything fully healed and not with freshly used magic, before he removed the next one.

When they finished Tony said. “Thanks, you know more about my childhood than anyone. You’re a good friend, I trust you. I don’t have many people I trust you know… Hey, does me being your apprentice mean you will treat me different?” He actually sounded worried, he didn’t want to lose this closeness that they had developed. Tony had learned to depend on Loki to hear him, not just listen but to actually hear and understand what he said.

Loki laughed. “Only when I am teaching you. And I feel privileged to be honored with your trust Stark. Thank you.”

Loki laid back down on his bed expecting Stark to leave, instead the man rolled over and fell asleep, sticking a foot out to touch Loki as if in need of reassurance. Trouble purred on the pillows between them looking completely content.

Tony actually trusted Loki. Had anyone ever really trusted him before? Well Thor had in battle and for healing but he never listened or seemed like he trusted him any other time. Not since they were very small children. These people especially Stark, were changing him and quickly too. His gut screamed it was a trap, but years of understanding people, civilizations and knowing when people lied told another story. Would they become his friends or stay Thor’s. That might be the real test, because Thor’s friends never liked or trusted him.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Trouble with Hulk

Chapter Summary

Bruce has decided to let Loki integrate himself and the Hulk.

Chapter Notes

I've got a few chapters both finished and beta'd ahead with more waiting to be beta'd. So I thought in honor of Thanksgiving I'd give you all an extra chapter this week.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 17

January

Clint genuinely decided to make peace with Trouble.

He set out to teach her that she could easily catch birds as he hated pigeons. They discovered she could easily jump five or six feet straight up to catch the toy.

The next day Clint had the largest dead pigeon he had ever seen outside his door.

Not to be outdone Tony built a series of games to ‘teach’ Trouble. Toilets could now be heard flushing at all hours of the night. On the plus side they no longer needed litter boxes.

Tony found a long lost remote to his coffee machine outside his door a few mornings later.

On the third of January Tony had a talk with Pepper. She told him it was over but agreed to stay his friend and run SI for him. She had several long business trips scheduled she decided they needed to wait until she returned to tell anyone.

Tony still told Loki but asked only for a hug. He wasn’t ready to talk about it.

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Bruce had settled that in January he wanted Loki to use his magic to open him to the Hulk. The Thanksgiving debacle convinced him he should try. He and Loki often spent time together usually having Tony show up shortly after. Loki had concluded he had lost his fear of Bruce, and in turn hoped it would help him with the Hulk.

Bruce’s safe room had been converted to be a play room. Loki was ready to build the pathway for
Bruce.

Bruce was still worried, but had come to grips, if he was ever going to be able to control the Hulk in battle this was the only way. It had been made clear at Thanksgiving that they needed him. Natasha didn’t like it but had agreed not to tell SHIELD or anyone else, for now, as long as nothing went seriously wrong.

They were in the safe room. Loki felt his way into Bruce’s brain and then to the magic that lay within. Carefully he stretched the narrow pathway arranging the connections of magic already there so they formed a bridge or tunnel instead of a collection of loose strands reaching from one cluster where the Hulk personality resided and to the smaller less magical clusters where Bruce’s consciousness resided.

He placed a small magical blockage of his own in there holding the magical energy keeping the personalities separate until he was done. Finally he removed the blockage.

Bruce’s mind swirled and he felt the anger, then it turned to confusion. It was strange he could tell what the other guy was seeing, thinking. He now understood what Loki meant when he said it was both him and yet there were two of him. That was way too simple though. Wow this was going to take some getting used to, he had two minds. He saw why Loki called it childlike. It/he had very little knowledge.

At the same time the Hulk awakened and felt a pathway open to him. He followed it feeling like he was out of his body. He was not alone, the other one, the guy who took care of things was there. He felt angry then confused. He had never been here before. He was usually asleep and alone. But this was him too. Why were they calling him Bruce? He was the Hulk wasn’t he? No, wait, he was both.

They both looked out at the group around them. Friendly faces they both recognized, until they got to Loki.

Bruce swiftly turned green and grew. He grabbed Loki by the shirt and tossed him into the wall and started to head over.

Bruce was fully aware for the first time while green. He was trying to tell himself, ‘Don’t hurt him, he helped us. Please don’t hurt.’

Tony and Steve raced to get between Loki and the Hulk,

Clint and Natasha put their hands on his back trying to calm and reassure him. Telling him easy, it’s alright.

He looked at Tony and Steve blocking his way to his enemy. Wasn’t he his enemy? He had tricked him to going to sleep in a battle. He was not his friend that is what mattered right! He roared.

Bruce felt his anger and confusion. ‘No. Stop. He is helping us, he helped us then,’ he tried to communicate. Why couldn’t he make himself understand? And it was himself sort of. He looked at his friends blocking his way, with their hands on him. I can see and hear them clearly, part of him thought. This was so new. Never before was he such an active part of Hulk before. Even if he was a small part, he was aware of everything now. He felt for his arms. No, he was not really controlling them, yet, he was and that part was still angry but was becoming more confused. Wait, his vocabulary was so small. He’d read papers on what babies understood. Part of him was like that, yet not quite. His other thoughts were powerful despite being confused. He was not a being to be manipulated, very straight forward and clearly stubborn.
This was so confusing having another person in his brain. He was angry. Always angry, but his friends didn’t want him to hurt the ‘Puny God’. The other him, didn’t want it either. He held his head, so much new, to process, but only sort of. He wasn’t just him, he was the Bruce guy too. The Bruce guy was never this there before. He was trying to stop him. It was just too confusing he was angry. His other thoughts were so complex he tried to ignore them only to find them so very there.

Suddenly Trouble appeared in front of Loki and meowed.

“Good Kitty. Kitty didn’t die.” The Hulk calmed down immediately and stuck his hand out to Trouble. Trouble ran up his arm and jumped into his hair.

“The kitty? Thank you Hulk for helping.” Loki wheezed out with eyes looking at Trouble. He had already figured out Trouble was the cat from that day. But seeing her look out from atop Hulk’s head squelched any doubt that may have remained. He also found it calming to see her there, giving him sufficient peace to avoid the panic attack that had been about to start.

Loki painfully pulled away from the wall and nervously slid out of sight of the Hulk. He had suspected Hulk’s anger was a possibility. It happened faster than he had planned. He forced himself to stay in the room to monitor but kept out of the Hulk’s sight for now. Trouble had calmed the Hulk down. How fascinating that Trouble had hitched a ride with the Hulk in the middle of the Chitauri attack and ridden on him to the tower.

The Hulk scrunched up his face. The ‘Puny God’ had thanked him again. The Bruce guy felt relief. Hulk had known he was not alone but he had never been so aware of him. And he had never sent feelings, let alone tried to talk at him. Then he thought about being awake when the Bruce was there, unusual. It had felt good.

‘Loki, uh the ‘Puny God’ did that.’ Bruce whispered knowing he liked being out at the same time. He made it so we can work together he encouraged himself. This was both so confusing yet so freeing at the same time.

Yes, freeing he thought. Not ready yet, need to watch more.

And, figure out how this works.

They were shrinking, glad he finally had pants that stretched enough all over. To Hulk there was no darkness or unconsciousness. Just being, thoughts. No, double thoughts. Trouble jumped off his head as they sat on the floor.

Bruce looked out lifting his hand, looking at it, then touching his head. He knew he was watching but would stay quiet because he was overwhelmed. And said. “Wow, this is weird.”

Loki from behind put his hand on Bruce’s head getting between Natasha and Clint who were now kneeling to keep contact with Bruce. And asked. “You understand why I had a hard time explaining it to you?”

Bruce didn’t need to think. “Okay, yeah, but it feels so right and so wrong at the same time. I think I need some time by myself though.”

Loki carefully stepped around Natasha and kneeled down and cautiously looked up into Bruce’s eyes. He saw them, knew they saw him. “If you need anything, or have questions, have Jarvis call me. I will do as much as I can.” Humbling himself seemed to work. It also enabled him to slip away without causing another scene. He was glad Trouble had been there as she seemed to have a gift for calming people. At least when she wasn’t causing Trouble!
Then everyone slowly left, giving Bruce and the Hulk words of encouragement and support. Trouble stayed for some time, while Bruce absentmindedly petted her.

And did Bruce have questions later. Loki did his best to answer but there was so much that he just didn’t know, in fact most things. Each incident of this magic affected the user differently and there were only three cases that Loki had any knowledge about. The first two were write-ups, one in a scroll, one in a book, both part of longer works describing uncommon magical aspects and phenomenon.

Loki had gone out of his way to personally meet the third example and that being was not even humanoid. The creature’s first personality had been loud, dominating, charismatic, and didn’t like to be bothered or surprised. The second presented itself as a quiet eloquent graceful, yet chaotic thief, now retired and occasionally taking a student to teach obscure magic.

None of the examples were similar to Bruce. The one Loki had met taught him mostly about other types of rare magic. Still there was quite a bit more that he had read about and enough to help Bruce with some of the questions.

Bruce came out of his rooms only for meals and to ask Loki questions over the next few days. It was interesting that most of the time that Bruce was up the Hulk slept. On the fifth day Bruce decided it was time to bring Hulk out again. Loki insisted on being there alone with Bruce. The others agreed but only if Jarvis watched. Of course no one could keep Trouble out and Loki was glad to have her.

The Hulk had gotten a little more used to Loki from being in Bruce’s background. Despite having asked Loki questions Bruce found himself leery of Loki. He knew the feelings were bleeding over between his selves. Trouble’s presence helped. For some reason, the cat reminded the Hulk that Loki was not a bad guy.

When the Hulk came out he grabbed Loki around the waist and held him with his hand and growled. Despite Loki expecting it, he felt his heart rate speed up. He felt the blood drain from his face; he was fighting the impulse to hyperventilate. He had really hoped he was past the panic. He had focused on working through his problems with Bruce but he was alone and a large green hand was holding him. He was afraid that hand would squeeze, or toss him around like a few months earlier. Abruptly his heart rate started to slow and he felt something brushing up against his leg.

Trouble was there, that beautiful, wonderful, angelic, life-saving bundle of soft feline courage. She was rubbing between the two of them. Purring like a jet liner.

Loki was able to follow through on his plans and hugged the arm that held him. The Hulk remembered being angry at the man in front of him because he brought the Ugly Creatures who hurt everyone. He had grabbed Loki to fight again, but the god hadn’t acted like before, so he turned his head, tilting it. What was the ‘Puny God’ doing? He had talked with Bruce lots recently, something was different. And nice kitty was there. The good kitty whose eyes were always soft and loving towards him.

Bruce was trying to stay calm. Loki had warned him something like this might happen again. He stayed in the background watching. For a few moments he had seen Loki freeze up and turn white, he feared for the god. Then he heard and saw Trouble and just like that the tension was released.
“I care about you Hulk. Thank you.” Loki carefully whispered.

Hulk didn’t let go but eased his grip. “Why care about Hulk? Puny God.” Hulk asked.

Loki did not let go either but leaned over more and hugged him tighter. “Because you are a friend, all of you. I wanted you to be whole. You helped me too.”

“Hulk friend? Thought Puny God bad.”

“I was… damaged. I didn’t know what I was doing then. Remember, you helped me fix it. I am sorry… I am better now.” Loki chose his words carefully.

Hulk thought and Bruce saw the slow thoughts. The Hulk really was partially a subsection of him but not a full one. That section was not balanced either. Anger was well developed, he could tell the Hulk part would never rival himself in intelligence. Yet he also saw a gentleness that could easily surpass Bruce. Once again he understood more of the childlike nature Loki had mentioned. Of course there was something that warmed in the Hulk when he was aware of Trouble.

“Puny God like Hulk? Help Hulk?” Hulk asked. And both Bruce and the Hulk realized that Hulk was utilizing language that only Bruce knew. Once more it pointed to the fact Hulk was more like an infant.

“Yes” Loki looked up and smiled. He had never done this before, an integration. He was proud of himself, it would take some work, but this was a chance that very few ever got. If they, Bruce and Hulk, lived long enough, the being they would become would be incredible, to help was an honor. He was really feeling good about Midgard as his home.

Four hours later Natasha and Tony came down to see what was happening. Loki and the Hulk sat at a table with crayons. Some were rather large crayons with a few broken. Trouble sat in the middle of the table watching. On the walls were pictures mostly very simple of friends. One green, one not. Sometimes the not green one had horns. All the pictures had a black cat included.

Natasha was pissed off a couple weeks into January. She wouldn’t tell Tony why. The others knew she had lost the bet due to Pepper and Tony still being together.

Loki knew Natasha had won but respected the privacy of Stark….for now.

Steve took Loki to an ice skating festival and entered them into a solo ice dancing competition. Steve was reminded that he hadn’t relearned to skate after the serum. His reactions were those of his smaller scrawny self. His clumsiness was embarrassing as he got way more female attention than he wanted. Prince Loki managed to avoid his many adoring fans by not being eliminated from the competition. In fact he won it.

Tony watched the winning dance on TV, finding himself mesmerized by Loki’s unbelievable grace and fluid motion on the ice.

Then firmly told himself he did not feel jealousy when Loki got a kiss from one of the judges.

Bruce bought Trouble a small basket she could carry in her mouth.
Clint was shocked one morning to find a three foot snowman outside his door and tried to tell everyone Trouble was magic, the basket was just too small.

Phil smirked when he admitted that he was the guilty party not Trouble.

Tony admitted to himself he watched Loki’s ass when no one was looking. Jarvis refused to hunt for video of a naked Loki for him. Tony pouted in private.

Fury did not appreciate the small dead pile of bugs on his chair in the conference room after he tried to bar cats from Avenger’s meetings in the Tower.

Everyone denied responsibility and blamed Trouble for it who proudly sat in the middle of the table watching everyone, fully alert.

Tony was speechless when he watched the recorded surveillance, showing Trouble really was responsible for the dead bugs. She had carried them in using her basket. But Tony only shared the find with Loki.

Loki and Tony ran every type of scan either of them knew about on Trouble. She really seemed to be just a cat.

Tony’s relationship with Pepper was over and his mental state was overall better. He still wanted her approval to learn magic. So, after watching Loki heal people, help Bruce, and come to terms with the fact he was no longer her problem, Pepper agreed to give him her blessing to learn magic. He would have done it anyways but now things would be easier. Tony didn’t want anyone else to know though. Now the only hurdle was having the other agree to Loki having the cuffs off most of the time.

Doom didn’t show up again until late January. It was a very weak showing with only a few bots that seemed to be trying to sneak into New York. They were very bad at it and were caught right away. However, by then there were other villains who had started crawling out of the woodwork.

The team found themselves called out on a weekly basis. The public was divided in their opinions. Some saw heroes. Others felt that the villains appeared because they had super powered good guys.

The group indeed got more lax about the suppression cuffs. They didn’t require oaths after missions before Loki healed them. More recently Tony started unlocking them before they left, just in case. They had added a couple of new part time teammates who didn’t live in the tower but showed up to help when they had to go out and fight. Loki had officially become the group healer. They trusted him to do that, they were still leery of how powerful he knew he was, and the fact he didn’t like to talk about himself or what he could do. But trust was forming.

Steve took Loki to the opera. Loki had decided he did not like it. Steve actually agreed with him. On the other hand Broadway shows were an acceptable outing for Loki and Steve.

Loki had managed to talk via the internet with Jane Foster now. She was unhappy, not knowing when Thor was going to return. But Loki had given her a few hints on directions she could take her research. It had earned him brownie points with her. She would have to use components he couldn’t tell her about, that could access Yggdrasil to make it work. She was really very smart, also motivated and focused. He didn’t know if she could do it without knowing magic but after seeing what Stark had done, she might just do it.
By early February Loki had removed three pieces of shrapnel from Tony’s chest. After the first one Loki started removing them in order of danger. All of them were dangerous but some would kill him slightly faster. For whatever reason Tony always found himself telling Loki about his past or what bothered him while Loki worked. It was almost like turning on a faucet. He clearly had a weird psychological quirk. Pepper had wanted Tony to talk to someone and now he was. In fact he actually found it helped a bit. Not that he would ever admit it.

He didn’t allow anyone else in the room with them when Loki healed him. This had the added benefit of avoiding the debriefing from Steve and Natasha as Fury was usually ready for him by the time Loki was done.

He told Loki that Pepper was going to be gone for Valentine’s Day, hoping to get him to spend the day and evening with him. Pepper had not yet deemed it time to announce their split and he needed to hide out for the day.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.

The next chapter will be sometime Friday or Saturday.
Valentine's Day Troubles

Chapter Summary

Valentine's day comes. Things don't go as Tony expects.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony and Loki spent Valentine’s Day together, watching several movies that Loki just ‘had to see.’

In the afternoon Loki approached Tony about the life enhancement that his mother had suggested at Christmas. The magic it took was long and involved, requiring digestion. It had taken several weeks to create the potion, and for it to cure to a solid. They had gotten up to get drinks, and were standing in Tony’s penthouse by the bar.

Trouble was curled up on the couch sleeping after a long night of playing with a metal ball with a bell in it. She had played outside nearly everyone’s bedrooms at one time or another the night before. Jarvis, had been so good as to move her from floor to floor, even opening various suites as she batted the noisy ball about the tower.

Loki cleared his throat. “Tony, I have to ask you something important.”

“Yes, I’m ready to be your apprentice. How about now?” Tony answered without hearing the question. He moved and sat on the other side of the sofa from Trouble.

Loki shook his head. “Not that again. Soon, I still wear these cuffs too much. This is something my mother suggested for you.” He relaxed into a chair opposite the sofa.

Tony looked at his friend. “Isn’t your mom on Asgard? Are you talking through dreams again? Is she hot like you? She could come visit me.”

Loki ran what the man had said to him again then said slowly. “I’m adopted remember? She looks nothing like me and is quite a bit older…”

“Age doesn’t matter to me. I’ve done lots of older women.” Tony saw Loki’s startle and had decided to run with it.

“Stark! She is still my mother, and happily married, though I know not why.” Loki said quickly, his mind was stuck on Stark wanting his mother.

“I still bet she’s hot. We could have an awesome threesome.” Tony trolled.
“Stark, you will stop this at once.” Loki growled.


Loki shivered, paled and then scrubbed his mind at the mention of the Allfather. “You wish to sleep with me?” Loki asked sounding serious, mostly just mimicking what Stark had said. His brain had taken a bit to catch up to speed to realize Stark was teasing. No one ever teased about sleeping with the Allfather.

Tony of course heard a serious question. “Wait, what? You’d seriously think about it? Really?” His heart speed up and he had to stop himself from holding his breath. He found he wanted that answer. Hell, he might actually want it. Well maybe. Damn his mind should not go there.

Loki looked at Stark sternly and said. “Stop fooling around. We are now way off topic.” He was not about to fall into a trap that might ruin his friendship, which was way too important to him to risk even contemplating an answer. Besides the scars and pain from betrayals and torture left him ill prepared for romance at this time. He didn’t do casual relationships like Stark had a history of. He had to give the man the enhancement, not think about cheap sex.

Tony smiled. He found himself sad Loki had avoided an answer. “But I like to fool around. I’m hot, available, so are you.” ‘Wonder if Loki does men? No more thinking those thoughts.’ Tony really was disappointed and imagined what it might be like to kiss Loki. That would have been a great way to spend Valentine’s Day. Then again, he too realized that it might blow up in his face and he didn’t want to risk what they had either.

Loki shook his head. “Anyway Stark, my mother talks to me every couple of weeks.” He answered easily.

Tony remembered that Loki and his mom had talked at Christmas. Then looked him in the eye. “I still think you’re hot. So what do you want to do to me if it is not an apprenticeship yet? Why do I feel like I’m gonna be a guinea pig?”

Loki laughed. “It hasn’t been used on Midgardians for a few centuries, nonetheless it is, commonly used on loyal individuals of short lived races. Fear not for you shall remain human and not turn into a pig.”

Tony laughed. Loki was quick and it wasn’t often he missed a reference these days. “Someone being a guinea pig means you’re gonna experiment on them, Bambi. Wait, you couldn’t really turn me into a pig, could you?”

Loki smirked and ignored the question but added, “You will find yourself a bit stronger, having more stamina and healing faster. Your body will repair much of the natural damage caused by aging. It effectively puts you and keeps you at the prime of your life longer. You can expect it to add anywhere from five to twenty-five years onto your life, based on your own personal body chemistry.”

Tony’s eyes were wide now. “You can do that? For me? That’s what your mom suggested at Christmas or in some dream for me? I didn’t know she cared. What’s the catch? I’m not going to suddenly have warts or grow tentacles. Although tentacles could be fun if we ever did have sex.”

Loki knew Tony would ask. “I SHOULD give you tentacles because you are a pest. The catch is you have to get permission from the Asgardian crown. Of which my mother counts…. And the reason she suggested it, has to do with her having a gift of sight. She seems to think you are good for
me and will help me someday. It’s really not very clear. Magically it counts as a long-term healing
spell.”

“Uh Loki, hate to break it too you but most people have the gift of sight. Or are there a lot of Ass-
gardians who are blind?” Tony said noticing Trouble twitching slightly in her sleep.

Loki rolled his eyes. “I mean the Norns give her visions they whisper to her in her dreams.”

“You mean those busybodies that supposedly sew the future or some such thing. The ones you told
us tall tales about?” Tony said in distasteful disbelief, without thinking, waving his hands in the air,
and standing up.

Loki glared at him in frustration.

Tony had been part of many discussions about them before. He just didn’t believe in any sort of
predestination. “I dare them to mess with me.” He challenged as he poured himself another drink
from a bottle set on the end table beside his sofa and sat down again.

Loki looked very serious now, he even sounded threatening. “Stark, they are real and you should
respect them. Especially now that you are on their radar.”

Tony was a bit taken aback by Loki’s quick and dangerous warning. Maybe he needed to reconsider
his views on the subject. He had already seen things he couldn’t explain and Loki was clearly
serious. “Okay Mr. Kreskin, I wasn’t thinking. So, what exactly do these gals do again?”

Loki was still angry. “They weave the future. Making small changes that can affect the future in big
ways.”

“Like a butterfly flapping its wings causing a hurricane. Yes, but how?” Tony recited the butterfly
effect. Trying to be interested rather than belligerent, it came out somewhere in the middle.

“They see the future somehow is all anyone knows. Nothing about how or why. Just that sometimes
they share visions with a few gifted individuals of which my mother is one.” Loki was trying to calm
down. Stark was just so frustrating at times like this. How would he teach him magic if refused to
believe in things he could not see or touch?

“Okay…well…a seer… huh…that could be useful… or not.” Tony said looking at his hands. Then
out of the blue, his brain failed to engage, only his mouth. “Does that mean all that Ragnarok shit is
real?” Tony asked looking up.

Loki growled out. “Ragnarok is no different than your apocalypse, a story.” Angry and hurt. No
Stark would never understand. He would never understand Loki either. He had let himself hope that
the man was his friend. His keeper had jumped from maybe accepting the Norns to accusing him of
Ragnarok in a moment. That stupid story had haunted him on Asgard, where people would use it to
show Loki untrustworthy despite it being well documented that it was false.

What was next? If Stark started thinking Ragnarok was true, surely he would send him back to
Asgard and Odin. If he believed that story, what would happen if the man saw his Jotun form? His
stomach felt sick as he envisioned tests being run on him. He wanted to take the precious vial and
throw it away, run and hide to his closet. But his closet was Stark’s too. He had nowhere to go,
someone would hunt him down if he ran.

He would not be able to withstand Odin’s torture, or SHIELD’s alien experiments. Surely Stark
would not experiment on him, he could count on that much couldn’t he. Loki’s mind had healed a
great deal but was still very fragile. Once he had not cared but now he had begun to learn what
friendship was. He thought about being forever alone. He felt his angry eyes start to water and got up to leave.

Tony was an idiot. He knew he’d screwed up. It was Valentine’s Day. He’d been looking forward to spending it with Loki though and now he was afraid he’d driven him away with his own stupid mouth. Even worse, insulting his mother after he found out he was being offered an unbelievable gift. He saw the god’s eyes start to water.

Standing quickly, Tony reached out and grabbed Loki as the god started standing, and said. “I’m an asshole, idiot, moron, imbecile, blockhead, dolt and especially a fool. My mouth is going off without thinking. My foot is so far in my mouth you can’t see my knee. I’m sorry Loki, I believe you. I’m sure it’s all true about the Norn’s. Sometimes I just respond without thinking based on stuff I used to believe was fact. Like magic isn’t real, and no one can see the future. Please don’t be mad. Sit down, call me a jerk and let’s make up. Sorry about the Ragnarok comment too. I know many of those stories are false. Shit, there are enough bad stories about me out there.” He leaned his head against Loki and tried to pull the god back toward the couch with him. Thinking almost prayerfully, ‘Norns if you are really out there, I deserve to have you play with me for being so cruel, I hope his mom’s right and I am good for him, I’d do anything to stay with him forever.’

Just then Trouble meowed loudly and twitched violently, very much still asleep. They both looked at her and looked at each other. Loki did sit down on the couch to touch her.

“Do cats have nightmares?” Tony asked as he sat back down next to Loki, not losing contact but looking at Trouble.

“Animals do dream.” Loki looked at Tony who was looking at Trouble almost nervously. Then answering more gently even laughed a little. “Ragnarok is just a story. I am not the bringer of it, but I am partially the cause of that story. It was something Fandral made up because I told Thor he was also sleeping with the human Thor liked at the time. I can’t help it if they wrote it down. It has haunted me ever since.” Loki felt better, Stark was just being Stark. Sometimes he just could not seem to control his thoughts from swirling into deep dark places.

Tony raised his head smiled. “Figures it was Thor’s friends who started that story.” He took a sip of his drink. “Magic has costs. What would the cost of this be again?”

Loki leaned his arms on his knees. “Nothing really, because it is a complex form of healing spell. It simply sticks around a long time. Much of it deals with bringing something back to its original state. You will be more susceptible to magic, but with so little existing on Midgard you won’t notice it. If there are any bad reactions I will be able to remove this from your system. Oh, and you may experience some stomach discomfort at first.” Loki instructed.

“Sure, lay it on me.” Tony braced himself.

Loki smiled and pulled a small vial with what looked like a piece of blackened grapefruit peel from his pocket and handed it to Tony. “Eat it.”

Tony looked at the disgusting looking lump in the vial and his snark was back. “What, you don’t cast it on me? Is this Alice in Wonderland? Will it make me smaller? I’m already shorter than average. Or maybe taller? Your height would be nice. But of course, I’m not that lucky. Will I get high? Does it taste terrible? This could taste like hair spray for all I know.” Tony prattled on.

“There is no Wonderland this time, and I assure you it will taste ghastly. Just do it quickly and get it over with.” Loki told him. “I would advise against washing it down with alcohol though.”

Tony of course never listened. He smiled, stuck out his tongue and promptly ate it. Washing it down
with the rest of his glass of scotch. “Alcohol goes with everything.”

Two hours later Loki found himself wondering how he ended up being Stark’s mother. Gone was the feeling that Stark didn’t care or that he would be sent back. Tony had a terrible stomach ache and was curled up in Loki’s arms half lying on his lap while Loki watched a movie.

“Remind me to listen to you sometimes.” Tony moaned as Trouble who had finally woke up proceeded to walk back and forth over Tony, more often than not bumping or hopping on his stomach.

Loki laughed. “Don’t worry I will, often and with enthusiasm.”

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Clint put a birdhouse on a very tall pole situated on one of the balconies that Trouble could watch birds through a window from.

Natasha discovered Trouble stuck on top of the birdhouse in need of rescue and unwilling to come down for her.

They never did figure out how Trouble managed to get on top of the birdhouse, but the birdhouse came down.

SHIELD had uncovered another spy in the organization’s ranks who also died mysteriously. And Jarvis had ascertained that SHIELD had called them to an emergency seven seconds before the attack started. This caused the whole group to find themselves trusting SHIELD less and less.

Natasha was very slowly and quietly investigating SHIELD herself now.

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Just after Valentine’s day Pepper came home for a few days and met with Tony and his lawyers. Pepper left and Tony came home and started drinking heavily. It took only days for it to become a real problem.

He had become a very needy and always inebriated Tony. He had very nearly refused to let Loki roam out of his sight when he wasn’t in his lab, and claimed nightmares every night. Loki had to sit next to him until the drunken man fell asleep. Tony hadn’t even been up to joking about sex with him. He insulted the other Avenger’s at every chance and was skipping showers. They had declared his hair a natural disaster.

Steve tried to get Loki to go on a group date with him. Tony suddenly needed Loki to help him on a most important project and had one of the new recruits go instead. Loki demanded to know what the problem was.

“I will not enable your drunken antisocial behavior any longer. You are going to tell me what your problem is.” Loki growled pushing Tony into a chair.
“Lokiiiiiiii.” Tony whined and looked like a pitiful drunken slob.

Loki grabbed at Tony and took a moment to remove the overabundance of alcohol from his system. “You stink mortal. What in the nine realms has sent you into such a state?” Loki cast a spell that masked Tony’s smell.

“Bastard.” Tony looked cross.

“Adopted, but I don’t believe I was ever a bastard. Now it is time to stop pitying yourself and tell me what your problem is.” Loki glared.

“Pepper and I broke up and she won’t sleep with me and I can’t sleep with anyone else until she says so.” Tony didn’t look at Loki.

“You told me that in January. Do you want to sleep with her that bad? I know you, if you wanted to sleep with someone else that would not stop you.” Loki didn’t believe this was the problem.

“God you’re an ass. No, I don’t really give a flying fuck about sleeping with her. It’s over, I just thought she might stay a friend with benefits since she didn’t want to announce our split. That means have sex with me. I’m sexually frustrated, maybe I should go pick someone up.” Tony just looked out the window then at his bar, still not looking at Loki. He futilely hoped Loki who was leaning over him would just sit down and make him forget, it had been a long dry spell.

“I know what friends with benefits means you dolt. Go pick someone up if that’s what you want. I’m still waiting to hear you tell me what is really wrong, as that is not it.” Loki harshly pointed out.

“Fine, they’re suing me over the Nuke.” Tony spit out.

“That is not new. The fishing groups wouldn’t even talk to negotiate and you already announced you would never eat flounder, lobster and some sort of bass because of it. You have lawyers handling all of the other stupid suits suing you for anything that might be related to that bomb SHIELD sent. Something new is bothering you.” Loki stood and circled around the chair Tony sat, straddled half on the back of it with one sock covered foot on the arm the other on the floor next to Tony.

“Everyone is blaming me. Did you know someone is suing me because the nuke got them pregnant? I think every property owner from Long Island and half of the East Coast is suing me for property damages. They see Stark money and think easy millions. I don’t mind helping but I’m not the reason for that thing. Where else was I supposed put the thing? I’ve got reporters, lawyers, PI’s and concerned citizens waiting outside the tower to ambush me every time I leave. Plus the more recent radiation induced causality figures have come out.” Tony huffed, argued, complained and finally whispered as he talked. He started out looking at Loki but ended looking at his bar again.

“Tell me about those figures Stark.” It was easy to pick up that was the problem when it was whispered.

Tony closed his eyes and spoke slowly and softly. “….There are another hundred and fifty radiation related deaths starting from a month after the nuke so far. Almost a third are children. They didn’t deserve that. Cancer rates have skyrocketed in all directions from ground zero. I don’t mind helping but I’m not the reason for that thing. Where else was I supposed put the thing? I’ve got reporters, lawyers, PI’s and concerned citizens waiting outside the tower to ambush me every time I leave. Plus the more recent radiation induced causality figures have come out.” Tony huffed, argued, complained and finally whispered as he talked. He started out looking at Loki but ended looking at his bar again.

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“Tell me about those figures Stark.” It was easy to pick up that was the problem when it was whispered.
I saw Jarvis run the numbers.” Loki tried to reason with him.

“I’m trying but everyone keeps blaming me. And those kids. My lawyers are trying to get a blanket exoneration from the lawsuits. So now the rumor mill says suits have to be filed now or never. Guilty until proven innocent. I don’t think I can face Congress. What can I do?” Tony said finally telling Loki. He finally put his face in his hands.

“First, I’m going to make you a sleeping draft that will put you into a restful sleep that will help you deal with your anxiety and depression over your false guilt. Secondly, I’m going to give you a presentation showing what different options would have done if you had done things differently. Lastly, I’m going with you, to talk to the lawyers and Congress. You will see why I’m called Silvertongue.” Loki told Tony. His mind alight with an idea to get rid of the cuffs.

“It might be easier to just put me out of my misery.” Tony sighed. He wasn’t sure if Loki could help him.

“You are not an impotent pariah. I will not have you wasting your time feeling sorry for yourself when you have much better things to do and work on. We are almost at the point where I can teach you magic and you need a positive attitude to learn it.” Loki smiled and grabbed Tony’s hand and pulled him down to Loki’s suite to make the draft.

The presentation was scary enough, showing how things would have been had the nuke been placed anywhere else, including number and graphic pictures of the likely deaths. Then how much worse if Stark had died with the nuke. How his lack of existence would have caused everything to be different and in many cases catastrophic. It made Tony stop and realize how much of a difference he really made to the Avengers and to the people of New York. Loki was good, Tony really felt better, now convinced there was nothing he could have done differently.

Loki, with the SI lawyer’s help, promptly set up a meeting with Congress. He didn’t name SHIELD but told them about a world organization that had international leaders that chose to send that nuke, even going around their top advisors to get it sent and that they refused to take responsibility. He was unfortunately constrained under penalty of imprisonment from telling who this group was. He turned Anthony Stark into a hero who not only saved New York using everything at his disposal to make a bad situation better, but continued to open his heart to protect the US selflessly. His silver tongue was at its finest.

The next day the blanket exoneration was approved by both the Senate and the House and had the President’s signature before Tony went to bed. He was still by himself but without nightmares for the first time in weeks.

Fury and Phil had been in attendance. Fury was convinced of Loki’s innocence now. “That man could have ruled the world without firing a shot. Pray, he never really goes after SHIELD,” he had warned Phil afterwards.

After the meeting with congress Phil suggested Loki be allowed to roam inside the tower without the cuffs as long as Tony was around. They all agreed. They agreed to keep it from Fury for now,
figuring it was better to for him to learn after something good rather than argue about it now.

Loki would have the real cuffs on when he went outside for his once a month SHIELD answering sessions. He used the fake ones Tony had made for short trips around town. It was time to start teaching Stark.

Chapter End Notes

If you've never heard of him. The amazing Kreskin is a real person who gained fame by being an amazing mentalist with supposed psychic powers including precognition.

Thanks for reading this. 
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Now that Loki was out of the cuffs most of the time he had finally agreed to teach Stark magic. They were sitting in his lab.

Loki was going over the apprenticeship with Tony. Being an apprentice meant having someone who was connected and responsible for you and your magic, and especially responsible for the backlash of your magic. The magical binding would put a damper/ buffer/storage capacitor on the apprentice’s magic. The master would activate the magic. That way on occasions when the apprentice’s magic got out of control and possibly went nova it wouldn’t maim or kill but rather the excess energy would be bled off and released over time to both the apprentice and the master.

The further the student was from the teacher the more their magic would be damped. The apprenticeship binding stayed in effect until the teacher released the student. By that time the student could buffer their own spells and magic so they hopefully didn’t end up dead by accident.

Tony was ready. Loki carefully performed the apprenticeship binding creating a connection and the buffer on Tony and himself. Green and gold light flowed over Tony and Loki twice.

“That’s it? You may rock my world but I don’t feel any different. ” Tony said.

“Hush, I have not shown you how to access the magic yet, fool.” Loki glared at Tony who was supposed to be sitting quiet and still. “Now I’m going to reach into you and you will feel me putting pressure on you in a place you didn’t know existed. I want you to concentrate on feeling it.”

Tony suddenly felt a presence moving through him. It was a strange sensation almost like fluttering hands moving through his body. Except it was more like it was moving through his imaginary body. Then it stopped and pushed. The location was centered in his chest above his heart and the arc reactor. He felt it and found he could push on it.

“Is this it?” Tony asked somehow pinpointing it using his mind.

“Yes, very good, now I’m going to push through, prepare yourself.” Loki said.
Suddenly there was something? Energy? A new sense? He didn’t have the words, something was coming through, a shining bright graceful new sense. He felt it start flowing in, yes flowing was the word. Spreading into his body, quickly. It was radiating out from that point. Wait, then it found another point and then it was streaming in there too. As it spread, more and more entry points formed. Before long Tony could feel the magic channeling throughout his body.

When he thought his body felt full, he opened his eyes, and realized that there was still more coursing into his senses. The world was looking different, sharper somehow. He touched his fingers together and could feel a movement back and forth, magic. The table felt slightly different, so did his chair. He could smell, yes it was increased? but that was not correct. His taste was also enhanced. Something else drew his attention, he could sense Loki. It was in a way that must be a new sense, a magic sense. Loki was more. Actually, he was a lot more, like supernova more. If Tony’s magic was earth sized Loki would be the sun.

“Hey why are you so much more? God you’re beautiful. But don’t give me any shit about you being a god, I want to know for real.” Tony asked.

Loki laughed. “You don’t think it is due to me being a god?” He smiled. “It is because I have a lot of magic within me. As my apprentice, the connection allows you to see me, all my raw strength. In fact this bond is the only one where I am revealed and not shielded or hidden. Any teacher looks impressive to their student. But I am very powerful, I can hardly image what you see right now.”

Loki answered honestly.

“So how do most magic users see you?” Tony couldn’t take his eyes off Loki now.

“They see an average sorcerer or more usually nothing. I have not been seen fully unshielded since I was a small child. When my mother opened my magic, she immediately put up a wall. For the next month, all we did was work on figuring out how to hide the sheer amount I had. As you can guess my teacher was my mother.” Loki smiled about that.

“What about your other apprentices?” Tony wondered what they had seen.

“You are my first. I was forbidden from taking one. Possibly because Mother thought it would put me in danger and wished to hide knowledge of my power from other. Odin would say I had duties to the realm. He didn’t really want many sorcerers around; I truly don’t know if he knows how much magic I possess.” Loki added.

“Well damn, aren’t I special? Do I get a discount because you are a novice teacher then?” Tony teased feeling the flow of magic continue into himself.

“You are a pain, I should name you after some affliction… Perhaps my little hemorrhoid. Just because I have not taken the other end of an apprentice link before does not mean I have not taught magic before.”

“Ha-ha. Wait? I thought I had to be bound to learn it. Did I just get played?” Tony objected. He was feeling a bit weird. Loki was beautiful. Actually, everything was beautiful, and different.

Loki laughed out loud. “I have taught people who already had their magic active. You can still learn after one has finished their apprentice-ship. I have even opened the magic up once or twice when one’s master lacked the ability to do so. So no, my little hemorrhoid, you have not been played and I am more than qualified.”

“So what next? Does this get better? My senses seem to have just gone crazy. And you Sparkles are so very there.” Tony said, he was leaning against a table for support while still sitting and only
starting to be able to take his eyes off Loki. “You know this is better than being high.” He added starting to look around the room. Then he tried to stand. “I don’t know if I’ve told you before but you are the absolute best cuddly, warm, cuddly, understanding, cuddly, therapeutic, cuddly, cuddle-bunny, cuddly, best teddy bear ever… Definitely feels a bit like being high. I think my co-ordination is off just a bit. Did I say I like that you cuddle with me?”

“It will take some time to adjust. You should stay still and calm. Perhaps I should walk you up to your bedroom.” Loki said, noticing Tony was still had magic flowing into him. Yes, the Midgardian was going to end up very overwhelmed, very soon. Perhaps he had underestimated the amount of magic Tony had, it was entirely possible the Arc reactor had hidden most of Tony’s connections to Yggdrasil. Tony had said something about being high? He wondered about that. The inventor had even mostly ignored the fact he had called him a pain in the ass twice.

Speaking of asses, Tony tried to stand. “Yup, best teddy bear ever. Oh, I’m fine, so are you and so is your tight ass. Wanta get naked and explore each other? You are so fine. I’d bend over right now but I gotta see you. Can we fuck facing each other?” He said, now staring at Loki, letting out a small giggle.

Loki gave Tony a grim look. “This is effecting you more than I expected. Should I call someone to help?”

“Nope, not at all, nada, negative, forget it. I had full permission to look before, and did it all the time, don’t need it now. I am a free spirit, unattached, but want to be attached to you physically I don’t care who’s top. You know you could come closer.” Tony responded, batting his eyes and putting his hands on the table. He moved off the chair attempting a standing position to get closer to Loki.

“Oh dear, this is much worse than I expected. You must have had quite a bit of magic hidden by that thing in your chest. I need to take you to your room.” Loki said looking at Tony who would have a lecherous look on his face if only his eyes didn’t seem to be swirling.

“I think you’re going to have to top. My co-ordination seems to be a bit off handsome. Now can we start taking our clothes off?” Tony was trying to remove his clothes but failing miserably. The only thing he seemed to be able to use effectively was his mouth, much to Loki’s frustration.

“Did you hear me Stark? I need to take you to your room. Do not take off your clothes. I’m not having sex with you.” Loki said in disgust. Stark looked like he was about to pounce on Loki. Yes, this was affecting him in a completely unexpected manner.

Tony fell on the floor and started giggling. Dum-e had come over and was now looking down at him, clearly trying to decide what type of emergency clean up or help was required.

“Hiya little guy. Loki turned me down but I’m not giving up. You’re kinda cute too, think I love you.” He said as he reached out and grabbed Dum-e’s hand. Then giggled some more and added “I think you’re magical.”

Loki rolled his eyes. “Jarvis can you open the doors and clear the path so I might take your master to his bedroom for the night?” not wanting to carry Stark up the stairs.

Tony interjected. “Jarvis will you marry me?” Then he giggled again.

“It will be my extreme pleasure. Master Loki.” Jarvis said with disdain.

It took some work since Tony resisted and never shut up. Loki finally picked Tony up and carried him bridal style up to his room. But not before visiting a few extra floors. Loki made the mistake of
taking the elevator. Tony wasn’t ready to go to bed yet and kept pushing extra buttons in the elevator using override codes on Jarvis.

Loki got several kisses on his cheek and a few more times Tony licked his neck, face and ear. After the third time Tony groped him he used magic to keep Stark’s hands in place. Loki only let him suck on his finger once. He also turned Stark down flat on all his attempts to ask, bribe and threaten Loki to marry him, fuck him. get naked or even once very sweetly to make love to him’.

“I pray you don’t remember this when you wake.” Loki told him smiling thinking Tony would really feel a fool if he did.

By the time they reached the penthouse Tony had sang parts of ‘Voulez Vous Coucher Avec Moi Ce Soir’ to Loki, ‘The Time Warp’ to no one in general, ‘Let it Go’ words sometimes being, let it snow, or ‘let it grow’ implying sex with everyone, and ‘Carry on My Wayward Son’ to Loki while giggling and nuzzling his cheeks. And as Loki carried him into the bedroom he started singing. ‘Here Comes the Bride.’ And told Loki “You kept turning me down, so I’m marrying Jarvis. You get to carry me over the threshold for Jarvis since he doesn’t have a body. He could use a suit maybe. Man I forgot about sex. Jarvis what are we gonna do about sex. I can’t live without sex. Hey Loki maybe we could have a threesome? If you won’t marry me, do you find me sexy? How about just having sex with me.” He purred into Loki’s neck.

Loki dumped him on the bed and watched him roll around on the bed in a fit of giggles. “Jarvis, alert me if he tries anything stupid or dangerous… Correction, anything more stupid than normal or dangerous.” And left.

Loki went back to his rooms and started looking through his boxes. Finding the one he wanted he opened it. Inside were a set of cubes. He picked up the first and largest one reached out his magic and opened it.

Inside was a lovely picture of his mother. He smiled and closed it up. And carefully put the picture by his bed. He then picked up his tablet and ordered a frame for it. Then set the four boxes on a table for Tony.

Trouble came up to him and jumped in his lap. Loki smiled and scratched his cat just the way it liked. “Oh Trouble, what have I got myself into. That man is as crazy as I am. I’m not sure the universe is ready for two Gods of Chaos.”

Trouble looked up at Loki and Loki almost thought he saw a sparkle in the cat’s eyes. He shook his head and said. “I think I need some rest too. Time for our beauty sleep.”

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is a little shorter. Sorry for not doing a second chapter this week like I would normally do when I have a short chapter. But my husband/beta has been busy with Christmas/Holidays and not in the mood to work on this. Don’t worry I’ve still got one ready for next week.

Songs info - In case you don't know for some. Or live under a rock for others.
Voulez Vous Coucher Avec Moi Ce Soir /Lady Marmalade - In French it means 'Do you want to sleep with me tonight'. It was a song from 1974 by Eleventh Hour, originally made famous by Patti LaBelle from the LaBelles. - Thank you TheQueeninMourningHasASecret for pointing out my mistake so I could correct it!

Time Warp - From Rocky Horror Picture show. 1973 musical later becoming a cult classic movie in 1975- it was an ensemble piece.

Let It Go - From the 2013 movie Frozen sung by Idina Menzel

Carry on My Wayward Son - 1976 by Kansas

Here Comes the Bride - Wedding March or Bridal Chorus, by Richard Wagner from the opera Lohengrin. - I figured everyone knows it but I didn't know where it was from.

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Loki’s Past

Chapter Summary

Tony Stark starts to learn magic. Loki talks about his past. April fools day find targets.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

WARNING- Loki talks about the death of his children.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony woke up feeling great, but fuzzy. He looked around, his room? Bedroom? check. No hangover, good. Something wasn’t right though. Everything felt… off. For lack of a better word some things felt sparkly. Some more than others. Damn he remembered a bad vampire book where they sparkled, oh well he couldn’t help the way things looked. Definitely the outside wall and windows were very, much, more. Oh yeah, Loki turned his magic sense on… In his lab.

His memory kept chugging away trying to remember the night before. Giggles. He was still dressed in yesterday’s clothes. Then he started remembering what he had said. He had asked Loki to marry him then ordered Jarvis to. Told Dum-e he was in love with him. Wait, did he actually tell Loki that he was the best teddy bear he ever had? And Loki had rejected his suggestions to become his fuck buddy? He had flirted with Loki and tried to talk him into sex multiple times. Then there was the threesome with Jarvis and the songs.

“Oh god.” He groaned. “I’m sorry Jarvis. I really made an ass out of myself last night. Didn’t I?”

“Don’t worry about it, Sir. It was no more than normal.” Jarvis snarked.

“Jarvis, I meant with Loki.” Tony groaned.

“Master Loki assured me that you could not control yourself and that you would not be held accountable for your words and actions. We both agreed not to speak of it to anyone.” Jarvis assured him.

“Thanks, how am I going to face Loki though?” Tony had finally managed to sit up.

“Quite probably exactly as you are, Sir. He is on his way as we speak.” Jarvis told him.

“What? Oh Shit. Damn, why’d you tell him I was awake.” Tony said as he jumped out of bed and quickly staggered to the bathroom. He was not very steady and left the bathroom door open.

“He felt it important to know immediately when you awoke so he could check for side effects, Sir.”
Jarvis said as Loki walked in.

Loki immediately went to help Tony. “You can hardly stand you fool. Look at the mess you made.” Loki waved his hand a bit and the mess around the toilet was gone, as a red-faced Tony pulled up his shorts.

Loki then proceeded to check and aid Tony while he brushed his teeth, got deodorant on and checked his eyes. “You can bathe later, when you can stand by yourself.” Loki informed him when Tony looked longingly at the shower. He did agree to wash his face and get him a clean shirt to wear. They made it to the living room. Trouble was sitting on the couch waiting for them.

“Sorry about last night.” Tony mumbled ashamedly.

Loki ignored it and asked. “Do you think you are up to learning anything yet? I want to get you started while everything is still very new.”

“I can barely walk and you think I can learn magic?” Tony was confused.

“Actually right now is an ideal time to start. Your focus is so absorbed on your new magic sense that you are having a hard time focusing on anything else. Training now will help you gain some control without so many distractions.” Loki explained. Then he brought out the first cube and held it up. “What do you see?”

“A man who hasn’t fed me coffee or breakfast.” Tony said looking from Loki to the kitchen.

“Here, look at this.” Loki huffed and handed Tony the box. “What happened to the man who doesn’t need food or sleep?” He said as he headed toward the kitchen.

“He is currently high on magic, always needs coffee, has the munchies, and is wondering what I’m supposed to do with a solid metal cube?” Tony was finally looking at it and seeing no seams.

“It is a box with a magic handle. Find the handle and open it.” Loki yelled from the other room.

Tony looked at it. Sparkles, no he didn’t like that word. Vivacity, better not overused. Ok he looked at the vivacity of the magic the box had. It was denser in places. By the time Loki had breakfast he was pretty sure he had found the handle, but had not figured out how to interact with it.

He and Loki talked about it and before long Tony had the box open. Despite Tony wanting to create a flame and do flashy magic, Loki kept him just interacting with it, feeling it, simple manipulation of it. ‘Baby steps Tony’. Loki brought out another box, slightly harder.

When Tony opened it, another picture fell out.

“Oh mother.” Loki exclaimed when he saw it. Immediately Trouble brushed up against Loki.

“Who’s with you, looks like a family?” Tony asked.

Loki closed his eyes. The picture hurt, it had so many memories attached to it. Tony was going to ask. He needed to decide whether to tell or not, and how much. Tony had shared quite a bit of himself and shown he cared unconditionally.

“It is a picture of myself with Sigyn, Narfi and Vali. They were my wife and children.” Loki acknowledged. The cat moved into his lap.

“You’re married?” Tony sounded shocked. He felt a surge of panic race through his body until the
‘were’ caught up with his brain.

“Not anymore.” Loki tried to take the picture.

“Were? Why would your mother send it then?”

“They are no longer alive. My mother has never known the truth.” Loki confessed.

“I’ve told you things no one else alive knows. Could you tell me about this?” Tony queried with puppy dog eyes. He wanted so much to know more about Loki’s past.

Loki didn’t want to tell Tony but he had proved he could keep secrets, and Tony had opened his soul to Loki. “I suppose, but it is very private.”

“I won’t breath a word Sparkles, I mean Vivacity.” Tony tried his best to look sincere.

Loki remembered as he spoke. “I was so young, only about 70 years. My father had arranged a marriage to Sigyn. She was from Anaheim. Her parents were nobles with a vast army. Odin wanted the army. Her parents wanted the wild and spoiled Sigyn to settle down. She was one of many children and older than I. It had been made clear from the beginning that it would not have to last more than 50 years and could be dissolved earlier if both parties agreed and there were at least two children produced. Her father had insisted on an infidelity clause. If she cheated her lovers would be executed. He was looking for a way to try to keep some of her promiscuous ways in line. She was older, I had no idea what I was getting into. I agreed to all the clauses.”

Tony looked on with rapt interest. He was finally getting something out of Loki.

“Sigyn had seen me and wanted me on looks alone. We married and within a year she had twins, Narfi and Vali. But Sigyn was not interested in raising children, preferring to socialize with her friends. So, I did most of the care myself. She had started cheating by the time the twins were two. I really do not know when she started, I only know the twins were mine. Her father killed that lover when he found out. Unbeknown to me, he and Odin started having her watched. I caught her again when the twins were five and asked her for a divorce. Her father had ears everywhere and had that lover killed also. It was at that time that I learned that there were several other men who had disappeared mysteriously after being associated with her. She promised to stop cheating, she didn’t want a divorce... What she didn’t want was to lose the status of being a member of the Asgard ruling family. She started spreading lies about me after that. However, she did not stop the affairs.”

“Shortly thereafter the twins performed magic. I was thrilled, Sigyn was horrified and jealous. Magic ran in her house but she was not blessed with enough to even be taught. The next time I caught her cheating, her beau asked for a duel. I couldn’t get out of it because of the marriage clauses. The idiot didn’t know what hit him. I was so much more skilled than him even without my magic.” Loki’s eyes looked away the memories hurt.

Tony put his hand on Loki’s back. Trouble rubbed against him some more.

“She despised the twins and myself now. Word had started to get around that cheating with her would be your death. I’m guessing between her father, Odin and myself nearly a dozen lovers had died or disappeared mysteriously. I no longer trusted her in any way and had started an official separation with intent to divorce. She was banned from court except for celebrations. She made no attempt to see her sons saying they were vile abominations. She eventually embarrassed Odin publicly and was sent away from Asgard altogether.”

“The angry vicious woman arranged for her current boyfriend to kidnap the twins then tried to
blackmail Odin and myself into letting her come back to court. I was terrified and searched without 
sleep for my children.”

“Odin fumed, I wonder if he really searched, he said he did.” Loki was looking disturbed at this 
point.

"We finally found where they were being kept. Odin and I had gone together to collect the boys. 
Sigyn had heard we were coming and Vali had been turned into a wolf and was in the process of 
tearing Narfi apart when Odin and I arrived. As much as she hated me and magic, her current beau 
had been another sorcerer. Odin in a fit of rage had killed everyone except me. I could not protect my 
children.” Loki’s face was in agony.

“Oh, Loki.” Tony put his arms around him.

“There’s more. When Odin realized his mistake, it was too late. I was in tears, clamoring to tell 
mother everything. We made a deal.” Loki pulled away from Tony, he was now angry. Trouble 
jumping back on the couch. “Odin promised he would never arrange a marriage for me, or kill 
another of my children, or most importantly, he would never object to me learning more magic. In 
return, mother would be told that the boyfriend had killed Sigyn and the twins, and that I had killed 
the boyfriend. It had been hard not to tell her, but Odin had convinced me that it would only break 
her heart. The truth could never bring them back. I was a fool to listen. Even then Odin had only 
cared about how others viewed him. He never really cared about me or my feelings.” He finally spit 
out.

Tony pulled Loki back onto the couch and continued to hold him for some time. Tony saw Loki’s 
eyes water and tears fall, but kept quiet. He was glad Loki had felt he could confide in him this way, 
with something no one else knew. He was feeling assured that the student/master apprenticeship 
wasn’t going to affect their friendship.

Eventually Loki grabbed the boxes and opened the other two himself. He took out one more picture 
without showing Tony. He gave a weak smile and turned to Tony. “I want you to continue working 
with the boxes. They get progressively more difficult. If you open them all the last picture will be 
your prize for your practice.” Loki left and retired for the day.

As he left Tony thought about Earth’s Norse mythology that he knew was mostly false. Jarvis told 
him it painted Sigyn as the loyal faithful wife of Loki. It seemed that the wife part was true at one 
time, but the loyal faithful part was about as far as one could get. Was this story also corrupted to 
cause Loki pain he wondered?

Tony worked until he got all the boxes opened. Inside the last was a picture of two children. One 
blond wearing red, soaked, sitting in a fountain with a tight-lipped smile on his face. The smaller 
black haired child wearing green, laughing next to the fountain, waving with one hand at the person 
taking the picture. His other hand pointed at the blond. Tony laughed knowing this was clearly a 
fond memory for Loki. He took the picture and put it on his own nightstand.

Tony continued to learn, it seemed slow but it was steady pace. He learned how to make a door 
handle magical too. Soon he could close a door and lock it to anyone but himself and Loki. It would 
even keep Trouble out! Learning theory was the best part. Tony’s mind was being introduced to a 
wonderful and exciting new world.
Tony spent most of his time immersed in magic. Loki was very much into defense before learning offense. Tony learned how to make a very weak force field. Then to make it a bit stronger and to shape it. He figured out how to line the outside of the Ironman suit. It was able to stop several doombot magic attacks before giving out. And he had the energy to renew it once in a fight if he could find a place to stop and concentrate for a couple minutes. It had no effect on normal physical attacks yet. Loki kept trying to keep the amount of magic he used at the lower levels. He needed to build up his control to use more powerful stuff. It was all about control.

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Jarvis discovered another odd occurrence. The Avengers had been sent out on an attack by SHIELD. Yet SHIELD hadn’t had any way of knowing about the event yet. No one had called it in or reported it to them. It left so many unanswered questions and a dead body belonging to the person who had alerted Fury to tell the Avengers. Even Fury was getting frustrated because his investigations were going so poorly.

Before the end of March Tony and Pepper’s broken relationship had hit the news. By April first Pepper had moved back to California for a while but stayed his CEO as agreed. She started to take appointments to see people with new ideas again.

The rest of the Avengers were very disappointed to find out Natasha had indeed actually won the bet.

April Fool’s morning brought a new round of laughter.

Steve was awoken to Wagner’s ‘Ride of the Valkyries’ at maximum volume. He managed to get it turned off when his alarm started blaring ‘My Country Tis of Thee’ also at full volume being sung by a slightly off-key singer. When he turned on the shower he heard Prince’s ‘Purple Rain’ coming from a speaker that had not previously been there. When he found the controls and got that finally turned down, the music switched to ‘Singing in the Rain’ sung by Gene Kelly which he liked but had never heard before, since he had missed the 50’s, but did remember Gene Kelly.

Natasha woke to find someone had left a sign in her suite that said. “We were going to pimp you but decided it would not work out for us.” Underneath the sign were life-sized standup cardboard cutouts of each of them sans herself, all with the heads cut off and on the floor.

Loki went to hunt down Tony to ask about removing the hundred stuffed bears dressed as Chitauri that had been scattered in Loki’s living room.

Tony was woken by Loki only to find the penthouse completely lacking in underwear and socks, except for a pair in a helium balloon filled with red and gold glitter. He went commando in sweatpants that day.

Bruce discovered his teas had been switched and a medicinal one for relaxing had catnip in it. Jarvis found that one.

Tony soon found a recording of his own voice telling Jarvis he couldn’t talk to anyone until after Tony got to the common room. It was well doctored and he set to work making a defense to fix that hole.

Clint didn’t find anything until he went to the bathroom and found his face painted magenta.

Cereal had been switched. An obviously doctored picture of Clint and Phil naked, hung on the
common room wall. Someone had put a live hamster in a hamster ball to be found by Trouble who had terrorized the poor thing nearly to death. The kitchen chairs were all sticky. The coffee that had been prepared the night before for morning had been doctored with laxative. The silverware was gone, in its place were red and gold plastic stuff. And at ten am a delivery of enough balloons to stuff their private elevator full, was sent up.

Someone bought Trouble a new toy filled with catnip.

Trouble went crazy and destroyed several of Bruce’s experiments, pulled all of Steve’s underwear out of his drawer, tore open three of Natasha’s pillows and knocked all of Phil’s suits to the floor and rolled over them covering them in cat hair.

Clint threw out the toy, hunted down the canister of catnip from Christmas and dumped it out. Then he asked Jarvis to scan anything anyone bought for Trouble for catnip just in case.

Phil was out on assignment and missed the whole event.

It seemed that more than one person had arranged to celebrate the day.

Fury came into work that day, opened the door to his office and found a room sized fishbowl. There was a clear plastic tarp taped up covering everything filled with water and a dozen goldfish swimming around. Nothing under the tarp was even wet. He suspected Loki and the Avengers since it just happened to be a day that Loki came in to talk and throughout the day each of them seemed to stop by for one reason or another. He hated April first.

When Loki went to SHIELD, he had to put the cuffs back on. Tony found out what Loki had meant about his senses being damped. It really was just the magic but now that he’d had it for a few weeks the loss was like a nasty hangover with a head cold. He was cut off and couldn’t use his magic. He could still sense magic in the walls of Stark tower or from Loki but he needed to be within a few feet to feel it and then it was weak and felt off. Fortunately, the side effects partially subsided after about four hours. It still left him feeling lousy and empty. When Loki and Steve returned, he had Jarvis bring him to his lab immediately, despite Steve starving and trying to head to the kitchen first.

Tony wanted to do offensive magic and affect the physical world more and Loki finally gave in. They had a long talk that Tony found boring about conservation of energy, Tony knew it all. Then they talked about how explosive magic could be in the physical world. And yes Tony would eventually make a fireball after he learned to use something that was similar to telekinesis.

It took him three days to figure out how to move a pencil.

“Loki, look I did it!” Tony was so excited “I think I see what you are talking about. I’m gonna try to push that box.” He said as he did it.

Loki saw it was too late as he said “No.” and shook his head at the explosion blasted the box across the room and Tony’s face, body and clothes were black with tiny burn spots.

“Yeouch! What the fuck?” Tony yelled and ran to his sink. Dum-e was caught off guard and went to try to help Tony. They fought over the sprayer only to end up with them both fighting with water at the sink. Soaking each other with the spray in the process.
“To much push. I said it was explosive.” Loki snickered as Dum-e tried to wipe Tony down with wet rags and Tony kept pushing the rags out of his face.

“So how the hell does Doom do it? He doesn’t have a teacher.” Tony asked finally taking the rag away from Dum-e.

“The only thing he is doing is pushing bits of magic together and opening them into his power sources. He does not directly affect the magic. I could use you as a source now that you are active.” Loki laughed.

“Wait can I make a power source then? Why haven’t I learned that?” Tony complained trying to take a single bandage from the four Dum-e was now trying to put on him.

“Because it is a crutch. I would bet the mask he wears is because he blew himself up with magic.”

“But can’t I just learn how it’s done? Make a few to experiment with it? His are so messed up by the time I get them.”

“I suppose I could teach you. Then, I could remove the buffer enough to mess up your face if you really want to be like him?” Loki sneered.

“Nope, I’ll wait, just keep that buffer as it is, I like this handsome face thank you very much.” Tony conceded after finally getting a rag away from Dum-e and wiping his face clean.

“I will teach you at some point. You are much too powerful to do that without having the control to actually use it. His magic is weak and limited, much harder to kill himself.” Loki added.

“Alright, I get it. Hey, that means I’m more powerful than him? And Stark wins again!” Tony absently tossed the towel and gave it a push in the air with less magic. After realizing what he had done panicked and dropped to the floor. It landed over Dum-e’s head/sensors and he started spinning to get it off.

Loki smirked at Tony. “Yes, I’m impressed. After nearly killing yourself you were not only brave enough to try again but used the correct amount needed.”

Tony opened his mouth to say something and then just laughed as Loki offered a hand to help him up.

Bruce was also doing quite well according to Loki. For him it was slow going. Angry two-year-olds didn’t learn very fast. The Hulk would take even longer. Bruce was always conscious when the Hulk was out now, sometimes even able to suggest one target over another, or distract Hulk from simply smashing things. Loki had told him it would be like this, and honestly this was so much better than before when he only had occasional memory flashes of what he did.

Hulk was also able to sit and be read to for minutes at a time without getting bored. He liked to color and was very hard on the large crayons, which they continually had to replace. Trouble had taken to visiting with Loki and sometimes when others went to ‘babysit’ the Hulk. The cat always seemed to have a calming influence on him. Of course, this was no surprise as Bruce’s few memories of his early times with Hulk on the run was when he was calm with nature and had animals around him.

Loki had become one of Hulks best friends now. No one but Bruce knew exactly what Loki did with him when it was his turn to ‘babysit’ the Hulk. And Bruce wasn’t telling. But it did make Hulk calmer overall and no one complained.
Natasha also made sure she had lots of time with the Hulk. Tony was convinced she was reporting to SHIELD. Steve thought she was doing her duty. Clint had decided she found the Hulk to be calming for her. She wasn’t saying either.

Tony convinced Loki to let him try to light a candle. It took two days until Tony could consistently light a candle. Loki complemented him because he actually did it without overpowering the buffer.

In LA Pepper finally met with one Aldrich Killian, who complained he had been waiting four long months to get to see her. She apologized but still turned down working with him and his think-tank, because his research was too easily weaponized.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Trouble with the Mandarin

Chapter Summary

The events of Iron Man 3 happened around Christmas. In my world Pepper was refusing to see people then. Killian had waited the few months hoping to convince SI to help voluntarily. Things have changed. Iron Man 3 occurs in this chapter and starts a huge swing from Canon in Tony's life.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is longer than most. I hope you enjoy it!

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

March had brought Ten Rings and bombing in the Middle East. Tony did his best trying to talk and convince Colonel Rhodes into letting them help but got told the US Military wanted to look stronger after the alien attack and Thanksgiving Massacre. The Avenger’s help was not wanted.

Tony had Jarvis start looking into random bombings around the US. They discovered that many looked like the ones in the Middle East. Once again Rhodey told him, “No Tone, let us deal with it, but thanks for the info man.”

A few days into April, Happy was injured in LA, followed by a broadcast by the Mandarin. Tony left for the west coast. Bruce, Steve and Clint declared that Loki should wear his cuffs in case SHIELD showed up. SHIELD was still not aware Loki was out of them most of the time or that he was teaching Tony magic. Tony tried to come up with reasons or excuses to keep the god out of them. He even tried to convince Loki to come with him. Unfortunately, Tony had already taken several short business trips before without him. That set a precedent for leaving Loki in New York. It was too risky, the rest decided, so Tony would just have to suffer. SHIELD liked knowing where Loki was. And indeed, Tony suffered; it was like having a strange sort of head cold.

Tony, who hadn’t yet been away from Loki on a trip since learning magic, was now miserable with a constant stuffy feeling, and was in a mood. This resulted in his temperament being much worse. Happy was his and should never have been in danger, let alone in the hospital.

Tony arrived on the balcony of Pepper’s LA office and walked right into her office. “Pepper, I need to know everything about Happy, when… who the hell is she?” His face mask lifted and he looked
“This is Maya Hanson she just arrived to talk to me about a problem that may involve Happy. We had not actually gotten started. You might remove your suit and join us.” Pepper said crossing her arms, raising her eyebrows and lowering her chin.

“I’m sorry to hear about your break-up” The woman said to Tony sounding legitimately sad.

“We’re still friends.” Tony smiled one of his fake smiles as he started to collapse the suit.

“I believe we met on New Year’s Eve in 1999 and we spent the night. You do remember me don’t you Tony?” Maya said watching him carefully, as he stepped out of the suit that was suddenly a briefcase.

Tony thought ‘oh fuck’. Then said out loud, so Jarvis who was still plugged into his ear could hear. “Party, New Year’s Eve, Y2K, spent the night, it’s coming to me.” He stalled for time as Jarvis sent him the information. He didn’t remember her at all.

“Sir, she was a botanist doing some sort of growth research.” Jarvis provided in his ear as Tony walked around the room.

“I got it now. You’re the plant person, botanist, great night by the way! Did you finally make the super sunflowers you were working on?” Tony may not have remembered his parties but he always had Jarvis record details of the ones where anything science was discussed, just in case.

“It was quite a bit more than plants, and now I’m involved in a think tank with Aldrich Killian.” Maya told him. She walked up to him. And showed him a nametag with equations on it.

Pepper heard her say Aldrich Killian and frowned. She thought about his visit a few days earlier and walked toward Tony and Maya.

Tony looked at the notes. “I wrote this. Must have been drunk cuz I don’t remember. I do great work even when I’m drunk. You should remember that Pep.” He was looking at Pepper like she should praise him.

Pepper stepped closer to Tony to look at the notes, rolling her eyes at his comment.

Maya looked at him in shock. “You don’t remember it? I’ve based most my work off this and have made great strides. I was hoping you could finish the formula for me.”

Tony laughed. “Sorry, I don’t remember it at all. Keep at it. I’m sure I was probably on the right track, you’ll get it eventually. Now what’s this got to do with Happy?” He started to hand it back to her.

Maya was sincere almost pleading and put one hand on Tony’s hand with the nametag. “I’m so glad you showed up while I’m here. I really need your help, this could save lives. Your friend being damaged does relate to this. You’ve got to help me.” And took a step even closer to Tony looking into his eyes, her other hand held a folder.

Pepper was now standing beside Tony. “Maya, I appreciate you coming here today to talk to me. Unfortunately I looked at what Aldrich showed me the other day. I haven’t talked to Tony yet but this could be easily be used to make supersoldiers if you get it to work. That makes it a weapon and Tony and SI just don’t do that anymore.” Pepper explained

“Sorry toots, I really don’t. SI won’t, my orders.” Tony smiled. “You still haven’t explained how this
relates to Happy. If your research is related I’m even less interested in helping something that fucked up.” He let go of the name tag.

“You really won’t consider Mr. Stark. Even think about it? How about you take the material and at least look it over. I can tell you more about your friend then.” Maya opened the folder, it was rather think and put the nametag on top and tried to hand it to him.

“Still, really not interested. And just so you know trying to blackmail me by withholding information is rather stupid. Do you actually even know anything about Happy?”

She put one hand into her pocket. “Well you can’t say I didn’t try. But you being here really makes our job that much easier.” Maya said pulling her hand out of her pocket revealing a weird syringe and jabbed Tony with an obviously fast acting sedative. She turned as Pepper started to scream and jabbed her too. “Nice of you both to be so close to me. Now we don’t have to ransom you to him.” The syringe had looked strange because it was a multi-dose device with an alert button. Maya turned and opened the door revealing her companions who had just disrupted Jarvis in the building when she had pushed the alert button.

They stomped on Tony’s ear bud and proceeded to search Tony and Pepper before taking them away.

When Jarvis came back on line in the building he alerted security. They had already discovered the breach and the kidnappers had escaped through the roof. They found a pile of phones, watches, tablets, buttons, jewelry and anything else that might have been a tracking device. Even chips that Tony had embedded in his arms and legs had been removed. Fortunately they left the Arc Reactor alone. Unfortunately he hadn’t thought to hide a tracking chip in it along with Loki’s key.

Tony and Pepper went off the grid. Maya Hanson was registered as a guest and had been taken with them, or more likely had helped take them. She too was off the grid.

The Avengers were worried, Jarvis was concerned. Loki assured them that Tony was alive. The link was still there and strong, Ironman was not dead. Inwardly Loki worried about the man, his first real friend. Stark was still a fragile mortal despite the enhancement his mother had suggested he take. The spare key (Bruce and Steve’s key) Tony had stolen was still with the inventor. There were protocols with Jarvis to get the other key but most required knowledge of Tony’s whereabouts one way or another. So he waited, unable to volunteer to try to find Stark. The genius was resourceful, but it didn’t mean Loki wasn’t worried, Jarvis too. He talked to Jarvis and they started work on the process, to break into the safe to get Tony’s key.

That night Dr. Doom chose to attack. Natasha was critically injured, bleeding badly.

Loki heard the fight through their coms and immediately started thinking on what he might do, even bouncing a few ideas off Jarvis. He met the Avengers as they landed. Natasha needed healing and by the sound of it quickly. It would soon be revealed that the second key was fake, and he would have to tell them, knowing he would get the blame. He was still thinking about what he could do to help the little spider as he went to the helipad to meet them.

The Avengers were expecting Loki to be able to heal her. As they were disembarking from the plane Loki heard them asking Steve to get his key for the cuffs.
Steve stopped and stood still almost in shock. “Can’t Bruce open the one in the lab?” He asked sounding worried. Loki stepped closer to hear and to help with Nat.

“No, it takes Tony’s explicit permission for Bruce to open that one besides he’s hulked out. Now get to it.” Clint ordered.

“I can’t get it.” Steve looked very upset and his voice trembled.

Loki was confused. ‘Had Steve figured the ruse out?’

“Why not?” Natasha said sounding strong, like she had nothing wrong with her.

Loki was with them by now, looking at the damage, trying to stop her bleeding by normal means. Hulk was going to his play room, trying to calm down.

“Look, I never thought we’d need it, so I gave it to Fury. He felt SHIELD should have it.” Steve sounded sorry and defeated.

Loki’s head popped up. “The agreement to my being here clearly stated SHIELD would have no control.” Loki said giving Steve the glare of death. Well-hidden was the thoughts inside his head about how glad he was Tony had taken the key first. His mind moved onto, where was Tony, they needed him. ‘I hope he is well’. Finally again thinking about his idea to help Natasha.

“We don’t even trust SHIELD and now Nat’s life is on the line.” Clint not only sounded but was furious. Natasha was bleeding badly and they suspected severe internal injuries too.

Loki had the thought pop in his head that Steve would once again be at the end of Clint’s hall. Stark’s secret was safe. He felt momentary relief that he would not be in trouble, at least until Natasha reentered his thoughts due to a meow from Trouble.

“I know, I know, I gave it to them a long time ago, shortly after he came. Don’t worry, I’ll call Fury.” He said, “Try to stabilize her if possible.” Steve was clearly worried but was good at keeping his cool.

“If that key is not in the city we may lose her.” Clint shouted as they rushed her into the building on the stretcher that was kept on board the quinjet.

Loki had brought his mind back to his task and was looking at Natasha who was doing her best to stay conscious. He explained at they went down the elevator. “There is no time. Clint, I’m going to try something that I think may work. I need you to hold the towels. Steve I’m going to need you to help hold her in place. In theory if I can convince the cuffs that she is an extension of my body, I can send my magic into her.”

“You are not allowed to have sex with her!” Clint protested.

“Shut up Clint.” Natasha spit out. “Do what you need to.”

Loki looked appalled and insulted. “Of course I won’t have sex with her. That would be akin to rape in her condition. This will require me breathing into her mouth making a seal, our breath being one. I will have to take in and release the air for both. It is more like your ‘mouth to mouth’, only much more difficult. Can you all live with that?” Loki said while helping them get her into the infirmary.

Steve and Clint nodded yes and Natasha gave a slight approval mumbling, “Get on with it.”

They got in place and Loki leaned over her and started breathing into her mouth. One hand was
bracing himself the other was holding her nose closed so she was forced to breath in his breath. His breath now entered her lungs.

After about two minutes Natasha started feeling the pain associated with healing. Loki stopped the active bleeding first. It was exhausting for both of them. They were taking oxygen from the same limited air and had to co-ordinate their breathing. Her lungs were punctured in three places. He started working on them next. Very slowly her body was being repaired enough to survive.

Bruce came in partway through and brought oxygen to Loki’s nose to breath. It made a huge difference as healer and wounded both gained a bit of color.

Stopping the places she actively bled took well over an hour, as opposed to the minutes it would normally have taken Loki. They let Jarvis handle the SHIELD calls. Healing her took nearly three hours not including two breaks for Loki to take short rests and to adjust things to make him more comfortable as he bent over her. In the end Natasha was left very weak, she was dehydrated, still covered in cuts and bruises, and her lungs were still in serious condition, but she would live now.

Bruce had given her blood and hooked her up to an IV. She still required an oxygen mask and needed to remain immobile. Like this it would take weeks for her to recover.

Loki was exhausted, he told them that while the method worked, the cuffs limited how much magic flowed into her. It was very inefficient and he did the best he could but only her life threatening injuries were healed. He was lucky to have been able to do it at all. He would do more later, once they could remove the cuffs.

Trouble who had snuck down into the infirmary as they brought Natasha down, jumped up and curled up next to Natasha, keeping watch.

Steve had called Fury. The news just got worse. Apparently the key was taken by the World Security Council for safe keeping. It was not even in the city and they refused to give it back. If not for Loki’s experimental process, Nat would be dead. Loki was even more relieved that Tony had the key now. Not only was the key not in WSC hands, the rest of the group had gained more faith in Loki because of this.

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Pepper Potts had been kidnapped. Bruce made the executive decision and asked Jarvis to help figure out how to open the safe. Without Tony there were some protocols even Jarvis could not override and avoid. They all agreed that the cuffs had to go, for good this time. They needed Natasha healed. They needed to find Tony. They needed to find Pepper. They needed to hunt down the Mandarin. They needed a working Loki all the time.

Loki didn’t tell them he had already started the process with Jarvis. When hours later they got into the safe and unlocked the cuffs, they were already prepared to go. The first thing Loki did was send out a spell to find Tony.

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Tony woke up to find himself standing tied to a cross-like metal post erected in the center of the room. He saw Maya Hanson looking through a microscope and realized he was in her lab. “Hey sweetheart, why don’t you come and let me go. We could take a walk around the grounds, talk about old times or maybe new times. Or, about how, what you’re doing had something to do with the explosion in LA.”
“Why don’t you help me with the formula?” She asked in return not looking away from her work.

“You know I can’t. I’ve figured out you’re responsible for the terrorist explosions and in cahoots with the Mandarin.”

“We need your help to stop the explosions.” Maya said returning to her microscope.

“So tell me how me helping you with the formula is going to stop the explosions? Do you already have it weaponized?” Tony inquired, wondering how much information she would divulge.

“The serum is unstable. It heals deformities on those who survive it, but recently they have been exploding. We thought we had something to counteract the problem but it stops working on some people.”

“So are all the Mandarin explosions you? How tied to the Mandarin are you guys?”

She laughed. “Quite a bit. You know, you’ll never leave unless you help us. We have your Ironman suit.” She told him switching slides.

“Where is my armor? You know it won’t work for anyone else. I would expect your boss to be smarter than that.” Tony smirked.

“We know about your armor, it’s in a shielded box. That’s because Aldrich is intelligent, he’s captured War Machine instead. I understand it isn’t keyed like yours is.” She said, finally got up, walked over to him and took some blood.

“You took Rhodey’s suit? What the hell are you doing with that?”

“Your Colonel Rhodes too. I believe they captured the President from Camp David with his suit.” She wasn’t really paying attention to what she said, much more interested in what she was doing.

“You better not have hurt Rhodey, the President. Fuck! So this serum creates supersoldiers out of what? Injured soldiers?” He said watching her put a drop of that blood on a slide with a drop out of an overly full syringe that she took out of a vial.

“Something like that.” She said and looked at the slide under the microscope again.

“Well since you have me where you want me, why don’t you share with the class what all this means.” Tony asked.

“Extremis, it helps people regenerate body parts. The problem is it also heats up the body, hot enough to disintegrate everything around when it blows up. If a body rejects the serum, it blows up. We discovered that even if someone seems to accept it, later on their body may reject it. There have been several people we were sure it was stable on blow up since January. Apparently after twelve to eighteen months some who we thought were fully stable become unstable. On those less stable we had a countering agent that seemed to work, but it’s failing too. We have been trying it on the ones we thought were stable but are finding unacceptable mental side effects associated with the countering agent. We need to stabilize the Extremis formula itself. Time is of the essence. That’s where you come in.” She explained.

“You want me to help you to stabilize your formula while you work for the Mandarin? How can you work for some middle east extremist group out to control people through fear?” Tony was getting information now. There was no way in hell he’d work on this for them.

“I’m doing it to help people. This formula will help so many more people than Killian might hurt
with it.” She answered.

“But he’s working with a terrorist, I don’t understand why you would work with the Mandarin. How do you communicate?” Stark had her talking.

She shook her head. “The Mandarin is an actor we control. You’ll meet him if you agree to work with us. We needed to get funding, approval for our tests from the country, and to gain your attention. Look it was all Killian’s idea.” Maya looked at him again but she was not as sure of herself.

Tony saw her eye dart somewhere behind him for a moment. He wondered if they were no longer alone, but it didn’t really matter. He had to find a way to get out of this.

“Killian?” Tony was thinking ideas connecting dots. “It’s not some crazy middle east group? He’s just giving them the blame. That’s even worse spreading fear and hate to those who don’t deserve it. When did you allow yourself to lose your ideals? People are dying out there because of this stuff. Killian is using it as a weapon and threatening people. He wants to take control of the world and you’re giving it to him.”

“You don’t understand, I’ve gone too far. It is going to save lives, make people whole. I have to complete this. Killian has promised me, this is only until we can get the funding and you to help us.” She started pacing.

“And you think that threatening me is going to work for you? Seeing that forcing me has worked so well for others in the past. I bet he told you I’d be glad to help. He’s lying to you. Don’t believe that jerk. Let me go I’m sure we can work out a deal so you don’t have to spend too much time in jail. Are you injected with it?”

“No, I’m not, but Killian is and my most current serum seems very promising on paper. Some blood seems to rejects it right away so far, I think it would work if you helped.” She said pointed to the microscope. “Your blood hasn’t rejected it yet, seems to be combining nicely in fact. This batch has something special we just acquired.”

He saw some vials and the hypodermic needle filled with serum next to the microscope. God, he knew both Steve and Bruce were able to be supersoldiers because they had magic. But it had messed up their magic. He had more magic than them. He had just started learning it and didn’t want it to be messed with. He had to figure out a way out. He noticed Maya was thinking about what he said, she was nervous, he hoped he could manipulate her into letting him go.

“So what? You just going to inject me with a new version? You really think that will make me help you? Just because my blood accepts it for a few minutes doesn’t mean I won’t blow up in an hour. Would you really risk everything you’ve done? There may be merit to your research but not this way, not with Killian.” He was trying to convince her.

He heard a voice from behind him say. “No, but I think this may have more persuasion for you. Although it would have been better back at Christmas before you broke up, but I promised to give your company a chance to get on board of your own free will.” His eyes were glassy and glowing.

There had indeed been someone who entered the room earlier. Tony saw Aldrich Killian walk into view, he grabbed a remote and turned on a screen positioned high on the wall above most the lab but in full view for Tony. On the screen was Pepper, her skin was glowing red in one spot then another.

“Her body is trying to decide whether to accept it or not. If it does she will live, but for how long. Extremis is not as stable as we thought. Even if she accepts it, she could still blow up in a year or
two. You have the choice to save her.” Killian said as he picked up a scalpel from a tray. His eyes were red and glowing.

“Let me go and I’ll put in a good word. Tell them you were abused by your dog as a child or something.” He turned to Maya. “You know you can’t trust him to keep his word on anything he’s told you. He’s already killed innocents that didn’t need to die. He’s like Charles Manson on steroids.” He could tell he was getting to Maya by her face. He knew she had been so focused on her work she had mostly ignored what Killian had been doing. Tony understood thinking, ‘It was one of my own faults before Afghanistan.’

Killian reacted surprised. “You make fun of me? Maya inject him with the new serum.”

She hesitantly picked up the needle full of the serum and slowly walked toward Stark, then turned. “No, we need him if he explodes it will slow things down.” She looked at Killian.

“Do it now, I said.” And he walked toward her with the scalpel.

“Do it and you’ll never have any answers, you’ll end up in prison tortured by memories of all those who died by your hand because you listened to him.” Tony spit out. His heart was beating fast. The situation was so volatile. He saw Killian’s face, there was a madness to it. He felt his stomach sink. God, he wanted Loki, he’d even believe in those crazy Norns if Loki would just show up.

Maya turned to Killian and looked at the scalpel. “No, you don’t scare me. You need me to make the formula and the countering maintenance-agent serum.” She reminded him.

Killian lost it. He grabbed her, turned her to face Tony, and slit her throat. Tony turned his head, closing his mouth and eyes in a futile attempt to try to avoid swallowing the arterial spray that was covering him in her blood.

Killian took the needle from her hand and dropped her. He had gone crazy. “Now you are covered in her blood. Let fate decide if you live. You will help me or you all will die.” He stabbed Tony in the neck with the needle.

Stark had blood in his mouth, eyes and all over his body. Tony’s thoughts were filled with Loki’s Norns who were keepers of that fate when he felt the needle prick. At the same exact moment the flow of magic opened to his senses. Loki was free of the cuffs. Tony had his magic back. He felt a crackle run through his body as he felt both the heat and magic flow in his veins. He mentally said ‘I don’t know if you’re real or not, Lokes believes in you. If you are, thanks for the magic. Although your timing could have been better. Now get my princess here.’ He felt foolish for doing it and decided he should be praying to Loki himself thinking, ‘Loki, damn it. You better get here fast, you bastard. I fucking need you.’

“I’ll give you a few minutes to think about it while one serum works though Miss Potts and this one works though you.” Killian laughed leaving the room. “Don’t get too angry. You might find yourself exploding.”

Tony ached, he was soaked in blood and felt angry as hell. He refused to work for Killian. He had a moment to think again. His head was spinning now he didn’t know if it was a reaction to the serum or getting his magic back or both. Fortunately ten minutes later Tony’s head started to clear. He reached for the link and prayed for Loki to find him and tell him he needed help again. Slightly more polite this time.

Moments later Loki showed up with the Avengers minus Nat. Tony was shocked and promised himself he would never complain or insult the Norns again.
In the next room the Ironman suit was in a lead lined electrified box designed to keep any signals going in or out.

The fight didn’t last too long. Killian had lost several key soldiers to ‘accidents’ with Extremis. Once they discovered the Extremis healing capabilities Loki instructed them the only way to kill someone with fast regeneration was to blast their hearts out or cut off heads. They ignored him until Steve got a partial burn and they saw what Extremis would do. The battle became much bloodier after that.

Killian had a helicopter waiting for him and was trying to leave with Pepper when they caught up to him. Clint shot him in the back making him falter and release Pepper. Steve from another direction grabbed Pepper and ran to get her to safety.

Killian roared and flamed up, healing the wound. “You just doomed yourselves trying to go against me!”

Tony tried a few blasts that did no good. The rest of the Avengers were all dodging Killian’s attacks while fighting his cronies. Loki was with Pepper and was using magic to make sure she was not wounded and then making sure she was stabilized for the moment.

Tony, frustrated and angry, decided to use his magic to shove Killian as hard as he could with maybe just maybe an attempt to split him into pieces.

Killian exploded into thousands of pieces. Tony dropped to the ground shaking breathing hard.

‘Oh God, what’s happening’ he felt dizzy and hot. He looked up to see everything covered in Killian goo. ‘I’d like to see Killian regenerate from that’, he thought. Then hoped he was not about to die. Remembering Loki as he was praying ‘God, don’t let me die’. He tried to reach out again calling to Loki, hoping the apprentice link was still intact, as the world went black.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo’s tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Tony has been injected with a new form of the Extremis. It is a bit more complicated than what Pepper was injected with, in fact a whole lot more complicated.

Another long chapter for everyone. Merry Christmas!

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

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Killian was destroyed. They took everything possibly useful from the lab. The official story was Killian blew himself and his compound up. In truth Loki had done it after making sure everything possibly useful or alive was removed. The actor and any living uninfected were taken back to the authorities but not before they told them of a second facility where they were able to rescue the President, Rhodey and the War Machine suit.

Tony had woken two days later to find himself stable for the moment and lying on a sofa in his lab. He was quickly caught up on events and began working with Bruce and Loki looking over the samples of Extremis.

They had started with those that most likely affected Pepper as Loki was sure he could keep Stark safe with his magic. The Avengers had taken nearly everything in Maya’s lab including all the samples of the Extremis serums and were evaluating them. After discovering which one Pepper had been infected with they had given it to Loki to work with.

Bruce had finally started looking at Tony’s serum which was definitely different. Bruce kept looking at the serum. “This is the third sample from that vial, it has blood in it. I think it’s corrupted.”

“Well we have the syringe they used on me, how about that.” Tony said as he prepared a slide with the Extremis stabilizer.

Loki was still looking at the serum that Pepper had received. Once he had figured out all of its components he was sure he would be able to remove it. “Pepper’s version does not have any blood in it.”

Bruce had made another sample with a new box of slides. “This one has it too. Do you think it’s
there on purpose?” Bruce wondered aloud.

“Can you isolate the blood? Is there anything different about it? Did we grab any other vials from that batch when we packed up the lab? If so do they all contain blood? Were there any vials of just blood by any chance?” Tony asked.

U picked something up off the carefully placed items on a back table and handed it to Bruce.

“I think we have blood, Tony.” Bruce said as he put a drop on a slide to analyze it. A moment later his voice shook as he said. “Loki, has anyone besides myself and SHIELD taken your blood?”

Loki looked up concerned. “No. Are you sure it is my blood?” and started walking over to where Bruce worked. He had not had a chance to look at anything but the serum used on Pepper.

Tony had walked over to Bruce and was now also looking at the blood filled test tube, and the serum tube. They both had magical connections that he had not been looking for. “It’s got magic in it.” Tony said. He was still learning to tell the difference between things with active magic verses ambient magic.

Loki picked up the blood. “He got this from SHIELD, the magic is more concentrated than when I let you take it Dr. Banner.” He looked at the serum that was used on Tony. “An effect of the suppression cuffs…. No wonder they said it didn’t mix well with other blood. You would have to have active magic to stabilize it.” He added.

“So am I good then?” Tony very carefully asked.

“Not so much, this complicates matters, as I don’t know how your magic has and is reacting to my blood. I have confidence that it will give us more time seeing as you have failed to die by rejecting it. I will probably need the time, given the more complex work to remove it.” Loki looked very thoughtful. “Anyway, I am almost ready to remove it from Pepper. Stark, I want you to watch me remove it. Who knows you may even learn something from it.” Loki snarked.

“Oh I’m learning lots, like what a jerk my teacher is.” Tony shot back.

“Whatever you say, my little hemorrhoid.” Loki teased.

Bruce snickered but said nothing.

Helping Pepper was easy. Loki was able to just remove it. Sort of like magically straining it out of her blood, it took most of a day. He had to make sure he got it all. She was so grateful she gave Loki a kiss. Tony felt jealous again. But Pepper wasn’t his anymore and he really didn’t care. Besides Loki wasn’t even focused on the kiss, his mind was clearly someplace else. Wait was he jealous of Loki? It seemed he was. He might have to think on it more when he got the chance. Now was not the time.

Late the next morning Loki stomped up from the Lab into the common area kitchen. Loki had been up all night. Tony for once went to bed earlier and gotten a few hours sleep, as had Bruce. Tony was in the kitchen with his newly poured first cup of morning coffee sitting in front of him. The others were also there, Bruce was starting to fix a brunch.

“Blood magic! This is why latent magic users should not play with things they don’t know anything about.” Loki snarled loudly.

“A very evil way of making something permanent.” Loki snapped, then continued. “Your friend Ms. Hanson had magic. From the lack of clues in her notes and diary, I would guess, years ago she managed to activate it, unknowingly and it just sat there.”

“You can do that? Activate it without knowing? What did it do?”

“Yes, who knows what it did, maybe it gave her a bit luck or something. She didn’t even notice and didn’t seem to be aware of it. When she prepared this serum she must have accidently cut herself and then stumbled into burning it in a manner that was close enough to act as a ceremony. And while her blood did not get into the mix, she managed to activate the latent magic in my concentrated blood.” He looked really annoyed. “There were three vials of the serum. Only the one used on you was activated.”

“So what does it mean? Should I update my will?” Tony asked apprehensively.

“That doesn’t sound like much, just a few drops. Is it really that bad?” Steve said putting a pan of scrambled eggs on the table.

Evil laughter rolled out of Loki as he looked at Tony and Steve, and explained. “Well normally it would not be. Except a few hours after this was made, its magical creator was sacrificed. Then Tony, covered in her blood had the stuff injected into him.”

Everyone looked unnerved as they guessed at the possible ramification.

Tony piped up nervously. “I suppose it might be important to tell you that I felt your cuffs come off and my buffer open up, just as he stabbed me with the syringe.”

Loki’s eyes opened wide. He stared at Tony for a couple moments. Those eyes went glassy in concentration and inwardly searching. Then he exclaimed: “And you did not think this important enough to tell me right away?” Tony gave Loki as sheepish smile. Loki exclaimed. “Oh Norns, the Bloody, buggering, poisonous, mewling Valkyrie quim!”

Immediately there was simultaneously a loud boom, flash of light, and the building shook as it took a direct hit from lightning. Outside the sky was clear and the sun was bright. Even Trouble took off running.

Everyone looked up, even Loki momentarily, before he stomped off to get some sleep.

“Is Thor back?” someone asked.

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Tony and Bruce worked for six hours before Loki came down to the lab again. They had made a great deal of headway on finding out how this formula differed from the one Pepper had. They had also cracked the security on Maya’s computer and actually found her notes on the serum. She had failed to mention how she spilt blood on the latest batch.

“Hey Reindeer games, glad you made it back.” Tony welcomed Loki when the elevator opened to reveal him.

“Stark, you know I hate that name. “ Loki drawled out sounding still very tired.

“Did you get enough sleep, it was only six hours.” Bruce asked.
“For now, I need to look at you Stark.” Loki said as he walked towards Tony.

“Finally realized you haven’t spent enough time admiring me darling?” Tony joked.

“Oh, do shut up. I need to see exactly what has happened to you.” Loki said putting his hands on each side of Tony’s head and slowly moved them downward.

Tony grinned. “Are you sure you want to feel me up with Bruce watching. Not that I’m complaining.” He thought about his discovery that he was jealous of Loki. He felt his second brain start to stand to attention.

Loki ignored him. “I’m going to push some of my magic into you. It may feel strange.”

“So I’m the bottom now? I hope it feels strange in a good way.” Tony was holding back a laugh, enjoying Loki’s touch.

Bruce suggested. ”Tony he’d probably work faster if you were quiet.”

“Faster, oh yeah, I like that, but I’m afraid I can get very loud when I get excited. You trying to excite me babe. You’re succeeding.” Tony said to Loki. Even tilted his hip up a bit to show off his excitement.

Loki snapped his fingers and Tony found duct tape over his mouth, effectively throwing cold water on the inventor’s excitement.

Bruce tried so hard, but you could still see his belly laugh as he covered his own mouth to muffle the sound.

When Loki was done he released Tony and turned to a holograph screen and started writing. Tony spent the next few minutes carefully extracting the duct tape away from his mouth and beard enough to talk. “Fuck you, this is going to make a mess of my beard.” Tony mumbled through the still mostly attached duct tape.

“Why don’t you try to use your magic to remove it?” Loki suggested.

Tony’s eyes gleamed at the challenge. “Alright I will, asshole.”

Two hours later the duct tape dropped off Tony’s face. His beard was still going to need a few days to recover. And his lips were sore. But he’d successfully removed the tape using magic. He had looked at the glue chemistry and actually changed the makeup of it so it no longer stuck.

Loki looked at him and smiled. A real smile, not a smirk, not making fun. “Good job, I’m impressed you didn’t even use the buffer. You keep that up and you will be able to turn your friends into frogs in no time.”

“What? I could do that! You mean all those threats about changing me into things was real?” Tony said gleefully.

“I have not even taught you about transfiguration yet.” Loki actually looked pleased. He had a proud smile that made it to his eyes.

“Yes, told you I do good work, besides I understand chemistry.” Tony smirked as he took the compliment. “So what did you find out about me? Other than I’m a smart handsome devil.” Tony was not about to let up on the hints. He wanted his god to notice him, but he didn’t want to push. He knew there were still too many nightmares and times when Loki would all but shut down from
memories of torture. It was not the first time he wished he knew more about Loki’s torture.

“If only that were so simple.” Loki became serious. “You have unfortunately been enchanted and it is incomplete. If I cannot figure out how to stabilize it, or rather complete the enchantment, when you blow up you are going to create quite a mess.”

“How big a mess?” Bruce asked looking rather uneasy.

“The crater alone would easily reach beyond New York City.” Loki answered.

“But you can stabilize it right? Like you did with the spell.” Tony asked only looking a little nervous. He had remembered Loki mentioning incomplete enchantments were unstable and magic could be explosive but it had not yet occurred to him that it would ever affect him.

“I’m going to try, my little hemorrhoid. It would be such a shame to lose my first apprentice. One with such promise too.” Loki said nonchalantly.

“Hey don’t joke. Can you do it?” Tony was serious now. The extremis was already an unstable factor, now he had to deal with an unstable enchantment. He really wished he had started to learn magic last fall and had more theory. He repressed a tremble in his hands.

Loki looked away from his holo screen. “I’m really not sure. This is very complex. So many random variables. It will be a real challenge even for one such as me.” Loki didn’t like having to tell Tony this but he wasn’t going to lie. His friend needed the truth even if he was mostly confident he could do it. He found himself worried about his friend, making him even more determined to finish the enchantment.

“Well, is there someone else who might be able to help?” Bruce asked. He too looked more than a little concerned.

“I am currently the most powerful and one of the most knowledgeable sorcerers alive today. There were once a few dwarves who would be better at enchantment but they are long gone. That is the reason the Bifrost is not yet fixed. I understand I am the only one capable of repairing that enchantment in any sort of a reasonable time frame. Yet Odin would have to forgive my crimes to allow that and he is too proud for that.” Loki said and shook his head. His mother had told him about their problems with the Bifrost, but he really didn’t care now. Even if Odin begged on his knees, he would find a way to fix Stark first. This man was the first one besides his mother and a much younger Thor who had ever cared about him, making Stark very important to him.

“So what are my chances? How long do we have?” Tony asked, having memories of Palladium poisoning dance through his head. He remembered those feelings of dying alone again, he had been so self-destructive at the time.

“Given enough time I am sure I will have a solution. It is hard to tell how much time. I believe a few weeks, maybe a couple months. The apprentice bond is also helping to stabilize it. I will do everything in my power to help you Stark. There will be warning signs before something happens. I cannot tell you what they will be yet.” Loki answered.

The next several days Loki spent a lot of time in the lab. He also spent a lot of time looking at Tony. Then he would say very little and write stuff down was in a different language. Jarvis had to keep it as a picture set since Loki wouldn’t give Jarvis an alphabet or even a symbol set. Loki was worried and the last thing he needed was Tony asking questions over his shoulder about his work.
Tony split his time practicing magic, working on his suits and trying to study the theory of magic. Of course he was always watching Loki for any shred of information that might slip. But the man was as tight lipped as a stone Buddha leaving Tony to worry. Tony did his best not to bother Loki while he was working. Loki only answered questions on magical theory, encouraging him to continue with his studies. He occasionally made an attempt to flirt but the disruption would end with Loki sending him away. So he stayed close and tried to keep his mind occupied.

Loki also removed the last piece of shrapnel giving Stark time to fully heal. He didn’t want to risk it interfering with the enchantment. The arc reactor had to stay in for now, not being easy to fix and remove. Besides, it might be part of the mess.

Friday morning Pepper dropped off some paperwork to be signed. Tony sat down at the kitchen table in the penthouse and started signing things. Tony was down to the last three things and had just finished one that actually required him to read it. He decided to try to use magic to make his pen write his name. He couldn’t seem to get anything legible on a blank piece of paper so he picked it up and was in the process of signing it when suddenly the pen melted out of his hand.

“Jarvis, get Loki now!” Tony yelled panic in his voice.

A few minutes later Loki came dashing up to find Tony running water over his hand and Trouble sniffing at the melted pen on the table.

“Stark what happened here? Are you burned? Does it hurt?” He said while grabbing Trouble.

“Trouble, you know you do not belong on the table, especially now.”

“The pen melted. Uh, it didn’t hurt. I’m running water because… Hell, it’s what you do when something like this happens. It shocked me.” Tony responded turning off the water and looking at his hand. “Is this the Extremis?”

Loki looked at the pen, Tony’s hand and asked a few questions of Jarvis. “I believe this is a side effect of the Extremis and the unfinished enchantment. It has been well over a week, is this the first time something strange has happened?”

“Fuck yeah, trust me if this had happened before I’d a told you.” Tony sat down at the table and poked at the mess. At least it was on the contract and not on the table he thought. Then. “Oh god, how am I going to tell Pepper. Jarvis can you maybe get me a new copy without her knowing?”

“I believe so. Sir.” Jarvis answered.

“What happens now?” Tony looked at Loki. “Has time run out for me.” Tony’s worry had been building the more Loki worked without giving him updates.

“This is only the first incident. I am going back to work, you need to be careful when you practice magic. Only practice it when I am around. If I am there when it happens it will give me more information.”

That night when Tony in the lab he went up and promptly got drunk, leaving Loki working.

Loki had been working with very little sleep for days. He was worried. The apprentice link had been affected by the enchantment and in turn was having an effect on Loki. He felt he had finally figured out all of the many factors Stark had on him that were in play when it occurred. He was working with numbers and possibilities when Jarvis called out.
Tony was drunk, very drunk and his temperature was rising. Loki instantly teleported to Tony, who looked miserable. He was slouched and centered on his loveseat. His head was resting on his chest. Glass in hand. His face wore an expression of forlorn hopelessness. Loki put his hand on the inventor’s forehead it was high about 106 degrees. His normal temperature since taking the serum now averaged about 100.5. He was not yet at the dangerous levels Loki had feared when Jarvis told him.

“We have to cool you down Stark.” Loki announced.

Tony looked up. “Why? m’ no good ta anybody anyway.” He mumbled. He was really worried he could destroy the city, he was most likely going to die and Loki had not been sharing anything with him. He felt like his only hope was brushing him off. He was a genius but knew virtually nothing about magic yet. Loki wouldn’t tell him, only, “Stark your knowledge is like that of a ‘normal’ grade school child. I’m doing the research of someone at the top of their field.”

“Do not be an idiot.” Loki said while taking the glass away from Tony.

“Snot an idiot, juss a burden. Nobody wans me anyway.” Tony replied looking away.

Loki looked at him. “I want you. Bruce wants you. You have many friends Tony.”

Still looking away Tony said. “Nope, they all toll-erate me. Or wans me for whas I can do. You juss wans me ta be ur a’pren’nice and ta stay here.”

Loki sat down and put one arm around Tony while the other he used to turn Tony’s head to look at him. He looked into Tony’s eyes and steeled himself. “No Tony. Strange as it may be for me, but you, Anthony Stark, a mortal, have become my first true friend…. You’ll have to forgive me…. I really do not have much experience with any kind of friend…. I fear I may not show it very well…. You will have to trust me when I say, I do care.” Admitting this felt like he was giving part of himself away, even if it was to the drunken puddle of goo sitting next to him. One that hopefully might not remember it in the morning. But Loki would remember, and Jarvis would remember, damn. Loki then took a deep breath and smiled. “Let me help you Tony. Your favorite Teddy Bear to the rescue.”

Tony’s eyes melted into a hopeful puppy dog. “U call me Tony. U really wans me? As me? Fur friens?” and he put his arms around Loki’s waist and buried his head into Loki’s shoulder

“Yes, you imbecile. Even with all your faults you are one of the most interesting people I have ever met, and I want you as a friend.” Loki sighed, as he hugged the inventor. . Loki felt his body start sucking the heat out of Tony’s. He needed to remember that.

Several seconds later Loki heard. “M I gonna die?”

“Not if I can help it.” Loki answered.

There was a pause then “Wen I die,… can u leave a a clone wif me?… So ur frien won’ be lone…. I rebby don wana dia lone…Know U don wanna blow ups urself.” Tony added.

“Tony, I really think I can solve this. I just need you to hold yourself together. If it comes down to the wire, you will not be alone. Do not fear, we are going to solve it.” Loki said trying to calm Tony, whom he now realized was finally letting out all of the fear he had been holding inside.

A minute later. “Can U maybee tell me sufs then? U don’ tel me nosson. I’s do besser wif facs. Peas?” Tony’s drunken mind had come up with the idea that maybe he could get Loki to tell him about what he was doing. Any information was better than what he was getting.
Loki rolled his eyes. He really didn’t want to talk about what he had discovered. It would leave him feeling more vulnerable, weak, and he had feared that talking about all the problems would only upset Stark more. Apparently that was not the case. He had just admitted to Stark that they were true friends. Guess it was time to show it. “Ask me tomorrow and I will answer your questions Tony.”


Loki picked him up and took him to his room and set him on the bed. He turned to leave and a hand shot out and grabbed his leg.

Big Brown doe eyes met Loki as Tony said. “Stay.” Sounding suddenly less drunk than before.

Loki climbed into bed next to Tony, wondering how drunk the genius really was. If this had been an act, it was worthy enough to let himself once again play teddy bear. He could use some sleep too so he gave in to his friend and lied down finding himself embraced tightly. They were both asleep in minutes.

The next morning Loki woke Stark up as he crawled out of bed and headed to the bathroom. When he returned Tony was still in bed but sitting up rubbing his eyes.

“Sorry for last night.” He said looking nowhere in specific but keeping Loki in his peripheral vision.

“Not a problem.” Loki responded.

Tony continued. “Did you mean everything you said last night?”

Loki took a moment to make sure he had not forgotten something. “Yes, I did.” He responded casually.

Tony turned his head to Loki. “Thanks.” He said.

Loki understood and nodded. Anything more would be too much right now. As he went to his own suite to get cleaned up he wondered to himself, how far does one go for a real friend?

Tony would be asking questions soon. Would he tell him everything he had discovered? How far would he go for Stark? He didn’t have much time to decide.

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Tony got up and walked into the bathroom. He felt a little guilty about what he had done the night before. Not about getting drunk. He did that all the time. Not about using Loki as a teddy bear, that happened often, might be good to happen more often though. No, he felt he’d tried to manipulate Loki so that he would share his work. On the other hand Loki had told him he was his first true friend and admitted to not really having friends before. Tony felt special and important.

He really liked Loki too. The sorcerer had done so much for him already. He was teaching him magic. He’d enchanted his tower and healed the Avengers. He’d removed the shrapnel. They got along so very well. He was a science buddy along with Bruce. Hell, what he had done for Bruce was incredible. Tony wanted Loki to be near him forever, more than that. He was so easy on the eyes.

This guy really was the best teddy bear anyone could ever want. Tony momentarily felt jealous of Thor who’d had Loki as his teddy bear for years. Tony always hated sleeping alone. It just got worse when he was drunk. And with Loki, it was some sort of battle shield brother thing, so there was no
uncomfortable morning after’s. No seeing someone you barely knew, then avoiding them, leaving things unsaid afterwards. Loki also brought food to the lab instead of making Tony leave. He had never really thought about it before but Loki really did take care of him.

Maybe he shouldn’t feel too bad. Friends are supposed to tell friends stuff. He and Loki were friends now. Whatever that meant. Guess he didn’t have much experience with it either. Besides it was his body and he did deserve to know. By the time he finished getting ready any guilt had dissipated replaced by happy thoughts of a tall dark green eyed man.

Loki was already in the lab when Stark arrived. Bruce had apparently checked in to see if he could help. But since his magical knowledge was less than Tony’s, he had gone to his own lab.

Loki wanted to look Tony over first, before he answered any questions, he told him. Then he had Tony do some stuff. Including actively pushing the apprentice buffer in different ways. He took some of Tony’s blood before and after. They watched and measured his healing rate after making a small cut, making a small burn, and a bit of frost. Tony even allowed Loki to cast a couple of damage doing spells on a small spot on his leg to see the reaction.

Loki had promised to answer his questions. Tony found himself surprised when Loki also measured some of the same things on himself. He was really curious now. Loki certainly didn’t count as a control group for Tony. After two hours Tony finally decided he had used up all the patience he had. He even had used up any that his guilt had generated from being drunk. He had been good and waited long enough. Silence was overrated.

“Loki, we’ve been doing tests for hours. I need data. At least give me something. I even called you Loki. Come on.” Tony pleaded.

Loki smirked. “Certainly, I have been waiting for you to ask. I just wanted to look you over quickly first.”

Tony said, “Asshole” under his breath. “So tell me what is going on then?”

It was complicated. Most enchantments were done on new things that had never had spells on them. Every spell that was cast on something had the potential to alter variables when an enchantment was done. A running spell always had an effect. Active magic in the area usually had an effect. Enchanting the tower was actually a complex thing. While having no running spells it had been in the middle of many magical fights. The tesseract’s former presence had been a major obstacle. Even Tony’s arc reactor, as well as the one that ran the building, had to be taken into account.

Tony’s enchantment was a nightmare, because it was all done by accident. The variables were bizarre things. First of all it was extremely dangerous to enchant a living creature, usually because of the cost or the possibility of backfiring. In Tony’s case the cost was paid for with not only blood magic and the sacrifice of the magic user herself, but the whole fire fight that had happened immediately especially Killian’s death as he was a key figure in bringing it all about. This all gave it a lot more power and guaranteed unknown side effects.

Then there was Extremis, an unstable regenerative thing, that actually worked by attaching to Yggdrasil, but surprisingly not requiring magic to stabilize. Instead, it seemed to eat away the owner’s humanity until it finally exploded. Why someone thought they could stabilize it, was insane. In Stark’s case his initial serum was also magically enhanced because of Maya’s cut and Loki’s
blood and he was still trying to determine the specifics of what that did. It was at least partially hooked into Stark’s healing potential and was able to pull magical energy back, meaning his humanity had not been touched.

Then there was the life enhancement potion Loki had given Tony. The one that added health and a few years to his life. The apprentice spell, and Tony being a sorcerer having cast many practice and protection spells on himself.

Last, but far from least was the fact that the enchantment occurred just as the suppression cuffs were removed. This meant that surging magic was flowing from Loki into Tony and back when the enchantment occurred. The sudden surge and two way flow of magic had clearly added power to the enchantment. This also meant Loki himself contained a minor part of the enchantment and he needed to be factored in. Loki was adamant that the enchantment end up on Stark alone.

Tony quickly deduced that was the reason Loki didn’t want to tell him. He recognized that fear. An unknown weakness. One that someone else may hold your own strings. Yeah, he got that.

The idea was to stabilize the enchantment and the serum, leaving Tony alive and healthy. With the enchantment completely on Tony and nothing on Loki. The only way to get rid of the enchantment completely was to let Tony die. They both agreed that was not an acceptable option.

A week passed. They had lots more information and Tony had no more weird incidents. Options were being crossed out. It was really going to take a very creative, complex, unique magic ceremony to stabilize the enchantment.

Dr. Doom decided to make a show one morning. Tony and Loki had been working for two days without sleep and had just headed off to their respective rooms when the alarm went off.

Tony didn’t even think. He just got in the suit and went to fight. The doombots were being more of a pain than usual. They had chosen to attack Coney Island. The damage was getting out of hand. Most of the civilians had made it to safety, but there were landmarks here. Tony was so tired, he had been able to make a very small flame with his magic before Killian. He decided to try one with his blaster, just something to get the fight over with quicker. There were five doombots together fighting Steve the last group left. Steve could take a little bit of backlash surely. He concentrated his magic and let it loose with the blaster. Massive flames shot out at extreme temperatures toward the doombots and Steve.

‘Oops, too much magic.’ Tony thought as he felt his temperature start to rise and passed out.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Chapter Summary

Oh no. Steve was caught in that blast! Coney Island burned, and Clint isn't happy. Tony has even more problems.

Chapter Notes

Happy Hollidays!

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

Warning: Minor graphic- a bit explicit, and some burns.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Voices, he could hear voices, words, phrases.

Steve dead.

Stark blew up.

100 percent of his body.

Armor.

He’s an idiot.

I can do it.

How could he?

Can’t look.

Dead.

Enchantment.

He’s a menace.

Must be stopped.

Make it happen.

He’s yours.
Poor Steve.

Remove his clothes.

You sure?

Yes, he is mine.

Hold him still.

Fix him.

Deserves it.

If he had to guess he would say he heard Bruce, Loki, Nat, Clint and Coulson but no Steve. Then nothing.

His arms were bound. He couldn’t move and he was naked.

He saw Loki above him.

“Fury has given me permission to do whatever I want to you.”

“No, I don’t understand what’s going on.” Tony was panicked now. He really couldn’t move and Loki was above him. If it was any other time he would be thoroughly enjoying this.

“You burned up Steve, Stark.”

He felt Loki grind against him. He immediately responded to the touch, he’d had blue balls for months. But not now, not when he didn’t know what had happened to Steve. “What happened? I didn’t mean to hurt him. Is he going to be all right?” His stomach seemed to clench, but he could still feel Loki’s groin against his.

“No, he is dead. You killed him.” Loki whispered into his ear.

He felt himself get even harder. Something wasn’t right. Steve should be able to handle a blast. “He can’t be. Not Steve. I don’t understand what you are doing?”

“It was the fire that did him in. You burned so hot. I am going to fix you though.” Loki said while biting his neck.

He ground back into Loki. Was this what it took to turn Loki on? He wasn’t so sure he wanted to be any part of this, except part of him wanted this so bad. “Maybe we could do this later. Could you let me up? Ahh…Ahhhh… Fury is going to want to debrief me.” He felt a chill run up and down as he felt their cocks meet. He was going to melt, this was so messed up.

“Fury already said I could have you.” Loki said biting him again.

Oh it felt so, so, so good. What was he doing he was having a hard time concentrating on anything but sex. “What do you mean have me? I don’t understand.” He felt Loki’s hand move between his legs and start probing.

“They gave you to me. I have to fix your enchantment. They don’t care anymore how I do it.” Loki leaned back and stuck a dry finger into Tony’s hole.
It hurt but he was turned on at the same time. “Not complaining… but what does sex… have to do with it?… Could you maybe find some lube… it hurts just a bit.” Oh god, he didn’t want this to stop but he needed to remember something. Steve he’d killed Steve, and now he was enjoying himself. He should feel sick.

“Such a spoiled toy you are. Tantric magic Stark. I’m going to complete the enchantment with sex.” Loki said but he felt just a bit of lubrication as Loki stuck a second finger in.

He gasped with pleasure and started writhing about and pushing himself onto Loki’s fingers. “You feel so good, more, I want more. What will you do to me when you’re done?” He kept trying to think. He had to think.

“I’m going to keep you. You will be my personal sex toy.” Loki said putting a third finger in.

Tony gasped again. That was the best idea he’d heard in a long time. He had killed Steve and now he was being made into a toy as punishment. “What about when I’m not being used as your toy?” He was being stretched. Loki had backed away, pulling his fingers out and was aiming.

Loki rammed into Tony and his brain did a little flip. Yes, this is what he wanted what he deserved. He pushed and wanted to move to help. But his arms were held tight. Loki pounded into him. What kind of a pathetic sicko was he, responding upon hearing Steve was dead. Enjoying sex with his god and master. But this is what he was going to be now. He breathed harder and harder and tried his best to move into Loki and rub against him. It was so good.

“Hold still.” He heard Loki say.

But he couldn’t he was so very close. He was really sorry for Steve but he was about there. He ground harder.

“I said hold still.” Loki sounded angry but he didn’t care.

Then he was about to cum. Release, pent up from stress and waiting so long. He gave a huge groan and opened his eyes to see Clint and Natasha staring at him.

“How? you guys hold him still! I’m working.”

He was sitting on Loki’s lap, facing him. His head leaned over the god’s shoulder and his arms were wrapped around Loki, legs on each side hanging toward the floor.

“Hey Loki, I think he came. Jeez, I don’t think I’ve ever watched someone have a wet dream before.” Clint was saying.

“At least he has stopped moving. His squirming was making this more difficult.” Loki hissed.

Loki’s was concentrating on something else and he was not holding him back. Tony moved his head and looked around. They were sitting in the medical ward next to a bed and Loki had his hands on something with Natasha and Clint on chairs angled behind Loki.

“Oh, hi. What happened?” Tony said red faced.

“I see you decided to grace us with your presence.” Loki snarled.

“Well, if dreamboat isn’t awake. I think you made a mess on Loki” Clint was shaking his head and laughing. Natasha just looked annoyed.
“No, not quite. Is Steve dead?” He felt about one inch high and it was a little damp.

Tony tried to move away and look around, only to realize that Natasha and Clint were helping hold his naked chest against Loki’s also naked chest. Both their shirts were off and they were in pajama pants.

“Don’t you dare try to move away, you stupid imbecile.” Loki growled the order.

Tony winced, “What happened?” His god was angry at him and he was still turned on but losing it by the second.

“You did genius.” Clint said. “Steve’s not dead but you burned him and half of Coney Island to take out those five bots. What the hell did you do, what were you thinking?” He turned to Natasha. “I get to use him for target practice later, for this right? He took out the Cyclone.”

“No Clint, he is unfortunately a team member and supposed ally. Besides it’s not nice to tease the soon to be dead.” Natasha told Clint.

“Ouch,” Tony exclaimed and finally got to look back at Steve. Guess he knew whose picture would have the honored place at the end of Clint’s practice hall for now.

“Why are you holding me against Loki?” Tony asked.

“Because he seems to be able to cool your extremis down. We don’t know why.” Natasha answered.

“Yeah, cool the extremis but apparently not your nuts.” Clint teased. “You were trying to ride him like a rocket, man.”

“Clint, don’t provoke him. He’s still fidgeting enough to disturb me.” Loki snarled.

“How long have I been here? How long has Loki been healing him? What the fuck happened when I fainted?” Tony sounded frustrated. He was sorry, but he never did well with not knowing, especially when everyone else knew.

“Don’t you remember me telling you not to do magic without me?” Loki sounded so tired.

“I sort of forgot. Sorry, really. So what happened?” Tony said.

“After completely losing control, your blaster, extremis and your spell combined and went off, bypassing the buffer somehow, probably because of the enchantment. Your core started going up and you passed out. Jarvis alerted me and brought you home.” Loki started the tale.

Clint continued. “Your blast expanded hundreds of feet out. It hit the bots, Steve was burned on one hundred percent of his body! If Natasha and I wouldn’t o’ been behind you we’d be ashes now. You should see your suit. I’m shocked Jarvis could fucking make it fly. My favorite coaster, the Cyclone, it’s gone now, history!” Clint exclaimed clearly angry and annoyed.

This time Tony managed to pull away enough to look for himself. The burn was bad. If Steve would have been a normal person he would be dead three times over. There were towels covering his hips. He assumed Cap’s suit was history. Loki had been working at this for some time. The skin on Steve’s core and head were red now, not black. “Oh shit.” He exclaimed before being pulled back in place against Loki.

“Now can you stay put? I don’t care if you talk but try not to joggle my arms I am directing healing magic into your badly damaged shield-brother and I need it to go to the right place.” Loki finally
explained sounding drained and frazzled with Tony.

“Loki has had you against him for almost seven hours now. We tried to move you away when he started to heal Steve but your temperature started raising again. Ever since we have been taking turns holding you against him.” Natasha added. You could always count on her to sound like nothing was wrong.

“Oh god.” Tony said and shook his head then stopped remembering what Loki had asked. He thought ‘I’m burning up and probably going to die, after I nearly killed the invincible Captain America. Howard would be so proud right now.’

“Yes, but I’m busy, so consider your prayers to me ignored.” Loki snarked, trying to lighten the mood at least a bit as he worked.

“Can you really answer prayers?” Clint asked.

“I have been known to do so in the past. If someone is sincere and actually performs an act of supplication,” The god answered.

Clint got down on his knees, closed his eyes and said, “I really, really, need the Cyclone back. Please Loki.”

“Did you hear? As in actually listening to what I said, when I said, I am busy? Now let me heal Steve.” Loki scolded rolling his eye, actually surprised at Clint who was usually a little more standoffish towards him.

Another two hours and Steve was red skinned but healed. He would have naturally healed himself but it would have taken a couple weeks. He was now awake but still ached. Loki told him his skin was very delicate and that he should stay naked for two days being very careful with his fragile new skin. Steve spent the next two days in seclusion except for Bruce who would made sure his food had been delivered to his room.

After Loki finished healing Steve, he carried the inventor back to his suite to get a change of clothes.

“Uh, do we have to do this? I feel really silly and it looks rather obscene.” Tony asked about being carried. Their chests were together with Loki’s hands lifting and holding him there by his butt. Tony’s arms wrapped around Loki’s neck hanging on so he didn’t fall. Plus he was more than embarrassed from his earlier erotic nightmare.

“I do not care how it looks. Of course if you don’t mind exploding, I can set you down. There should be enough time for me to teleport to a safe distance. Otherwise until we are someplace where I can monitor you and your temperature the answer is yes.” Loki said snottily.

“Ok, I got it. But if you get a hard on I’m not going to be embarrassed.” Tony snarked back.

“I believe you are already working ‘hard’ on that, dearest. Is that your face turning red?” Loki teased.

“Oh shut up. I can’t help it. It responds to friction.” Tony put his now clearly red face into Loki’s neck and was quiet the rest of the way. He kept thinking about the dream. He was seriously messed up.

Once in his suite, Loki put a still embarrassed and amazingly quiet Tony down. He set a tablet next to him and ordered him not to move and to stay calm while he took a shower. Then politely asked Jarvis to monitor Tony. Tony sitting up put a pillow in his lap to cover his obvious response to friction. Trouble, immediately jumped up on his lap walking in circles to settle on the lumpy pillow.
Tony picked up the tablet only to have Trouble bat at it, ensuring that Tony could not see the screen. She turned around a few times and butted her head into Tony’s face. “You cat, are well named.” Tony said feeling both weirded out and oddly calmed by her presence.

Loki was still finishing his very quick shower when Tony felt his temperature begin to rise again and Jarvis notified Loki.

Loki came out of the shower with nothing on. Even after all the nights Loki had spent as a teddy bear, it had been some time since Tony had seen him naked. Tony looked, oh yeah, Loki was fine. Thin, long legs, muscled, tight ass, well endowed. ‘Oh god, not what I should think about right now.’ Tony put his face into Trouble’s fur and was very glad the pillow was still in his lap. “Puts some pants on at least. I need to be able to use my eyes,” Tony cried out, praying Trouble didn’t notice the slight pillow movement. She did and started batting away fortunately with her claws in.

“Fine, I did not know you were such a prude.” Loki said and suddenly pants appeared on him.

“Better?” He said with a smirk looking at Trouble.

“Are those real? I don’t want to feel anything even if I can’t see it.” Tony said pointing at Loki’s crotch. Then a smirk of his own. “Unless you want to cool me down and heat me up at the same time.” Isn’t this what he had wanted, Loki to notice? But he had screwed up big time. Not his finest moment. This was not the time to push for this, his worry and guilt were starting to eat at him.

“No, the pants are real, now hug me.” Loki sat behind Tony and put his arms around him, not disturbing Trouble in the least.

“Is this a permanent problem now? Did I really blow it? And why does this drop my temperature?” Tony just couldn’t seem to ask just one question.

“Yes, you upset the balance of your system, but I don’t think it is permanent At least not yet. Your temperature stayed stable longer this time, before it started rising again. They only told you about once, but we tried it three times when I was healing Steve. You were stabilized longer each time.” Loki told him.

“And why does this work? You forgot to answer that.” Tony scolded a bit.

“I have not had time to investigate it. I noticed it the night you got drunk. I suspect it has to do with the link and my Jotun form, somehow cooling you.” Loki sighed and took a deep breath.

“How long do you think we will have to stay like this? Will it be all night? Do you…”

Loki raised his voice a bit and cut Tony off. “Are you even capable of not talking? I have not had time to figure things out. You are also quite ripe. We need to get you a bath too.”

“But don’t you have to hold me…?” Tony was about to ask more but saw Loki’s disapproving face.

“My dear hemorrhoid, we will go to your room. Once you are cooled down, you will take a very short cold shower. If, you are quiet I may be able to have a few answers for you by then.” Loki said. Then added when Tony was about to ask something else. “Just stop! Remember, you did this to yourself. Not talking is your punishment.”

Sometime later after one more move, Tony’s cold shower and non-successful attempt at being quiet. He had to complain about the cold, really he did. Loki told him they would have to sleep together tonight at least.
Tony hoped tomorrow would bring answers. He didn’t want to die. He was exhausted and felt more guilt than he had in a long time. Regardless he didn’t expect to be able to sleep. But with his nice cool teddy bear’s arms around him, sleep actually came remarkably quickly.

Chapter End Notes

Tantric magic - Sex magic - Just in case some of you don't know.

This is actually the first part of a chapter that was too long, to me. The next part will be up Friday or Saturday.

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
The Trouble with Unfinished Enchantments.

Chapter Summary

Tony find out that unstable enchantments cause problems for everyone.

Chapter Notes

Happy Hollidays!

Warning there is a brief torture-filled nightmare scene.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony woke up to Jarvis announcing loudly; “Sir, wake up! Master Loki, wake up! Ms. Potts is almost here.” Clearly Jarvis had been at this awhile.

Tony sat up. Neither of them had worn shirts, feeling it would make it more efficient to keep Tony cool.

The door burst open as Loki finally forced his still very sleepy eyes open.

“Anthony Edward Stark what did you do! Do you have any idea how much trouble you have caused?” Pepper was very angry and yelling.

“Sorry Pep. Things went completely haywire.” Tony said while yawning.

“I need to know what happened y……..” Pepper said, then noticed Loki and their lack of clothes, as he sat up. “Are you crazy doing this with Extremis?” Anger turning ugly.

“It’s not what it looks like. Don’t get mad, let me explain.” Tony said cringing at her voice.

“Good Morning Ms. Potts. I fear you have jumped to an incorrect conclusion.” Loki said politely and fully awake with a light gentle tone.

“And what conclusion would that be?” Pepper was at least in control of her emotions, but still very angry.

“We didn’t sleep together. Jesus, Pep.” Tony looked at Loki and his naked chest. “Okay, we did but not in the way you think.” Then to Loki. “Bastard, how are you so awake and cheery so fast?”

Pepper glowered at Tony. “I knew you cuddled up to him sometimes. So you wouldn’t be alone, when you were drunk. But was there more to it all this time or did you just start recently?”
But Loki answered. “You have incorrectly perceived that we were engaged in sex. Nothing is further from the truth. The reality is, I have been keeping Mr. Stark’s temperature from rising and leaving a crater where this city currently resides.” His tone was clear and bright he was now smiling at Pepper.

Pepper’s face softened. “The Extremis? Oh Tony, what’s happened?” She looked from Loki to Tony.

“Why is it you believe him and not me?” Tony whined.

“Because he tells me the truth.” Pepper stated like a fact.

“What! You believe the God of Lies over me. Because he tells the truth!!” Tony couldn’t believe his ears he leaned back into Loki. His cool body felt so nice against his skin.

“I am not only the God of Lies but also the God of Mischief, God of Chaos and the God of Fire.” Loki added looking down at Tony.

“But still Lies!” Tony wailed.

Loki rolled his eyes. “Don’t you know anything about lying Tony? First you must tell the truth most of the time or no one will ever believe you. Second you must know when to tell the Lie.”

“Anyway Pep, I’m afraid the Extremis got out of hand yesterday when I was fighting the Doombots. Besides it’s been a couple of months, if I wanted to sleep with Loki I’m a free man.” Tony countered but sounded rather depressed and dejected.

“The good news is it does seem to be calming down again. I plan on figuring out a way to temporarily stabilize it some more today.” Loki explained to Pepper. Ignoring Tony’s comment on sleeping with him.

They continued to talk to Pepper. She was not happy that Tony had gone out to fight. What had he been thinking? They both decided to leave out the attempt at magic and blame it all on the Extremis. She finally left with a story she could tell the press and a promise that Tony and Loki would help rebuild the damage done.

After she left Tony turned to Loki. He had been thinking about what Loki had said, and asked. “Did you figure out why you are cooling me down yet?”

“No, I woke up a couple times and looked some more. All I saw was that part of it involves the apprentice link.” Loki now looked tired again.

“You said you were the God of Fire right?” Tony asked.

“Yes? You think I am controlling your fire?” Loki asked not getting what Tony was hinting at.

“No, I woke up a couple times and looked some more. All I saw was that part of it involves the apprentice link.” Loki now looked tired again.

“You said you were the God of Fire right?” Tony asked.

“Yes? You think I am controlling your fire?” Loki asked not getting what Tony was hinting at.

“No exactly. Heat. What is fire? It’s combustion that happens when there’s enough heat. Maybe you are the God of Heat. If that is the case, maybe you can not only cause heat but take it away too. You know give AND take away.” Tony looked at Loki, who was very much listening now. “Look, Thor is the God of Thunder but he can control weather, not just storms. It would only make sense that God of Fire is a general term too.”

Loki looked at Tony and his eyes widened ever so slightly. “So you think that I am using my power as God of Fire to suck the heat out of you? Not my Jotunn form.” Loki’s own mind was moving into
“Yeah, it’s at least a possibility.” Tony agreed.

Loki put a cool hand on Tony. Tony felt it, the temperature of the hand change going up and down. Loki all the while staring at where the hand sat against skin.

“Tony, you are indeed a genius.” Loki exclaimed.

“Isn’t that what I’ve been telling you all along?” Tony laughed.

“I do not feel my temperature changing internally. But when I touch you I can tell the difference and can actually raise and lower it. Temperature has never bothered me. I believe I must have subconsciously adjusted my temperature. In all my years I have never looked at it this way!” Loki laughed.

“So can you maybe use the apprentice link to suck heat out of me without having to hold me all day? Unless of course you want to have sex with me, since Pepper seemed to think we were.” Tony asked waggling his eyebrows.

Loki stilled and for once Tony kept quiet. Well, he was half asleep. Coffee, that would be nice, he thought. Or perhaps Loki was actually considering his suggestion, he smiled at the idea. Loki laughed and suddenly Tony felt a chill go through his whole body. He was cold, he hadn’t been cold since before Extremis.

“What the hell? Are you doing this? How about you warm us up together, we’re half naked already?” Tony wrapped his arm around the god and tried to seek heat from Loki’s still cool body.

“Yes, I am doing it. This is brilliant. I have never done anything like this before.” Loki bounced out of bed, shaking Tony off, and headed to the bathroom, once again ignoring Tony’s sexual remark.

“Hey don’t leave me. I’m freezing, you asshole.” Tony got up and held a blanket around his shoulders. Until he felt his temperature raise to something more normal.

After some experimentation they determined several things. Tony’s Extremis was more active and was never going back to complete remission. Loki’s god power over fires was indeed heat in general. Loki, did not take kindly to Tony pointing out how he had figured it out in five minutes, when Loki had had the power for over a thousand years. Loki was not currently interested in sex just to prove Pepper’s first assumption correct. And finally Tony discovered Loki could indeed turn Tony’s hair and skin a sick green that clashed with the arc reactor.

After a very painfully embarrassing lunch, where Clint couldn’t help calling them the Jolly Green Giant and baby pea, Loki finally turned him back.

Later that day Loki created an ongoing spell that would remove heat using the apprentice link. It ran from him and was not attached to Tony at all. Tony had enough magic on him as it was.

A few days later Tony had been forced to attend a meeting with some of the research guys. It was in a room that had had a mini kitchenette: a sink, refrigerator, microwave, counters, cabinets and of course a coffee machine. Tony arrived late as usual and was standing by the coffee machine pouring himself a cup while everyone else waited on him.

He heard a pop and looked up to see a coffee cup had exploded. Then another cup went pop and
burst. Pop, pop, pop, they all started to detonate. His eyes widened and both the pot and cup he was holding exploded. For a second he thought about keeping a level head. Then in that powerful manner that only Tony Stark could achieve, he screamed like a little girl. “Ahhhh! Meeting abandoned.” And ran out of the room leaving a mess along with several confused researchers.

“LokiIII!!! LokiIII!!!” He repeated over and over getting louder with each iteration. He ran into the lab and met the gaze of his favorite alien. The handles of both the coffee pot and his cup were in his shaking hands and he was breathing fast.

Loki jumped to his feet and moved over to Stark. He put his hands on the man’s shoulders attempting to calm him while magically feeling about for signs of the disturbance. “Relax Stark. Tell me what happened?”

“All the coffee cups exploded down stairs. I think it was me.” Tony’s tiny voice wavered as he spoke. He was scared shitless.

Loki took the remains of the pot and cup and threw them into the trash. He put his arms around Tony and pulled the inventor close. “It’ll be okay. I’m here. This is just the second time. You will be fine.”

Loki did some investigation, there wasn’t much to go on. Stark’s enchantment had indeed caused it. It was odd that it had not started with the coffee pot. He could not answer the question as to why.

Things went smoothly for the next few days. Everything was fine so they slept in their own beds. Then one night Tony woke up felling hot. Very hot.

Jarvis was saying. “Sir, you need to go see Master Loki right now. You are hot and he is screaming again. “

Tony jumped out of bed and ran down the flight of steps to Loki’s suite. He ran to the bedroom. Loki was screaming “No, stop, please no, not my vocal cords. No, no, no, no. I beg you.” He was on the floor thrashing bruising himself against the wall, bed and dresser.

Tony grabbed ahold of Loki forcing their bodies together. “It’s a dream Loki. I’m here you’re ok. No one is hurting you.”

“Not my vocal cords!” Loki screamed again.

Loki kept moving, throwing himself and now Tony against things. “Please Loki, wake up. This is all a dream. No one’s taking your vocal cords.”

Loki slammed Tony’s back into the dresser corner. Tony felt a snap in his lower back. “AHH!” He screamed. “Loki it’s me Tony. Please wake up. I’m getting hotter. Please.” Tony felt his legs going numb. Extremis would heal it but not if he exploded.

“AHHHHHHHHHHHH” Loki continued screaming.

Tony remembered something from a conversation with Clint. He closed his eye and buried his head into Loki. “Dear Loki, God of… Fire. Please grant me my wish and wake up. I need you.” He tried as sincere as a panicked person could get.

Amazingly it seemed to work. Loki stopped rolling, his screams died out. He was still breathing hard but opened his eyes. “Tony?... “

Tony could feel his temperature start to drop. “What happened?”
Loki was still dazed, half asleep and shaking. “They removed the soles of my feet, had blinded me, and were about to remove my vocal cords again…” Then he stopped and realized what he had just said. He had told Tony more than he wanted the man to know. And he was plastered to him, hot, but cooling. “You mean the spell.”

Tony painfully hugged Loki. “I meant both, Lokes, I meant both.” He knew Loki would want to be alone after telling him about the nightmare, but he needed to cool down, and his back hurt so much. So for once he held his tongue and stayed still. He should get an award for the past few weeks and how much he had restrained his questions. He couldn’t leave yet anyway. His legs weren’t going to be much help until he was healed.

After several minutes, Loki’s breathing and heart rate slowed down. He looked at the ceiling, took in the fact he was on the floor. Tony had cooled down but was holding himself funny. Loki took his hand and felt Tony’s back. Broken. The nightmare had been bad but he had hurt his friend. He felt awful even with the knowledge that Tony would heal fully. “I am sorry, I hurt you.” He finally said.

“I’ll live. Maybe, I should go back to my room.” Tony said hoping his legs might be up to working again.

Loki sat up and carefully helped Tony onto the bed. “No, you are staying here. Apparently my nightmares are able to shut down the cooling spell.” Loki explained. “I think we need to figure out whose bed we will be sleeping in. At least until I have you permanently stabilized.”

They ended up in Tony’s bed. Jarvis sent out a memo informing everyone in the tower of the situation so they wouldn’t get the wrong idea like Pepper had.

Trouble had no problems adjusting. Besides being able to open most doors herself, her catwalks between the lab, Loki’s suite and the penthouse, she had also trained Jarvis to open any door she wanted by putting her paw on the door in question. And while she couldn’t exactly talk, Jarvis seemed to enjoy the game of taking Trouble between floors trying to guess which one Trouble was going to.

Several days later Tony was in the common kitchen talking with Bruce, Clint and Natasha when glasses started shattering. This time they started with the one he was holding. Tony screamed for Loki again but remained standing in the kitchen.

When he got there Tony was stammering. “Kitchens, I need to stay away from kitchens. Maybe it’s just food or coffee. Coney Island had coffee. God, please let it not be coffee. I’m going to blow up and take you all with me. Maybe you’ll all explode like the coffee cups. I think you need to move out. Maybe I need to move out. I don’t think I could hurt anything in the middle of the Sahara… or the Gobi… I don’t want to cause environmental problems either. Space. I need to go to space.” He was staring at nothing shaking again. There was a panic attack starting.

“Stark, settle yourself. This is another side effect of the unfinished enchantment. It is not too bad yet.” Loki said, grabbing him. “Now listen to my heartbeat, breath with me. In, hold it, out, hold it.” Loki felt around with his magical senses. This time it was radiating out from Stark as he expected.

A few minutes later he had Tony calmed down and the others had cleaned up the broken cups and glasses.

Steve who had finally emerged from his room to help, got filled in on what had taken place, looked at them and said. “What about Coney Island, was that a side effect?”
Loki answered immediately. “I do not believe it so. Stark had been actively trying to use everything together then. This has a different feel to it.”

“So what, do I just not eat or go into kitchens now. It’s the third time it happened in a kitchen you know. What am I going to do? Can you stop these things from happening? What if it had been Clint or Natasha that exploded? What if something happened to Jarvis or U or Dum-E.? ” Tony was rambling again now, voicing his fears again.

“Stark relax. One panic attack for today is enough. I don’t think it will effect a living creature for a while yet. I’ll put a shield on your bots so they should also be safe.” Loki said but he rested a hands oh Tony’s shoulder and looked him in the eyes as he said it hoping it would sink in. Finally he took him down to the lab to be with him while he worked.

The next event happened while Tony was in the lab trying on an Ironman suit when it exploded off of him. Loki was there to calm him down and observe him. This time he was able to observe it enough to put in some safeguards. Tony felt much better after that.

Nothing happened for nearly two weeks. Then one night Loki came dashing into Tony's bedroom from the lab screaming.

“What the hell did you do Stark?” His face red and his hands covered in small cuts.

“I didn’t do anything? What happened to you?” Tony jumped out of bed and grabbed some bandages. “How did you cut yourself? Do you need to spend the night here?”

Loki looked around at the room, he walked to the bathroom, checked out the closet all the while Tony was following him with bandages.

“Tell me what happened, please? Tony begged.

Loki put his hands on Tony, sighed and said. “I believe you had another incident.”

Tony stared in disbelief then at Loki’s hands. “Shit, I thought we had them stopped. What happened? Let me help you. Is this me again? Damn, I’m sorry.” Tony took Loki into the bathroom and treated his hands finding no evidence of glass. This was not supposed to be happening anymore and certainly not through the link.

Loki meanwhile looked at Tony. “I think this is something new. Just go back to bed, I have some work to do. I’ll figure it out by morning. Get some sleep.” Loki tucked Tony into bed and absentmindedly brushed his lips across Tony’s forehead, as one would do with a small child.

Tony fell asleep immediately not even angry that Loki had probably been his sleeping pill. Loki went back to the lab to work.

The next morning Tony was in a great mood. He went down to the lab and found Loki looking miserable with his head in his hands.

Tony said brightly. “Good morning Sunshine. I see things are great.”
“Go drown yourself.” Loki responded.

“Aw, is the reindeer in a bad mood?” Tony snarked.

“Tony, do you want to know what it feels like to be a gerbil?” Loki was serious he rubbed his temples.

“What? You weren’t drinking, sweetheart. It can’t be a hangover.” Tony wasn’t quite so cheery.

“Perhaps I should just let you explode.” The black haired demon growled. If looks could kill. Tony would be dead now, a small pile of ash.

Tony sat down across from Loki and waited for Loki to cool down. When he finally spoke he was sincere. “Ok, tell me.”

Loki looked up. “I forgot about Odin’s enchantment that keeps me from appearing as a monster.”

“You are not a monster ever. Anyway. And?”

“Stark! You are not in a place to correct me. This is much worse than I had imagined.” Loki was pissed, really pissed. “When the cuffs were removed and the magic washed into you during that blasted ceremony, it interacted with the magic in your arc reactor, backwashed into me and planted itself into my enchantment.” Loki told him, sounding like he was scolding Tony.

“I may be a genius bright eyes, but I’m still missing what this means. Why is my teddy bear suddenly a porcupine?” Tony asked still smiling but a little more careful now. He hadn’t seen Loki this angry since he’d been living in the tower.

“The backlash side effect last night was generated from me. This means it is not possible to stabilize you without being permanently linked to you.” Loki snarled at Tony.

Tony looked at Loki. The reality hitting him like a ton of bricks. He knew Loki had been firm on not being linked. “What? So you’re going to let me die! Do I get a choice where I explode? How long will I be able to live like this? Am I allowed to say goodbye to my friends?” Tony was loud and angry and indignant.

Loki glared at Tony his temper barely controlled. “Calm yourself mortal. I have not made a decision. Place confidence in, that I find myself not wanting to let you die yet.” And Loki was gone.

Tony sighed, “Jarvis, where is he?” He felt his magic dampen and withdraw. Loki wasn’t here.

A moment later Jarvis answered. “I don’t know Sir. He appears to have left the tower.”

Great, just great. He had just pissed off the person keeping him alive.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this.
If you like it, feel free to press the Kudo's tag. Maybe leave a comment.

I appreciate all of you.
Loki didn’t show up for dinner that night. Tony worried that he had been abandoned for real. He didn’t tell anyone of his fears, not even Jarvis. It was like the palladium poisoning all over again or Howard abandoning him next to that wrecked car. He couldn’t estimate how long he had.

He didn’t want to tell anyone because they would assure him that Loki would not let him die. He wanted to trust Loki, knew he should. He was responsible for Loki being on earth so Loki needed him. But that didn’t help keep his mind from having doubts. Loki no longer wore the suppression cuffs, so he could hide anywhere in the world or go to who knew where off universe. What if Loki went to sleep and had a nightmare? Oh God. He didn’t sleep at all, ending up in his lab going from project to project. He tried to ignore the recordings playing in his brain, of Howard telling him he was worthless. His guilt plagued him over all the people he had disappointed. He talked himself out of leaving, trusting Loki enough to not let him explode in New York and wanting to stay put so Loki could find him immediately when he came back.

Trouble spent all her time with Tony. The cat never let him out of her sight. Tony was used to her being on the bed with them at night so he didn’t seem to mind. In fact sometimes when he would pet Trouble, magic would spark like static electricity on his hand. It did help calm him down, keeping his nerves at bay.

Two days later he was in his lab trying to accomplish something when Loki showed up, grabbed him, and teleported someplace desert-like with no civilization in sight.

“What the fuck. Am I going to blow up now? Is this why you brought me here?” Tony shrieked, being startled upon landing. “Really? Isn’t there another way?” He was scared.

Loki just glared at him for a moment. “I had another episode. I finally felt disposed to explain the situation to you.” He was still in a bad mood, his body was tense, and he started to pace.

Tony looked at Loki. He wanted to rant and scream it wasn’t fair. He wanted to cry and beg Loki to care. He wondered what happened but decided not to ask. He settled for an unsteady, “Great idea.”
“I thought this would be a mere ten or twenty years on Midgard when I asked to stay. Then I would once again be free to do as I like. Being enchanted to you means I will be bound to you for the rest of my life. You will be there forever. You will not die at the normal human eighty to hundred years but will live as long as I. My life may even be dependent upon you, one stupid reckless human keeping me alive.” Loki hissed. “I tried my best to see if there was a way to separate us. It is not possible.”

Tony listened carefully then felt the floor drop out from underneath him. “Does this mean we’re committed? As in attached, forever, you mean like no way out for me, ever?... I don’t do commitment.” If he was nervous before now alarms were ringing. He felt a cold sweat race over his body.

Loki stopped for a moment. “Well congratulations Stark. You have tied yourself to me in a very permanent fashion. I am pleased sharing has helped you to suffer too.” Loki sneered then started pacing again.

“You really don’t understand. I can’t. Not on purpose. I mean Pepper is sort of there but I, I can always leave and Rhody... Rhody hardly counts, only there for emergencies. Jarvis and the bots are not alive. They are like part of me... so they don’t count. Everyone leaves me or I leave them. It’s a rule I have. Stay free, don’t get handed things, don’t let people touch my stuff, and don’t do real commitment. I mean, I don’t expect the Avenger’s gig to last forever and SHIELD is probably going to blow itself up soon. I can’t commit to anyone. I really can’t.” Tony was shaking staring at the tracks Loki was leaving in the sand.

“It would be risky but I might be able to survive if I allow you to blow up your end of the enchantment.”

Tony wilted. “Blow up ??? Commitment?? Die?? Forever??” He burbled.

Loki smirked. “I’m so glad I shared this with you Stark.” He stopped and squinted at Tony. “Now go back and suffer like I am for a while.”

“No, wait…” Tony started and was suddenly back in his workshop. He dropped into his chair and put his head down on his desk and said. “Jarvis, remember all the times you told me one of these days I was going to do something really bad that I couldn’t fix.”

“I remember very well Sir.” Jarvis replied.

“Well I’ve finally done it. I’ve fucked myself for real this time.” He said.

There was a crash behind him, he looked and saw Trouble sitting on Dum-E and they had just broken the table containing the extremis experiments. Trouble jumped down and up into his lap and purred. “How is this my life?” He said and put his head back down, his fingers now stroking Trouble.

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Loki had hid in an abandoned shack near the Arctic Circle. After his ‘sharing’ with Stark, he ultimately decided to contact his mother. He knew he could always rely on her. He may not be her blood but she would always be his mother, the one constant in his life he could count on to care.
She had been waiting for him. It had gotten harder for her to contact him because of the mess with Tony and the enchantment. She’d had another vision and had something for him, a pendant. They talked about what had happened. They talked extensively about how to stabilize the enchantment, the apprentice link, enchantment bonds and side effects.

Frigga was helpful saying that the work he had done was close and could be used in a joint ceremony to finish the enchantment. She suggested a couple more things to incorporate and told him he was probably being too careful, but she was insistent that he wear her pendant when he did the stabilization ceremony with Stark.

He was concerned about adding more randomness to factor in. Frigga reminded him that he was the God of Chaos not a lawyer.

The pendant was ancient even by Asgard standards. It was, at first glance, an expensive opal on a simple gold chain. The size and shape resembled an extra-large jumbo egg yolk sitting on a flat surface. The colors were very vivid with purples, blues, greens and reds that danced and seemed to glow as only the finest opals do. It was not an opal since it was hard as diamond; an unknown substance held together with magic perhaps? Scholars had spent eons failing to figure out the mysteries it held. The stone had no powers as far as anyone could tell and it was most likely linked to the Astral Sea. It was a treasure passed down to Frigga from her ancestors.

Loki finally calmed down. He just hoped that Stark would not have done something stupid while he was gone. Frigga placed the necklace in his room in Alfheim where he was able to retrieve it.

Loki showed up the next day, having been gone three days and nights. He found a bleary eyed Tony working in his lab.

Loki walked up behind Stark. “I have returned.”

Tony jumped and helped DUM-E put out the small fire the torch he was holding had started when he dropped it. “Fuck! Don’t sneak up on me like that!” Tony blurted.

Loki stood there amused and looked on quietly, watching Tony and DUM-E fumble with the mess. Picking up Trouble who circled around and finally wandered over to him, acting like she was grudgingly accepting him back home.

Tony finally looked up after the mess was cleaned up. “Well, are you going to talk to me or what!” Oh no, Tony wasn’t nervous, not at all. If his hands were sweating and had a slight shake as he set them against the table, it was just coincidence.

Loki smiled. It was a warm brilliant smile but just a little evil. “Oh my dear little hemorrhoid, you don’t know how pleased I am to find you have not done something stupid.”

“Loki! I’m not an idiot…well maybe sometimes I act like one. Spread your knowledge on me. I’m dying here. Literally!”

Loki turned serious. “Well first of all, you won’t be dying anytime soon. I have decided to allow the enchantment bond to complete.”

“There is a ‘but’. I can hear the ‘but’.” Tony answered.

“Yes my little apprentice. There are a few.” Loki snarled.
“I’m not going to like this am I?” Tony sighed, moping.

“Honestly, I’m not sure how you will take it.” Loki confessed slowly.

“Stop with the suspense and tell me already.” Tony, unsuccessfully tried not to fret.

“You will be permanently linked to me. It will not exactly be an apprentice link, although I will remain the dominant side of the link and be able to affect you through it, if I so chose to. That is perhaps the worst. The other major point, is that your life will be linked to mine. This means that you will live as long as I do. The link will not be able to be completely suppressed although I do not know all the ramifications of that yet. I expect some powers to grow with time due to it. I do know that it will make us both much, much harder to kill and actually increase our combined magic. It does not necessarily mean we will be forced to constantly remain with each other for eternity but I expect there will be some sort of pull. I am hoping it will only be the need to see each other occasionally but it could be very strong. It is something that cannot be predicted. Most importantly, I think if you do something truly idiotic I can keep you as a vegetable.”

Tony was a little stunned. “So, if you were to go evil you could control me for the rest of your life? Or if you get tired you can just turn me into a vegetable?”

Loki closed his eyes and shook his head. “Must you be so pessimistic? I will not be able to control you but I will be able to influence you. And there is unfortunately a good chance that you will have an effect on me too. I will restrain myself from turning your brain off, allowing that responsibility to lay in your feeble hands.”

“Really? So, we won’t have to be that committed?” Tony perked up.

Loki got an evil look in his eyes and shook his head. “Must you be so pessimistic? I will not be able to control you but I will be able to influence you. And there is unfortunately a good chance that you will have an effect on me too. I will restrain myself from turning your brain off, allowing that responsibility to lay in your feeble hands.”

“Really? So, we won’t have to be that committed?” Tony perked up.

Loki got an evil look in his eyes. “Oh, we will be committed still. I have no way of predicting how strong the link will be.”

“Great, just great.” Tony lamented. He had spent the time since Loki took him to the desert doing his best to ignore and deny the idea that this was a commitment. He had told himself that this was a liability that he had pledged to take on.

“Yes.” Loki grumbled not sure what kind of mischief his apprentice might bestow on him.

“How long are we talking about? I don’t know how long gods live.” Tony asked.

“At this point I’m not sure myself. Frost Giants live a bit longer than Æsir. But I will have a middle aged you, an altered form of Extremis and the enchantment all affecting our life span. I suspect it will be at least a couple thousand more years though.”

Tony hmphed at middle aged but listened as Loki finished. “You know I can’t even imagine that. I don’t even know if the world could handle my awesomeness for that long.” Tony joked trying to still his brain. He was slowly being overwhelmed by the enormous magnitude of possibilities both good and bad that were threatening to actually shut down the great and very sleep deprived brain of Tony Stark.

“Well you will have plenty of time for contemplation as soon as I finish the details of the stabilization ceremony.” Loki said and started ordering Tony around. He had tests to do.

A part of Tony was secretly thrilled. He was getting his wish to be able to keep Loki as a friend. He was definitely not trying to think about a relationship with Loki right now. He was too busy trying not to think about the ‘C’ word or the near panic attacks he’d been fighting off because of it.
Tony found things hard for the next several days. He had been removed from active duty as an Avenger until he was stabilized. Loki was pissy all the time. Fortunately, he was kept busy working with Loki on preparing the ceremony. Unfortunately, that meant the big 'C' work kept finding its way into his mind. He was trying to face it, he had to, it wasn't going away.

By the beginning of June Loki had everything worked out.

Loki had gone to great lengths to minimize the random variables he could not control. For example, Tony’s arc reactor. Tony no longer needed it for his heart but it was part of this mess. So, the quinjet had brought them to this building that they were now sitting in. It was outside the ruined SHIELD base because Loki has said “the ambient magic from the Tesseract was right for Stark’s arc reactor.” Whatever that meant.

Bruce and Steve watched Loki and Tony enter the secure and sterilized room through a glass window. Both men were standing with their arms crossed in front of them, looking into the room behind them was recording equipment. Their job was to keep an eye out for outside disturbances. Only the god and Stark were allowed in the main room containing runes, braziers, magical containers and an array of equipment and sensors.

“So how is the Hulk coming?” Steve asked trying to talk about something to break the silence.

Bruce smiled. “Good, we are getting along. It feels weirdly like being a father to myself.”

“I’ve noticed that Hulk is a lot more controlled in fights than he used to be.” Steve added.

“Yeah, he doesn’t listen much, but sometimes he learns things while listening to me outside of battle. Then he uses it later. We can’t really control what or even if he chooses to learn any given thing. But it’s a huge improvement from before.” Bruce answered.

“So are you one person or two?” Steve asked.

“I don’t have a clue. Sometimes I’m so convinced it is two, other times I know it’s one.” Bruce laughed nervously.

“Are you always aware when I am in the room with the Hulk?” Steve inquired.

“Yeah I am, but I don’t always pay attention. Coloring is not my thing, although I do try to give hints when he is trying to put the big 12 piece puzzles together. Having them be animals was a brilliant idea. He really likes animals.” Bruce smiled as he said it.

“I’m glad he likes them. It’s weird seeing him like that. Did you notice when we play with the Avenger models he moves them to avoid making the buildings fall now. Just like in real battles. Is that what you meant when you said he learns outside battle?” Steve was clearly curious but usually too polite to ask about the Hulk.

“You know he only does that with you. With Clint, they end up doing even more damage. Fortunately, Clint does try to teach him that there is a time to do damage; like when you’re playing, and a time not too; like real life. When Loki tries to play with the figures, Hulk just gets bored because Loki is almost playing chess. Loki’s smart though noticing quickly when the Hulk get bored. Then he moves on to something else. The best times are when Hulk and Trouble are alone
together. She is so warm to us. I can’t seem to take my mind off her when it’s just the two of us. Did you know Trouble can play fetch with small soft balls?” Bruce smiled brightly when he talked about Trouble.

“Really, I didn’t know. She returns them?” Steve would pet her when others were around but didn’t really interact with her much.

“Brings them back and drops them at my feet. Better than any dog I’ve ever seen. We owe her a lot, she hiked a ride on Hulk during the Chitauri attack and helped him listen to Loki. I still find it hard to believe they found her and adopted her. Loki insists she is just a normal cat though.” Bruce continued to smile while talking about her.

Steve was shocked at this. “Do the others know it’s the same cat? I didn’t even know that there was a cat here during the invasion.”

“I have no idea. I didn’t know until I remembered as the Hulk and talked to Loki. But unless there is something strange about earth cats, Loki, the Hulk and myself all think it’s just a random coincidence.” Bruce explained.

“I guess. I’ve seen a lot of stuff that is just coincidences.” Steve replied.

They continued talking about random things.

Time passed, they watched as the shadows seemed to form into shapes that almost resembled living creatures. Three were much larger than the others and they passed all the barriers as though they didn’t exist.

Sometimes a color would appear sparkling red, silvery blue, glittery green, yellow reflective gold, or molten orange, and subsequently a haunting almost absorptive purple would appear in the center.

At one point a low rumble was heard followed by a crack and pop at each of the braziers. Loki and Tony looked up momentarily. All three braziers now had distinct green cat eyes that changed to yellow owl eyes and finally became purple eyes with lightning flashing through them before disappearing altogether. Both participants took a deep breath and continued.

Near the end the energy seemed to compress down and form a glowing egg shape around them. Then the shadows disappeared and the energy seemed to soak into the two. Finally Tony turned and did a thumbs up while Loki smirked and rolled his eyes.

Then Loki pointed to something behind Steve and Bruce. They turned and realized Trouble was sitting on top of the highest device. Her green eyes appeared to be glowing purple for a moment before snapping back to normal.

“The enchantment is successfully completed, everything is over.” Jarvis announced.

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They gathered Trouble and the equipment and went back to the tower. Exhausted, they laid down for the night and Loki even slept next to Tony. It was the only way to get him to go to bed and not
Tony woke up. He was warm and cozy. He was nestled up against Loki, playing little spoon. It felt so very right. His hand held Loki’s hand which was locked around him, he wanted to stay that way forever. Then the fog started to clear. Wait, it wasn’t like Loki was the love of his life, or even his boyfriend, or even a friend with benefits. Not yet, despite his more than occasional wistful thoughts that way. And there was that commitment thing, 'its real now', he shivered.

He felt a tickle on his chest. He moved one hand there and felt it touch a metal object. Ever so slowly he opened his eyelids and looked down. He stared at the thing and recognized it. His eyes became large moons as he turned his head to verify he was really seeing part of the metal casing that had been in his body since Afghanistan.

“LLLokkii” he stuttered.

“Well” he said louder, voice shaking.

“Loki!” His voice held panic now.


“No, I’m fucking not alright!” Tony was loud and shaking and afraid.

Loki pulled away from Tony and sat up a bit. He looked at the metal piece at Tony’s chest and finally recognized it too. There were other metal pieces working their way out of his chest too. “It would appear you don’t need it anymore.”

“The reactor is still in there. I don’t have a sternum.” Tony sounded panicked, he knew he didn’t need the reactor. The shrapnel was out. Jarvis brought up a mirror display so he could see. There was still a clear cover and the triangular glowing element was now covered in what looked like veins and arteries. Some carried blood, some seemed to carry the blue glow. He had messy visions of a massive collapse of his chest, his already weak heart stopping. He was now panicking for real.

“Just relax, breath with me. I need to look. We will figure it out.” Loki assured him. It was unusual but not unheard of to heal so that you rejected things you no longer needed. Asgard had several cases where arms or legs had suddenly decided to grow back after a highly magical event.

Loki rolled Tony over a bit and adjusted to better see what the inventor was talking about. The arc reactor and the veins were not at all normal. He sent his magic to search and found himself following the flowing blue magical power through and around Tony’s body. It didn’t stop there, it flowed into and across the link and into Loki. There it flowed around and eventually settled into his chest where….Oh…..dear…..the stone of the necklace his mother had given him was now embedded inside his own chest. It resembled Tony’s arc reactor with veins and arteries and green, red and blue colors running from it that flowed around him across the link and back into Tony. There it flowed around and finally settled into the arc reactor. He looked again and realized that yes there were places that flowed from the arc reactor that were not just blue but had some red and green too.

The link was now different too. It had always existed in Yggdrasil, but now it was more. Some of it hidden from both Yggdrasil and the standard plane of existence and thus Loki. As for Tony’s rib cage there was a very strong growth forming. He looked at himself only to discover his own sternum was changing into a similar form.

He lifted the empty gold chain from his own neck. “Tony, I believe something was botched and
things did not go as planned. Or as you would say we are fucked.” Loki said in a low voice.

He proceeded to explain to Tony the energy movement between them. Well at least now, they both understood why his mother was so insistent that he wear the necklace. Tony was sad Loki’s necklace was already assimilated. He hadn’t gotten to do much besides a cursory scan of the item.

Now that Tony knew what was going on, having gotten over his initial shock and fear, he became fascinated by the metal his body was pushing out. He noticed that the casing window was loose and he was having Jarvis record everything because it was starting to fill in. In another few hours, his skin would show no evidence of what hid beneath it, or that there was ever even damage to his chest. The window, like the casing, and any unneeded part, pushed out of his body leaving the raw reactor or whatever it was becoming, inside.

“I thought the enchantment was done yesterday, why is it changing now?” Tony questioned while looking at his chest reflection.

Loki’s eyes kept looking at Tony’s chest, he was also clearly thinking. “I have read in ancient texts that very complex enchantments can continues to change over time, way beyond adding a few powers. There are very few of these and to my knowledge there have not been any created since the age of the dwarves. That was long before my grandfather Bor’s time.”

“Well shit.” Tony exclaimed.

They stayed in bed observing what was going on until there was nothing left to see.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo’s button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Auction Time

Chapter Summary

The evaluation of the stabilized enchantment. Oh no, Pepper asked Loki to be auctioned off and Tony get upset.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Once Tony and Loki had finally gotten up and dressed they headed down to the lab to look at the data they had gathered. Indeed, it was very strange to say the least.

They had seen the eyes appear during the stabilizing ceremony. Loki’s best guess or perhaps wildest fear was that the Norns had not only taken an active interest and watched the event but participated in it.

When all the data was put together it appeared that there were figures helping in the ceremony.

Loki explained. “There are in a few very, very old texts, mentions of beings from a third axis. If you counted the world of physics as one axis, and the world of magic or dark matter as a second, these would be from the unknown third world.” He pointed at the figures on the screen.

“There is so little known about this axis. Some call it the world of the Astral Sea, or True Creation, occasionally Fate. But with such limited information people are just guessing. It is believed that the six infinity stones are linked to the Astral Sea. They theorize that real fate comes from it and that all universes and realities are linked to it. Some suspect the Norns are actually beings from there.”

“So, I’m cool enough to get their attention.” Tony snarked.

Loki tensed a bit. “We garnered the eyes of the Norns; this is not a good thing. In fact, most would find it a reason to be afraid, Stark. Beings from beyond, from the Astral Sea, those give even me cause to worry. Who knows how they will play with us in the future. Those beings have bound us together; already they reduce our freedom. You do realize we may not be able to be apart for long periods of time as I once hoped.”

“Us, yes, I think I can get on that bandwagon, dear.” Tony smacked Loki’s ass then moved to hide behind Bruce who was there helping. “So, what are these reading saying?” He pointed to some more data.

“Stark, just because we are bound does not preclude me from making your life miserable.” Loki
snarled at Tony who was smiling. He then pointed to the readings. “Those are showing the completion of the enchantment. These over here are really quite unique. I’m not sure how you captured them.”

Tony said. “That was from the double arc reactors bouncing energy back and forth. I made it to try to measure your magic before, didn’t work. This is the first time it ever actually recorded something. Glad I thought to set them up.”

Loki squinted at Tony then tilted his head. “Please tell me you did not have arc reactor energy flowing back and forth across the room that we were performing a delicate magical enchantment in.”

Tony looked straight at Loki. “Umm, can you tell when I lie?”

“Yes, I can.” Loki said in a low hiss.

“For everyone or just me.” Tony rolled is head and looked at the floor.

“Everyone, especially you. STARK!” Loki growled louder.

“Then I think it’s best to move on to another subject. Do you know…”

“Arc reactor energy is magical like the tesseract and reaches the Astral Sea! I thought I’d had it neutralized because of the location.” Loki was angry.

“So hunny bunny, does this mean the honeymoon is over? I sort of missed the wedding night sex part.” Tony was being careful to keep a desk and the holoscreen between him and Loki. “Remember there is a good chance if you hurt me you hurt yourself now.”

“That is a risk I am willing to take.” Loki’s piercing eyes enhanced the already extreme level of danger his voice exuded.

“Hey guys did you know those reading match up to movement of those beings.” Bruce said out of the blue, oblivious to Loki and Tony.

“What?” Loki suddenly was looking at what Bruce was pointing to.

“Really.” Tony’s attention refocused.

“See there each time one of them moves or seems to say something it registers.” Bruce was pointing to two sets of data.

“Good job Brucie boy. Great find.” Tony patted Bruce on the back.

Trouble had been sleeping on the tall box that had gathered the signals from the arc reactor energy measurement. She lifted her head and meowed, seemingly annoyed at being woken up from her beauty sleep by their talking.

Tony stared at her. That was the same box she was sitting on during the enchantment ceremony. “Is it possible that Trouble is more…” He started then she rolled on her back batting at something in the air and promptly fell off the box in about as ungraceful move as was possible for a cat.

“What?” Bruce asked looking from Tony to an appalled looking Trouble who was moving away with aggravated pride to hide behind another box.

“Nothing.” Tony laughed.
“Your findings are correct, Bruce. They do seem to have chronicled the shadow figures. It is very fascinating. I am sure they were genuinely participating in the enchantment ceremony now.” Loki said sounding fascinated again rather than angry.

“I may have added some risk. But we got more info now. Can’t change the past. Can I be forgiven?” Tony said with hope.

“I suppose Stark. Next time try to tell me before you do something stupid?” Loki sighed.

“Don’t bother Loki. I don’t think it’s possible for Tony to keep that one.” Bruce grinned.

“Hey, I can, sometimes, well maybe. Oh, shut up.” Tony huffed.

Trouble soon came out from hiding and decided to help. She helped by making sure important papers didn’t get blown off the desks by sitting on them. It was very useful they didn’t blow away when Tony and Loki wanted to look at them.

As Loki was picking her up from the fourth set of things they were looking at. Tony asked, “Why’d you bring her with you?”

Bruce looked troubled. “We thought you guys brought her. Loki, did you expect her eyes to glow like that?”

Loki looked up. “Her eyes were glowing, I missed that. What color were they?” Loki picked her up to look into her eyes.

“Ah, purple, similar to the colors from your room. I thought you knew. You pointed at her.” Bruce added.

Loki still with his hands on Trouble, “I pointed because I thought I saw her through that glass because she wasn’t supposed to be there. I saw no glowing eyes though.” As he set her down she promptly ignored them going over to jump up on the couch.

“Jarvis, we need a recording of the observation room.” Tony requested.

“Certainly, Sir.” Jarvis promptly brought up the recording from the room. They were not expecting anything to happen there so there was only one angle, fortunately it did get most of the room.

They watched in fast forward as Trouble snuck out of a box of equipment they brought in. Then found a spot out of view. She did not show up until the ceremony was starting. Then she jumped up to give herself a good vantage point and stared. The camera could not see her eyes but for the whole time she did not move, glued to the event that was unfolding before her. It was not until Loki pointed at her that she moved at all, lifting her head a little bit, noticing Bruce and Steve looking at her and quickly jumping down. Purple eyes may have flashed across the screen for a moment, but it might have been a reflection.

“Huh, didn’t know a cat could sit at attention like that for so long.” Tony was the first to comment.

“Animals don’t usually, unless they are hunting.” Bruce added.

“This is not the first time I felt I might have seen something unusual. Trouble has no magic though, I checked.” Loki murmured. “This appears to be yet another data point to add to a list of things I do not understand about Midgard cats, or at least this one in specific.” Loki finished.
Next on their agenda was the brand new stabilized enchantment. First, how were they different? Before, Tony was only allowed to do simple tests and then only when Loki was present. For some reason, everyone agreed that Tony becoming a crater would be a bad idea. Now that danger should be gone. Bruce was convinced that Tony could still manage to create a crater; he’d just survive it.

So, they started testing Tony. He was stronger now, but not as strong as Steve, Thor or Loki. His stamina was more like theirs though. He healed faster than any of them but nowhere near as fast as the regeneration they had seen with the unstable extremis. That had been ridiculous. Loki also saw an increase in his natural healing but it was not as fast as Tony’s.

Next came heat, they soon understood how Steve had been burned so badly. The extremis clearly came into play when Tony cast the simple fire spell. But it was not only that, he had clearly also been pulling from Loki’s godhood. If he were to try his spell on the coaster again now, the blast would be much, much larger. Loki was now certain when Tony had tried that trick, his blasters had only served as a delivery and aiming device. Tony suddenly found himself restricted from any attempt to use fire without a lot of time spent practicing in Loki’s presence.

Tony insisted Loki also try a fire spell. Turned out what was left of extremis augmented Loki’s fire too. In fact, his was enhanced as much as Tony’s when he produced a fireball that nearly torched the whole lab while trying to light a candle. Tony broke into hysterics when Loki admitted he too would have to practice with fire.

Loki also explained to Tony that he had originally underestimated his magic a great deal, believing that it was hidden by the arc reactor. Now it seemed that both their magic was enhanced.

The link between them worked best when they were close. They could draw magic from one another and Loki felt if they learned to work together they would see magical efficiencies of some sort. Loki said the groundwork for a short distance mental communication existed and they needed to work on it.

Both of them could shield the connection to stop magic from being borrowed if they concentrated on it. The apprentice link was still working with Loki being teacher and Tony being student but it had changed somehow, a bit more two way, and looked like it would continue to evolve over time.

Loki set to work having them both practicing magic control until they would drop from exhaustion. Tony was disappointed to find he no longer had to sleep with Loki.

Fury was finally told Stark was stabilized and the extremis was no longer a problem. Loki was the official group healer and was no longer using the cuffs. Tony’s magic and the enchantment was still kept a secret. Fury asked if he could have the suppression cuffs and the second key in case they caught Doom. As an act of good will they gave them to him. Of course, Tony kept the key he had stolen from Steve, fearing SHIELD would use the cuffs against Loki or even himself. Coulson later reported that Fury had shared the information with the WSC.

===== Late one Friday afternoon a few weeks later Loki announced he had to get ready for a party.
“Party? What party? We still have science to do, magic to practice, Link.” Tony asked, not understanding why Loki might leave.

“Tonight, there is a charity auction. I told Pepper I would allow myself to be auctioned off for a date with someone.” Loki informed him.

“Wait, what? You are going to go on a date with a human?” Tony gasped in surprise and felt his heart sink at the same time.

“Of course, the cause is a good one. Pepper thinks I need to be more visible now that it has been a year. And auctioning off a night with a prince is apparently something very desirable.”

“A night? Does that mean sex too? Do you even do that? I’ve never even seen you interested.” Tony exclaimed suspiciously. He had so many things he wanted to know.

“Stark, Stark, Stark. I am just as interested in sex as the next person. I do not have sex with strangers, this will be no exception. Even if I did, I am immune to any disease my partner might have.” Loki laughed.

“But, man…I’ve never… when…. Must be in a big dry spell huh?” Tony was sort of at a loss. He really wanted to ask very nosy questions. He didn’t want Loki to go out with someone, at least if that someone was not him.

Loki looked at him. “Oh? Are you that interested in my sex life? Is that an offer I hear? Just because I refrain from doing anything in front of you does not mean anything. I am a god after all.”

“So you would do a man? Who have you had it with in the last year? I’d be willing to volunteer to help with that dry spell. You know I have a big bed.” Tony was interested and just couldn’t help himself. Loki had given him an opening to ask.

“I really don’t care what sex they are if I find the person interesting. While I appreciate the humor of your offer, my sex life is none of your business. Now, I am going to go get ready. Are you going to this event? I believe Pepper had said you were.”

“Yes, I’m going.” Tony still couldn’t believe Loki was going to be auctioned off. Loki had taken his statement as a joke. He might have to get more serious with his princess. He was definitely going tonight. Someone needed to watch out for Loki after all. Loki did guys too, he felt his heart speed up. Maybe he should buy him for the night but then Pepper would probably kill him.

Loki and Tony arrived together at the event. Both were dressed to kill in tuxes and bow ties.

The press didn’t even ask too many questions about the Coney Island mishap. They instead focused on Prince Loki, and how he was settling in on earth, about how his mental healing was going and how he, Tony and the Avengers were getting along. He answered a few questions with grace and diplomacy before they entered.

Captain America was also being auctioned off. He was also all smiles and politeness.

The auction took place and Tony joined the bidding but Pepper made him stop.

“You have him all the time. If you want to go on a date with him ask him sometime later.” She said.

“But, that bitch over there bidding is a wolf. I don’t want her to win.” He argued, wondering if he
did win Loki, whether he would be taken serious or not. Maybe he should try the date route.

“Loki is a Norse God. He is over a thousand years old, has magic, super strength and powers we probably can’t even guess. I think he might just be able to take care of himself against a strong-willed woman.” Pepper scolded.

“Nope, not that one. Trust me I’ve seen her in action.” Tony was getting protective.

“Fine, if she looks like she is going to win you can bid.” Pepper gave in.

Tony ended up bidding a few more times. Both men and women were bidding on the prince. In the end a woman probably around forty won. It was the highest bid of the night.

Captain America came in second and was won by a trio of rich fan girls. He was in for an interesting date! Tony had been there, done that, and was really glad he was not on the auction list tonight.

Afterwards Tony and Pepper headed over to Loki. Only to see Justin Hammer arrive first.

“Justin Hammer, close personal friend of Tony Stark. I’m sure he’s told you all about me.” He said holding his hand out to shake Loki’s.

“No, I don’t believe he has.” Loki took his hand.

“I find that hard to believe, you must not have been listening very well. Tony can be such a bore at times, never stops talking. We both used to make weapons together. Mine were superior of course. He tried to be just like me. Finally gave up making weapons because of my superior stuff. I think it’s jealously personally.”

“Oh I do remember him mentioning you now. Weren’t you the one with all the faulty tech? The one who hired that criminal that attacked the Stark Expo? I had heard you were in jail.” Loki took his hand back, noticing Tony and Pepper were arriving.

“Anyway. So, how does it feel to be a piece of meat?” Justin said bluntly.

“I’m not sure that is quite how I would put it.” Loki was not amused.

“I was up there a few years ago. Some fat broad won me. Had a miserable time.” Justin supplied and Loki raised his eyebrows. “Your slave master is rather tubby too, I see. Probably has a horrible personality”

“Sir. That is not only rude, but judgmental and crass. Just because someone is not as emaciated as some of your Midgardian standards seem to expect, does not deem them either unpleasant or fat. I would rather spend my time with someone who is interesting regardless of what they look like, than with someone who is a rude arrogant prick like yourself. My friends have arrived. Leave now.” Loki snarled.

Justin took a moment to look shocked and took off.

Tony clapped and said. “Good job, I don’t think I’ve ever seen him run that fast.”

“Yes, well there are unfortunately way too many just like him in Asgard.” Loki said with disdain. Then he turned around and an exhibit caught his eye. “What was a Djofullin from Illitplass doing here?” He gasped walking over to it.
Tony and Pepper followed and where he pointed was an ancient replica of Panzuzu an ancient Babylonian demon. “That didn’t translate at all. It says it’s an ancient demon called Panzuzu.”

Loki spoke with disdain. “That is no demon. It looks like a devil, a Djofullin from a place not of this universe.”

“Looks like someone’s bad dream to me. Are you sure? This thing is from seven hundred BC.” Tony asked.

“I suppose it might not be, I have never actually seen one in person.” Loki sniffed giving it one last glance before walking away.

After that Pepper took Loki to meet his winner. Tony decided that he wasn’t up to watching it. He wanted Loki who had never taken him seriously and hadn’t been in a joking mood since before they finished the enchantment. So instead he went and found someone to hook up with.

About thirty minutes later, Tony was in a room in the hotel with a chosen female.

She pulled out a gun and shot at him. He was hit. He dashed into the bathroom, slamming the door and locking it. He reached out to Loki and yelled for help or at least made an attempt at a distress call through the link. Then tried a prayer as bullets passed through the bathroom door and hit him a few more times. He was bleeding. He was sure he wouldn’t die but she was pounding against the door trying to get in. Suddenly more bullets were flying, she had reloaded. He remembered how to lock the door magically and did so then crawled into the bath and found a safe corner. He probably had a dozen bullets in him. She was serious, two clips had been unloaded at him. He wondered if Loki had heard him.

One more clip was sent through the door this time trying to break the lock. Tony was glad he had learned magic. Then there was silence. He stayed like that for several minutes. Eventually he heard voices one was Loki’s.

“Tony, are you in there?” Then quieter “No, I don’t know. Mr. Stark was at the event downstairs until recently.”

“Yes, I’m in here. In the bathroom.” Tony yelled out “Who’s out there? Loki, who’s with you?”

“Yes, I’m here with security. Can I come in and see you?”

“Give me a minute to open the door.” Tony looked at his blood. “I want just you in here though.”

“Do we need to get an ambulance?” The guard was saying.

Loki answered quickly. “No, if he is injured I will heal him.”

“There need to be crime photos.” One guard, who was probably a part time police officer was saying.

“I will take them then.” Loki stated as the door unlatched and Loki slid inside.

He looked at Tony and relocked the door. Then softly said. “I think I am going to help remove the bullets before you pass out. Perhaps clean you up a tad bit also.”

Tony was already having Jarvis take pictures from his phone. His head was spinning a bit from
blood loss.

Tony leaned against the counter and sat down on the seat. He sat wearing only his undershorts. “Fuck, bullets still hurt. Ouch be careful!” He exclaimed as Loki leaned over and prodded his wounds.

“Quiet mortal. What did you think you were doing anyway?”

“Mortal again? All I was trying to do was get some, when she pulled a gun and started shooting.” Tony glared tiredly at Loki.

“And this is why I don’t sleep with people I don’t know.” Loki had got two bullets out already. The wounds stopped bleeding very quickly once the bullets were out.

“Well this is the first time it’s ever happened to me.” Tony cringed as Loki worked on the third.

“It is indeed a good thing that you are an improved human or you would be dead now.”

“Yeah, I’m lucky like that.” Tony looked down and saw five bullets. Not feeling really very lucky at all.

“You do understand that you are still able to be killed? Or did that fact not occur to your oversized brain?” Loki was not at all happy.

“I know. Shit, give me a break. I’m wounded here. I just wanted sex. I didn’t hear you volunteering.” Tony was sure Loki was being rough on purpose.

“Stupidity does not suit you Stark. You need to be more careful who you trust.” Loki said jabbing Tony this time on purpose as the next bullet came out.

“Then, I shouldn’t have trusted you? If I hadn’t a year ago, you’d be back on Asgard locked in some cell being tortured now.” Tony growled back.

Loki was silent as he took out two more bullets being much less careful about jabbing Tony. Finally, “That was different. We even made a contract. I had those cuffs on. You knew I was dangerous and besides you didn’t really trust me. Not like this.”

“Oh, you’re right, it was different. But I don’t understand why you are so angry. I take risks all the time and you don’t get this angry.” Tony was tired, frustrated and wanted someone who didn’t seem to even notice him, despite having a magical linkage.

Loki stood up and looked at Tony. “Those you take in battle are calculated, and your guard is not down. Here you let your guard down. If that woman would have been smarter you would be dead.”

Tony looked into Loki’s eyes. “You… are worried about me… Stop the presses, Loki cares about me.” He teased.

“Oh, shut up, Stark. I just have no idea what would happen if you died, now that we share an enchantment.” Loki drawled out.

Tony smiled and stood up. Say what he might, Tony had seen that look. Loki really had been worried about him. Wincing, as Loki healed the obvious bullet wounds so they didn’t show. He picked up his phone and sadly realized that there was no way Jarvis could have caught that look of concern.
Then they left the bathroom to start sorting things out. The police showed up. Bullets were collected. More pictures were taken. Tony actually managed to get his tux back on, and look halfway decent. Then Pepper showed up and practically fell apart. Happy ended up taking her home.

As the two of them watched her leave they discussed how it had become obvious that their confident self-assured Pepper was starting to have her own bad reaction to seeing her friends attacked. Loki hoped she wasn’t getting nightmares. Tony informed Loki that Pepper would see someone for help, if she needed it, unlike the two stubborn assholes they were.

Loki’s date happened without a hitch. Sort of. Tony only texted him four times during it. Made him promise to call if he was going to be home after one. He stayed out until two but did text the inventor to let him know. He and his date had a good laugh about Tony’s overprotectiveness.

Chapter End Notes

Panzuzu - a demon from Assyrian and Babylonian mythology - I stole for use here.
WSC - World Security Council - in case someone forgot.
Djofullin - a universe I made up.

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Jane and the Aether

Chapter Summary

Tony is frustrated that Loki hasn't noticed. Jane calls the boys for help, something has entered her body.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

I had problems with the file disappearing this week, I think this is the beta'd version. My husband hasn't had the time or energy to go over it again to check.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Time passed:

Tony had the coaster rebuilt and Loki had used magic to adjust things to give it the same ride as before. Clint volunteered to spent hours helping with the testing, just to make sure it really rode the same.

Steve had a good time with his auction fan girls who didn’t even try for sex. Tony was totally confused.

Tony was more confused when Steve went to a convention with them just for fun.

Steve took Loki with him. When faced with over a hundred fan girls running towards him, Loki panicked and teleported home.

Tony got to hold Loki in the back of the closet listening to horror stories about sex crazed fairies.

Tony was learning more magic with time and practice. The theory was easy but every new trick was like learning to walk all over again. He both hated it and loved it. He could finally throw a fireball and not have it melt a city block. For some reason Tony never seemed to have a problem of not enough oomph. No, he always had to learn to back down. The other thing he seemed to take to was transmogrifying things. If he understood it chemically or physically no problem. Loki would not let him try it on living things yet. He did it anyway on a cockroach. Understanding materialized as he cleaned up the mess.

Loki had also been working on magic. He had worked with the pathway that existed in their link and now they could emote to each other as long as they were within about twenty five miles. It was nowhere near talking yet but with practice it would get there eventually. Loki could also, once again,
throw fireballs without melting everything in sight.

Steve was really impressed by the way Loki was willing to work with them in the training room. He seemed to always be able to keep them guessing when sparring. Even Natasha learned a couple new tricks.

Clint and Trouble were at it again. It started with Clint stepping on Trouble’s tail, she hissed and scratched him. He yelled insults at her, and then chased her off the common floor.

Hulk and Trouble accidentally broke Clint’s door and much of his living room the next day.

Clint worked on his door and felt he had finally made his room safe. He celebrated by setting up traps that drenched Trouble.

It worked until Trouble realized air vents meant access to Clint’s room.

Clint now had to put plastic sheets on his bed when he got up, hang his shoes from hooks, lock his closet, and finally had to start locking down the vents.

Phil thought it amusing that Trouble never touched his stuff.

Steve celebrated the fact that Clint was spending less time in the air vents.

Natasha and Tony Laughed for twenty minutes straight after discovering what was going on.

Clint put cayenne powder on Trouble’s food.

A terrorized Trouble tore through the tower for hours afterwards, ripping everything to shreds. No one’s things were safe. Even Coulson and Loki had things ripped apart.

Loki sprayed Clint’s bed with ode-de-skunk and told him if he ever did that to Trouble again he would make it permanent.

Steve would not punish Trouble or Loki for it, but did give Loki a talk about diplomacy.

Coulson had a long talk with Clint that resulted in a promise to spend more time at the tower if Clint would stop pranking Trouble.

Clint stopped the prank war again.

Doom was also attacking much less frequently now. The few bots that did show up led Loki to suspect he was trying to work on his magic to improve their power sources. They all hoped he would blow himself up in the process.

The enchantment was declared complete and Loki decided that their ‘needing to sleep together’ habit had gone on far too long. They were to sleep apart, agreeing to join the other in bed only when nightmares called.
Tony felt this was a new slap in the face. He was sexually frustrated and Loki was refusing to take any hints. His Loki had gone on a date, a real date without him, even if it was for an auction. Then there was that ‘C’ thing: commitment. If he pushed a relationship on Loki he would have to accept that he would be tied down to one person for the rest of his life. According to Loki that might mean a few thousand years. What’s worse if he pushed and Loki rejected him, well he wasn’t willing to face that any more than the ‘C’ word. He had to do something.

So Tony made the grand bold resolution, he would try to pick up a couple partners until Loki finally took the hint.

He tried a grand total of three glorious disasters.

The first time being not long after the shooting and Loki’s date. Determination was the only thing that got him to go out and pick someone up but paranoia ended the date before he could actually do anything, remembering having bullets removed while sitting in underwear.

Tony waited a couple weeks before going out again. He took Bruce and Steve neither who weren’t happy about it when they found out why. They had never known him in his ‘one night stand phase’. Loki had teased about going too while holding Trouble, even teasing about picking up someone, maybe even Tony. It wasn’t serious, Loki claimed he had some spell research calling him. Because of all of this Tony was annoyed when he finally took a girl to a hotel all he could think of was Loki. They made it to the bed but found guilt and thoughts of Loki made for a limp Tony.

Twice he had failed to perform. He was embarrassed and ashamed of himself. Even Trouble seemed to look at him with disdain but then again she was a cat so who knew?

He ended up calling someone he’d used years ago, an old acquaintance with benefits. When they met up he got a bad feeling and almost called it off, but he needed to prove to himself that he hadn’t become a member of the Viagra crowd. They’d just gotten their clothes off when she pulled a gun to assassinate him. That, he found himself ready for. What didn’t go down well was two days later when they found her dead from unknown causes.

That shook him up good. He had no problems getting it up for ‘me’ time using a certain unmentionable asshole who was now teasing him over his failed dates. Yes, he whined to his best friend about his dates. Tony couldn’t keep a secret from Loki like that. On his dates he couldn’t relax. He blamed it on a higher tolerance and taking too much to stay drunk very long. The reality was, that someone was gunning for him, wanted him gone and was willing to murder would be assassins who failed. It made the whole idea of picking someone up randomly seem vile. An unfamiliar feeling for Stark. He was starting to understand what Loki meant about not trusting bed partners. How the hell did he get Loki to notice him without being pushy, threatening or actively facing the ‘C’ word?

He had slept on and off with Loki under stressful circumstances. Not once had he seriously tried to initiate sex. Getting together for nightmares just weren’t conducive to arousal. Waking up in the morning with his soft teddy bear was so soothing, leaving him feel refreshed and relaxed that he was almost afraid to mess with it. He had never slept well alone, it was better with Pepper but far from perfect. Loki was like a sleeping aide that guaranteed waking unconditionally rested every time.

It was time to really think things through. He came to realize that he ‘loved’ Loki as a best friend, as definitely ‘unrelated’ family and secretly to himself, for brief honest moments: romantically. Therefore Tony channeled his energy into heavy flirting. Maybe if he could get Loki to ‘play along’ with the flirting, attraction might come along naturally. He talked to both Bruce and Pepper who assured him that some people don’t jump into relationships and not everyone had sex on the third date. Loki had clearly been hurt in the past and Tony needed to ‘give him time’ because they were
pretty sure Loki would eventually return his affections.

So for once in his life Tony did his best to ‘cool his shit’. He found himself contemplating the ‘C’ word. He acknowledged that he found the comfort he had with Loki being his best friend was something he didn’t want to mess up. If they had sex and it didn’t work out, well, they were already in a permanent non-sexual relationship. It could get excruciatingly bad. What if Loki turned him down, wasn’t interested and found the thought of sex with Tony detestable. How would he be able to deal with ‘forevermore’ being near Loki knowing that?

In October Loki started talking about something called the convergence. It was where the nine realms would be in alignment. It was a time of great power. He had plans and wanted Tony’s help to try some experiments with the Astral Sea. Tony’s arc reactor, he believed, like the Tesseract, had openings there as did their enchantment. They even had it partially planned out.

Then Tony got a call from Jane Foster. She had found something she was sure was magic and it had gotten inside her. Tony and Loki left immediately.

They arrived a less than an hour later after teleporting to a known location in London.

“Jane, good to see you again. We met a couple years ago when SHIELD and I agreed to help with your funding.” Tony said.

“Nice to see you again too Mr. Stark.” She said nervously.

“Tony, please. And this is Thor’s brother Loki.”

“It is nice to finally meet you. Thor says hello.” Loki greeted.

“Yes it is. You don’t look anything like Thor. I’m afraid I expected another bulky blond.” Jane said embarrassment.

Loki went cold and took a breath. “No. I would not. I am adopted.”

Tony reached out and touched Loki. “Hey, it’s alright Lokes. She didn’t mean anything.” Tony said in a calming voice.

“Oh no. I would not. I am adopted.”

Tony reached out and touched Loki. “Hey, it’s alright Lokes. She didn’t mean anything.” Tony said in a calming voice.

“Oh no. I’m sorry, I didn’t know. Please forgive me. I didn’t mean to insult you or imply anything bad. And I appreciate the phone calls and texts with messages from Thor.” Jane backpedaled.

Loki nodded, he was still put off. “Indeed. Whatever seems to be the problem? You were very vague. Babbling something about fog going into you, and then you knocked out a policeman?”

“Oh yes. I don’t know what happened. One minute he was trying to arrest me the next some sort of force came from me and shoved him back a long way.” Jane explained.

“Yeah, knocked him off his feet and the rain didn’t rain on her for like ten feet. Things were floating backwards where she picked it up from too. And the force was red.” A girl who had walked into the room said.

Jane turned and said “And this is my assistant Darcy. Darcy, Tony Stark and Loki Odinson.”

Loki looked a bit annoyed at the use of Odinson. He knew he should be used to it by now since he had to use it for political purposes on Midgard but he had not been expecting it and felt his mood
sour even more after being reminded of his adopted self. He steeled himself and held his tongue and anger. He remembered they had met Thor and he could not blame them. Everyone liked Thor better.

“You mean the rich dude and Thor’s prince brother. Wow! Glad to meetya.” Darcy said while chewing gum and walking over to hold out her hand while smiling and looking at Loki with appreciation in her eyes.

They shook her hand and a cold Loki asked Jane. “Would you allow me to examine you? It sounds like you have encountered an effect of the coming convergence of the nine realms.”

“Yes, please. Dr. Selvig has mentioned the convergence.” Jane exclaimed sensing Loki’s annoyance.

“You can examine me too, handsome.” Darcy said to Loki, ignoring the signs of ‘stay away’ Loki was giving off.

Tony felt a pang of something. “What about me?”

“You’re not a prince. Besides he’s tall, dark and handsome.” She smirked pointing her fingers and gave a nod towards Loki and raised her eyebrows. “And available.”

“Jane would you like to sit on this table. I will need to put my hands on your head.” Loki ignored Darcy. But found himself thinking about the tall, dark and handsome. He had heard it before in some of the old movies Steve watched. Was that the human ideal currently, he wondered? Perhaps he shouldn’t be quite so put off.

“I’m dark and handsome! And a genius. And rich. Plus I help pay your salary.” Tony added sounding hurt. He was trying his best to keep her attention off Loki. While his mind was thinking ‘there was no way this whirlwind of a girl was going to get my man!’

“Like I care about that shorty. Besides you’re a geezer. But I gotta admit, you look lots younger in person.” Darcy bantered back, but her eyes kept creeping back to Loki.

“I’m not old. And I’ve never been a geezer! I’m pure refined stock.” Tony boasted. He too had noticed that he looked younger since he ate that ghastly piece of crap Loki made him eat in the spring.

“And a snob too.” Darcy laughed, dancing around and looking like she was going to pat Loki’s ass.

“Would you two please shut up before I make you! I am trying to concentrate.” Loki yelled at them, making Darcy back up to really give him room. Fun aside, she was obviously worried about Jane. He was glad of that.

“He will too. He can make duct tape appear with his…” Tony continued, until said duct tape appeared on his mouth. ‘Well at least Loki isn’t interested in her either.’ Tony thought.

Darcy held her hand over her mouth, unsuccessfully trying to quiet the giggles. Tony was once again stuck trying to use his magic to remove the sticky stuff from his beard.

A short while later Loki said. “I find this hard to believe but you possess the Aether inside of you. This is not good. I am afraid I must attempt to contact Asgard immediately.”

“What? What is the Aether?” Tony said, with most of the duct tape off. “I thought Asgard was really bad for you. It’s why you’re here and not off building some bridge from prison.” He felt his stomach twist and realized that his was not the only one twisting. His god was worried about this even if he didn’t show it.
“Yes, but this is another one of the Infinity Stones. Even Odin cannot ignore this.” Loki said allowing worry to cross his face.

Tony’s head snapped to attention when he heard Infinity Stones.

“She’s gonna be ok though, right?” Darcy asked.

“While she might make an interesting three dimensional floating mass of protoplasm, most people do not count that as ‘ok’. I need to figure out what to do and I will need aide from Asgard.” Loki said calmly.

“It’ll kill me?” Jane stuttered.

“Can’t we figure it out without Asgard?” Tony asked nervously. The last thing he wanted was Loki in some cell somewhere in never, never land. This was troublesome, the Infinity Stones were seriously dangerous items.

“I fear, I must tell them Stark. Ms. Foster, we need a quiet still place for a magic ceremony do you have one here?” Loki asked, adding. “I will contact them that way and not just take you to Asgard.”

“How much room? Will this place work? We can move stuff around in the Lab and lock the door. Are windows ok?” Jane said.

They spent the next hour getting the room ready. Darcy put white paper over the windows to block out distractions, since light was not actually an issue. Tony moved heavy things and Jane moved lighter things. Loki wrote symbols on the floor.

Darcy and Tony kept laughing during the set up. They had envisioned a dark room with candles where everyone stood in a runic circle or sat on the floor in the middle of it. Instead, white paper blocked only a little light, no candles. Of course runes were present, they were in a sort of skewed circular pattern, but they were bright and colorful made using colored markers and sidewalk chalk. But it was the chairs Loki added that had them in giggle fits. He said it might take a while to get Frigga’s attention. There was no reason to be uncomfortable. He was the only one who even needed to stay awake. If he needed any of them he was sure he could wake them. When he brought out snacks they lost it. This was a magic circle?

When the circle was finished Darcy had to stay outside the area. At least she got a whole couch. Loki was in the center with Tony next to him sharing a loveseat. He didn’t want to risk the continuous flow between them messing with the spell. Jane was sitting in an easy chair placed upon a large pink symbol all by herself. So in comfort, Loki began the ceremony.

He contacted his mother who actually noticed within the first hour. He explained the situation. She sent at once for Thor and Odin. Loki, and unexpectedly, Tony could both see his mother. Jane and Darcy could hear what was going on. Jane was able to be heard by Frigga, but poor Darcy could not. One would have thought that Loki planned it that way.

Thor appeared first. Apparently from Frigga’s end Jane could also be seen.

“Jane! I am so delighted to see you. Are you well?” Thor asked before thinking.

“Thor is that you?” Jane asked hearing his voice.

Loki rolled his eyes and said “No, Thor, she has the Aether inside of her. We would not be calling if there was not a problem.”
Frigga took Thor’s hand. “She is in grave danger dear.”

“Oh Jane, I am filled with sorrow. But rest assured between mother and Loki, we will be able to find a solution.” Thor assured her.

“Hi, Ms. Odinson, I’m Tony Stark. Loki’s other half.” Tony just could not be trusted to be quiet.

“What! Loki, you and the Man of Iron are married?” Thor rumbled.

Darcy screamed. “I knew it! You were jealous!” She pointed at Stark.

Jane went. “What?”

“Really Loki, I knew you had a link. Has it gone that far so soon?” Frigga asked.

Loki accused. “Stark, you did that on purpose. No mother we are not together like that. There is only the enchantment. This by the way is Anthony Stark also called Ironman. He is the mortal that I have found myself linked to. Feel free to call him what you like. I have grown fond of calling him ‘my little hemorrhoid’.”

Tony jumped in. “Call me Tony, Mrs. Odinson. And who is the frowning dude with the eyepatch that just came in? Is he angry or always like that? We have a guy named Fury with an eyepatch who is just like that always furious, get it Fury, furious” Then softer. “I guess he’s Odin isn’t he.” When the eye focused on him.

“Yes, mortal, Man of Iron. I am Odin, Allfather, king of the Gods, ruler of Asgard and the nine realms.” He was loud, clearly annoyed, with a voice that spoke of untold power. “What do you mean you two are linked?”

Loki stayed silent and closed his eyes. He had hoped Odin would not have to know about the enchantment. Tony looked at Loki not sure what he should say now that he had put his foot in his mouth once already.

Frigga answered. “Husband, Loki risked his life to save Anthony Stark, the Man of Iron, Thor’s shield brother. A terrible accident with uncontrolled magic from an untrained sorcerer left the mortal with an unstable enchantment on him. That unstable enchantment formed a link to Loki through the enchantment you put on our son. That link could not be severed in such a way as to keep the mortal alive. Separating them would have caused a multiple mile explosion on Midgard, the man’s death and endangered Loki. The only reasonable solution, required Loki to accept the link with the man and complete the enchantment.”

Odin huffed. “He could have taken him somewhere where the explosion would have merely killed the one mortal.” Turning to Loki. “You did not seek out permission to enchant a mortal like this.”

Loki answered this time. “You have not been interested in speaking with me. Your Queen gave me permission. Not only is Stark brilliant and did not deserve to die, he is also the one holding responsibility for me on Midgard and as such, I felt required to save his life.”

“‘I’ gave him permission and advice on stabilizing the enchantment.” Frigga added sternly.

Odin looked angry but held his tongue.

Frigga continued. “Now that we are all here. Loki tells me that Jane Foster now holds the Aether, the Infinity Stone inside her body?”
“What?” Thor exclaimed.

“The Aether, the Infinity Stone.” Odin repeated in gruff surprise, at the same time.

“Yes.” Loki responded looking put out already. ‘Had Thor actually been listening earlier?’

“He thought we needed to let you know before we tried anything to save her.” Tony added.

“Save her? She needs to be brought to Asgard where we will extract it for safe keeping.” Odin told them.

“Father, we must save her too. She is the woman I told you about. I care about her. She is mortal, you can’t just extract it out of her. She would never survive.” Thor pleaded.

Jane was visibly upset now. “Please your highness, Allfather sir. Isn’t there a way to remove it without killing me?”

“For Thor’s sake, you may try. Nevertheless you must come to Asgard. Loki you will bring her and your mortal so that I can look at you all.” Odin stated it like a decree.

“If I come, will you not throw me in chains? Will we be safe while we are there?” Loki queried with disdain.

Frigga looked at Odin. “You will not trick him like this husband. He is my son, even if you do not accept and forgive him.” Her chin was held high in defiance leaving no room to argue.

Odin looked annoyed for a few moments then cleared his throat. When he spoke it was in a voice that seemed to vibrate and echo in a strange way. “I Odin, Allfather, King of Asgard and the nine, decree that Loki and these two humans will be safe from any retribution while in Asgard, for any reason, from anyone, for the next fortnight under threat of death.” Then in his normal voice. “I expect you to give those working on the Bifrost help when you are here too.” Looking at Loki. Then he turned and left the room.

“I can’t wait to see you!” Thor exclaimed to Jane.

“I will see you all shortly, goodbye mother, Thor.” And Loki broke the link.

“Wait, two? Does that mean I have to stay home?” Darcy whined.

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry this is not a great chapter, I just wasn’t happy with it and I had technical problems on top of it. There are better chapters coming. I promise.

If you see errors, please let me know.

Thank you all for being so patient with me.

I appreciate you all taking your time to read my work.
Asgard!

Chapter Summary

Off to Asgard.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

They quickly cleaned up from the spell.

“So can I be the second person? At least sneak me in somehow. Please, I’ll love you forever!” Darcy begged.

“I’m sorry, but the Allfather expects to see Tony and as humans are not allowed in Asgard and you are not one of the two given permission. I am afraid they would kill you on sight.” Loki explained sounding actually sort of smug.

“I hide real well.” Darcy started until she saw the look on Loki’s turn to blatant skepticism. “I hate you now… So are you and Tony really bumping the uglies? Is he as good in bed as his reputation? What is your preferred position? Is he good at sucking cock? I need details!”

“Wow. I can’t believe that there is a person with less of a filter on their mouth than me.” Tony said. “No, we are not.” Loki said while helping Jane put her lab back together.

“So harsh. You know we could. It’s called friends with benefits here. From things you’ve said I know you aren’t just hetero.” Tony decided to test the water.

Loki rolled his eyes. “You are correct, I do not limit my partners. I am also very self-aware. Enough to know at this time in my life it would be very bad to attempt ‘friends with benefits’.”

“Aww. Why tall and dark? I’d still do you even if you don’t take me with you.” Darcy snarked.

Tony was listening very attentively. He didn’t like Darcy hitting on Loki. But for some reason but he wanted hear the answer.

“Let us just say…I am very possessive and I don’t like killing people.” Loki warned with an evil grin that caused Darcy to back up and effectively ended the conversation.

Loki and Tony teleported home with Jane after she packed a suitcase. Loki had told her Asgardian clothes would be provided, women were expected to wear different things there. She brought a
suitcase anyway. Loki also gave Stark a glare at the size of his suitcase, he would be required to wear clothes provided also. Tony didn’t care.

In no time they were ready to leave for Asgard. Loki placed a hand on each of them and cast the spell.

Trouble watched from a few feet away and jumped into Jane’s arms just as Loki moved to walk them into Yggdrasil.

Moving through Yggdrasil for Tony was exhilarating. For the first time he saw magical connections looking like lines made of light that Loki always was telling him about. Not looking at the ones tied to him, but the others, often in bundles reaching out to other places. Then he looked at Loki. Loki was like looking at a sun, he had so many connections. Tony could really see how powerful Loki was. He looked again at himself, he wasn’t so shabby himself he decided.

Jane saw nothing not having any magic herself. She just held onto Trouble, fearful of what Loki might do if she lost his cat. And upon reaching Asgard, promptly threw up after Trouble leaped out of her arms.

Frigga was waiting for them at a prearranged place. She grabbed Loki and hugged him tightly. He gently put his arms around her too, dubious of his standing, hoping for the best. Thor was there too and grabbed Jane and raised her high into the air and twirled. Letting her go only to snatch Loki as soon as his mother released him. Thor hugged him like an unruly child not willing to let go of a squirming 'Loki' pet. Tony stood back snickering with folded arms watching, then leaning over after noticing Trouble.

“Let me go, you oaf!” Loki snapped.

“But I have missed you brother.” Thor loudly insisted.

“I am not your bro….” Loki stopped as he heard a familiar sound, partially wresting free of Thor.

“Meow.” Everyone looked around.

“Meowrrrow.” Tony picked up Trouble curiously. He hadn’t noticed her leap to Jane becoming a stowaway.

“Is that a Midgardian cat?” Frigga guessed putting her hand on Loki who was just escaping Thor’s grip.

Loki had turned to see Tony holding her. He ran and grabbed her out of Tony’s arms.

“Oh my baby, I would never have risked you traveling between realms if I had known. Stark, has your brain been removed? How could you possibly have brought her?” Loki scolded, while carefully checking to make sure Trouble was fine.

“Actually she jumped into my arms as we left.” Jane admitted with embarrassment.

Loki gave Jane an evil eye and whispered lovingly to Trouble. “Were you scared my little one. I’m so sorry you got caught in this. I would never have hurt you my darling.”

Tony stood there wishing he were Trouble at that moment. Firmly telling himself it was ridiculous to be jealous of the cat he definitely co-owned with Loki.
Frigga smiled as she scratched Trouble’s head. “She will be fine. We will make sure she is well cared for during your visit.”

Trouble was purring loud and clear. Looking very pleased with herself.

After greetings were exchanged they went to the palace and were shown to their respective rooms. Loki and Thor’s suites were very close and there were a few spare rooms that were built nearby for guests or bodyguards. Jane was put in one across the hall from Thor. Tony was actually put in a room that was part of Loki’s suite.

Loki’s suite was done in greens, and creams with dark wood bookshelves covering nearly every wall. His wooden floor was clean and shinning with highly detailed decorative rugs on it. His bed cover was an amazing tapestry with an image of some dark foreign land with a castle in the background, in front stood a girl, whose face was divided one side normal with a green eye, one side blue and marked with a red eye. Next to her were two men. One was a tall broad man who had a furry tail. The other man was even taller but very slender with no tail. All three had black hair. Behind them also stood a many legged horse. It was clearly a picture.

There were also some skins on the bed, all black and/or white and as soft as anything Tony had ever felt. Loki’s balcony had a bench on it and by the door sat a chair that waited to be taken out on nice days. There were several pots a couple of which still had plants growing in them. The view looked out on the royal stables, beyond pastures, hills and mountains, even a waterfall visible.

Loki’s attached room where he was staying was briefly dusty. One magic spell later, made it sparkle. This was clearly overflow from Loki’s suite, with extra books on shelves and chests with drawers. The bed looked virtually untouched. Tony wondered if it had ever been slept in.

Trouble made herself at home, immediately investigating everything. Loki cast a few containment spells around a few things for her safety before they left her.

They collected Jane and headed to the medical wing of the castle. The castle was huge and seemed to take forever to get anywhere. Tony hoped before they left he would get to see it more from the outside.

They were introduced to Eir the chief healer. She was waiting and took the group to a private room that had a domed ceiling and ornate carvings in the walls. Jane sat on a table in the center. Then they opened up a virtual screen. It was three dimensional and made Tony’s hologram screens look old and outdated. Eir had two assistants plus Loki studying Jane and the Aether. Fifteen minutes later Odin came in.

“Well, what can you tell me?” Odin demanded.

Eir spoke first. “It is as Loki told us. She truly has the Aether inside of her. It has partially bonded with her cells and if left there it is only a matter of time before she dies. Her body cannot handle it.”

“Can you remove it and leave her alive?” Odin asked coldly.

Loki answered this time. “I am quite sure I can with a few days of research.”

Eir also answered. “It will be difficult, she will weaken every day but I believe with your son’s help we can do it.”

“Can you do it without him?” Odin asked, Loki clearly being the ‘him’ in question.
“I do not think she will live long enough. His skills as a scholar and sorcerer will definitely make the
difference.”

Odin shook his head. “How much of his help, do you need?”

Loki twitched when Eir called him ‘your son’ but held his tongue. Thor, Tony and Jane could sense
him getting angry.

“Why do you wish to refuse my help?” Loki demanded. He was no longer the son who had begged
for acceptance. No, he was the monster that he was sure his father hated and was ashamed of. He
was also still the best sorcerer in the nine realms and a scholar who knew the royal library better than
any.

“I need you to work on the Bifrost.” Odin replied callously.

“For a year and a half you could have requested my help with the Bifrost. Suddenly it is a priority.”
Loki pointed out crassly.

“Yes, it is a priority for the next two weeks. I expect you to spend all your free time helping them.”
Odin ordered.

“You expect much, for one who only has such animosity for me.” Loki hissed.

“You have defied me. Betrayed us to enemies. You are no longer useful to Asgard for anything other
than repairing the Bifrost which you broke. You are an abomination, even more so now that the
mortal is attached to you. If we did not need you to bring the Aether to us, you would now be in
chains for just being here. You are not and never were my son or part of the family. Beware, Frigga’s
goodwill will only go so far.” Then to Eir. “Use him as little as you can.” And back to Loki.
“Now go attend those who would repair the Bifrost. Eir will contact you when he needs you.” Odin
turned and started to leave.

“No father. He is still my brother. You cannot deny him.” Thor objected. His heartfelt voice clearly
showing his love and concern for his brother.

“I am the Allfather and you best remember that too. Elsewise we will just take the Aether.” And he
left.

Everyone was stunned.

“Wow and I thought my dad was bad.” Then, “hey that rhymes.” Tony said.

“What did you do to get him so angry with you?” Jane inquired to Thor.

Thor answered. “Nothing. Loki and father have always fought. But that was beyond excessive.”

Eir finally spoke. “Thor, has the Allfather been behaving like this often of late?”

Thor looked down at his feet then back at Eir. “Perhaps, do you suspect something?”

“Nothing I am willing to comment on. Perhaps you might think about it. Loki I will be talking with
you later.” Eir replied and left.

“Jane, Thor. If you will excuse us, Tony and I have business. We will see you this evening. Come
Tony.” Loki announced with displeasure and headed out the door.

Tony followed looking uneasy, as he overheard a bit more conversation.
“Thor, I’m not sure coming here was such a good idea. Do you think your brother might be able to take us home and remove the Aether there himself?” Jane shuttered as she spoke.

“It is not an option, especially now that father knows. Fear not, I will protect you. Mother will make him see.” Thor replied, but his voice lacked conviction.

Once in the hall Tony had to work to keep up with Loki. “Hey talk to me. Remember me? Man who likes to be in the know? Was the doctor gal onto something? Oh, and are we going to the Bifrost now?”

Loki kept quiet for a few moments and started walking faster. Tony had to practically run to keep up with Loki’s long strides. “Hey Prince charming, I know you’re angry, but don’t take it out on me. Talk to me.”

Loki stopped and cast a spell maybe two. Suddenly Tony heard Loki talking in his head. “The walls have ears, you dunderhead. I am being watched, carefully. Odin has traps set for me I must watch myself as to not fall into one.” They started to walk quickly again.

Tony tried to talk back in his head. “Can you hear me talking? This is so much better than with the link where we have to use strong feelings. Why don’t we use it all the time?” He was having to hurry to keep up still.

“Because we will become dependent on it and not work to develop the link. This method can be tapped into, our link cannot. If you must know we are going to see the Bifrost. I wanted to see it anyway and it will look like Odin has won for the moment. We need to keep up appearances here. It is important that we be seen as helping and if possible indispensable.” Loki informed him as he carefully watched anyone they passed and looked for spells that might follow them like spies.

“Ok…can I learn about the Bifrost for real? Seeing as I’m your apprentice and linked to you? Can the people here tell that? How do they know I’m not a human to be killed?” Tony suddenly remembering hearing that humans were killed on sight and he was being noticed.

They were still walking fast as they passed palace guards, heads acknowledged Loki and glared at Tony. Tony wondered why some of the guards didn’t seem to find Loki’s presence a bad thing as he had expected.

“When Æsir see us they hear Odin’s decree. You are safe for the two weeks. Because you will ask, the spell uses Yggdrasil, and vibrations in time. All Æsir in Asgard are linked into Yggdrasil enough for some basic magic.” Loki explained, he was starting to calm down.

“Can they tell I’m your apprentice?” Tony asked again.

“Before the enchantment some would be able to see it. Those that needed to. Now they will see an enchantment of great power. Most do not understand magic so they have no idea what they are seeing, only that it has great power. They will likely guess that I have enchanted you to myself as a magical thrall and power source. This is something only a very powerful sorcerer can do.”

Tony concluded. “So I’m your slave is what you’re saying. Great, just great.” He was finding himself not liking Asgard already.

Loki smirked and nodded to Tony. They had reached an outside door. They were near the stables. An eight legged black horse with a grey mane was waiting just outside. It appeared to have a blanket and saddle thrown over its back but not secured. Tony recognized it from the tapestry on Loki’s bed.
“Slepnir! You heard I was coming.” Loki sounded delighted now.

The horse was huge and butted his nose into Loki, who cast another spell, this time on the horse as he straightened and secured the saddle.

“So who is this creature that you have enchanted to you father?” A noise seemed to come from the horse.

“You can talk? Father? What the fuck.” Tony exclaimed when he heard it.

“I’m going to have to discover what all actually works through the link. Only I should have heard that.” Loki then turned back to Slepnir. “This is Anthony Stark. I call him Stark. He is my apprentice and accessory now.”

“Accessory? I may be your apprentice but I am also your warden on Midgard. Nice to meet you Sleepner, Slipnir, uh horse. Wait, father? Did he turn you into a horse? Oh god, I remember Clint asking questions way back when.”

Slepnir laughed. “He is an entertaining creature. Midgard though? He is no human, not anymore at least. I have missed you father.”

Loki hugged Slepnir’s neck. “I have missed you too, son. Now we need to go to where they work on the Bifrost. But you already know that.” He quickly tightened the saddle.

Tony looked at them with horror dawning in his eyes. “Wait, you expect me to ride? I do not ride. Let me call my suit I’ll just fly next to you.”

Loki surprised Tony by grabbing him and swiftly throwing him up on the saddle as he followed in one graceful movement. With that, Slepnir was off. Tony screaming and flailing while Loki held him.

“Fuck, let me off. Take your dirty hands off me. You rotten, son of bitch, I don’t like horses!” Tony wailed.

“What a rude thing to say to my son.” Loki chastised him.

“Slow the fuck down!...That myth is true then? Of course it is, Clint asked you. Wait you gave birth to a horse? AHHHHHHHH...Woah that was close. Don’t drop me.” Tony screamed as Slepnir sped up.

Loki teased. “You want me to let go. Now you don’t. I thought you could make decisions my little hemorrhoid.”

Tony huffed and tried to talk silently, if the spell was still running. “I’ll get you back later for that.” Then aloud. “Were you seriously impregnated by a horse?” He had stopped fighting and was just concentrating on helping Loki keep him on Slepnir. If he wasn’t so scared he might be enjoying being up tight with Loki, but he was too damn scared.

Loki sighed. “I guess you will find out eventually. I was, but it is not as it sounds. I was also a horse at the time. I’ll tell you tonight about it. Now try to be good, remember we are trying to make a ‘good’ impression.”

They got to the ruins of the Bifrost. Loki explained how it worked. They saw groups in enchanting circles working on blocks barely visible. Loki hopped off Slepnir and approached the lead engineer.
He was delighted to see Loki. “We are so glad you are here Prince Loki.”

“Skirnir, you look well. How is the Bifrost coming?” Loki knew the answer.

“Poorly, we do all we can but the magic required to build it is both rare and difficult. Has Odin forgiven you so that you might help us?” Skirnir asked hopefully.

“Only for a fortnight. Even then, I am not forgiven, so I am only an advisor.” Loki clasped Skirnir’s hand and shoulder in greeting.

Tony had managed to scramble off Slepnir and felt ignored. “By the way I’m Tony Stark. Since Princess here keeps forgetting to introduce me.” Tony told Skirnir, earning him a glare from Loki.

Skirnir looked at them for a few moments. “You are one of the mortals Odin has protected I see. Loki that enchantment between you is… very… You did that? You have once again amazed me with your magical prowess.” Skirnir exclaimed.

“Prowess? Does that mean there is magic sex like physical sex?” Tony’s eyes twinkled.

“Stark! This is Skirnir, he is another male sorcerers. He is from Alfheim and one of the few capable of actually seeing our enchantment. Do try to be polite to him.” Loki eyeballed Tony in exasperation.

They got to talking. Tony did his best to follow but still lacked some of the basic concepts. The gist of it was that Loki had major enchantment capabilities, some pretty rare and not very well understood. It was these that were required for rebuilding the Bifrost. Loki was also none too eager to do the work himself, since Odin clearly thought him ‘no longer useful, a betrayer and abomination’. Loki said he would think on the Bifrost and try to come up with a way to make their work more efficient. They talked over a few ideas, before long it was time to return to the palace.

Loki ordered dinner sent to his rooms. Then he stopped by to see Frigga and inquired about what Eir had observed and commented on. She was unhappy about it, she too had noticed a change in Odin. His last Odin sleep, when Loki fell, was both longer and disturbed. It was not Loki’s fault, she assured him. He would need to sleep again soon and she was hoping it would be corrected then.

“She is the only one of whom he will listen.” Loki explained to Tony once they returned to his room.

Tony asked a billion questions while they ate about the Bifrost, trying to understand it. This was new, difficult, and very technical and Tony was in heaven. This was forbidden technology way above what any human would normally be allowed to learn.

Trouble of course went back and forth between them begging and receiving scraps of meat from them. Yes, Loki had finally given in. Besides Trouble was here in Asgard with them. A bit of spoiling was due her since she had had to withstand the horrible trip.

As the evening grew Tony decided that he would ask about Slepnir. “So the eight legged horse is your son?”

“Yes” Loki replied simply.
“You told Clint you were a horse when you gave birth? Did someone turn you into a horse for a time?”

“You actually, I shapeshifted into a horse. And Thor was correct for once, when he said I was raped.”

“How were you raped then? You could have used magic to get away. I hope I can ask that, you didn’t seem as upset as Thor when Clint asked.” Tony questioned as carefully as his curiosity would allow.

“It was before Sigyn. I was not even 50. Just a child really. I was sent to study in another realm. A sorcerer took a fancy to me. I refused to be his boy toy, many times over. He finally got so angry that I hid in a herd of local prized mares. He caught me and used a spell that forced me to stay in that shape and brought me into season. Then he brought his prize stallion to mount me until I was with foal.” Loki knew Tony would find out eventually and it was best if he tell him. Besides he loved Slepnir and had come to terms with it long ago.

“Harsh. That’s awful angry for just being told no.” Tony was appalled and already started to consider how he might destroy the man.

Loki laughed. “He had stuck his cock in my mouth and I bit off the tip. Completely. That was why he was so angry.”

Tony looked pale, cringed and put his hands down in a protective motion.

Loki continued. “Odin killed him when he discovered what he had done. But forced me to give birth as a lesson.”

“Remind me not to have sex with you. Like ever!” Tony gulped.

“Do not worry. I only did it because he was trying to rape me.” He looked at Tony and snapped his teeth together.

“Think I’ll just get ready for bed now.” Tony went to his room grabbed some clean shorts and headed to the bathroom.

When he came out Loki was on the balcony looking out, Trouble sitting next to him on the wide ledge.

“Nice view Princess.” Tony teased.

“Yes, it is one of the things I do miss. This place brings back so many memories.” Loki looked shaken for some reason.

“Hey you okay?” Tony asked.

Loki warned. “There are eyes on us here. My rooms are the only safe place. I found spies on my balcony while you were gone.”

“Spies? I thought we were safe? At least for a few days.” Tony walked out on the balcony. He noticed Trouble was standing on a few black feathers and had one in her mouth.

“Muninn, and Huginn, the Allfather’s ravens, were here delivering spells from the Allfather. We caught them and have protected us for now. I think we should stay together tonight. I think he wants
to separate us and study you.” Loki absentmindedly caressed Trouble’s neck as he looked out.

“But he said we were safe.” He looked at the feather Trouble was chewing on. Yup, Trouble was definitely a good bird cat. Ravens beware!

“He left a loop-hole. You are not completely human anymore. From others you are safe but not from him. You must stay close to me.” Loki cautioned. “We will not be able to stay the two weeks. It will give him too much time to separate us.”

They spent the night in Loki’s bed. It was at least comfortable. And Tony definitely did not notice the fact that Loki shook several time in the night, and cried once in his sleep. Nor did he tell himself not to ask about it, because he definitely didn’t see it. He just held on tight knowing that the man who Loki had once called father was out to get them.

Trouble spent the night on the balcony watching the stars in the sky. Or perhaps looking for nosy ravens.

Chapter End Notes

This is still part of the computer mess that I had last week. I really think it is the good copy.
If you see errors, please let me know.

Thank you all for being so patient with me.

I appreciate you all taking your time to read my work.
The next morning they were summoned to see Odin. Loki sent a note to his mother to let her know.

They stopped by to see Eir on the way. Thor was there, with Jane. Eir explained to Loki what some of the problems she faced were and Loki agreed that later today he would go to the library and do some research.

Thor and Jane decided to follow Loki to see Odin. Thor wanted to see if he could notice differences with his father.

“You are late.” Odin growled. “And why are they with you?” He pointed at Thor and Jane.

“I am to be king someday. Should I not watch and learn how you treat people in unusual circumstances?” Thor was clearly on the ball today.

Odin glared at Thor but nodded. ‘Very well Thor.” Then turning to Loki. “What did you do with the Bifrost yesterday? I see no progress on it.”

“I discussed what they were doing with Skirnir. I wanted to understand what they were doing in order to make a plan for them.” Loki answered carefully. He took note of a door that had opened behind Odin and wondered who might come from there.

“What! I did not order you do make a plan. I ordered you to repair it. You are to use your magic to do that. Not to interact with my people.” Odin thundered.

“I did not come here to repair the Bifrost Allfather. I came to bring Lady Jane here. I felt the Aether was important enough to the nine realms to risk coming here. I will not work on the Bifrost unless you pardon me as Frigga has declared.”

Odin sat for a moment frowning, looking at them, and thinking. “Tell me of this enchantment that I see between you and the mortal?” Odin eyed them his face still angry.

“He saved my life, the only way to do it was to connect us. You don’t have to worry about it. I won’t go boom anymore.” Tony supplied.
“I care not about you. Nor do I care about Loki. I want to know about that enchantment. It is one enchantment that goes between you. It has subsumed my enchantment on Loki. Tell me the nature of it and how you accomplished it.” Odin had almost a crazed look in his eyes.

“Allfather, it was caused by a series of seemingly random events that left an un-stabilized enchantment. After much work Tony and I were able to stabilize it. The possibility of reproducing it is all but impossible.” Loki really didn’t want to get into details. He knew there were facets about the enchantment that he didn’t trust to anyone.

“It matters not. There are aspects of this enchantment that are too dangerous to exist. Especially in your hands. I know you recognize the similarities of the Tesseract and the Astral Sea of Yggdrasil. You must see why you cannot be allowed to have it.” Odin mocked them with a smile. “You Thor, you understand what I have to do.”

“What the fuck is wrong with you? This is keeping us alive, me at least. For you to take it would mean killing or imprisoning us. That is just barbaric!” Tony spit out.

“Father you cannot meant to go against your word and do this. Loki is my brother and Anthony Stark is my shield brother and a good man. Is there something wrong? Father you are not acting like yourself.” Thor pleaded.

Loki appeared to be fuming, carefully hiding that he was starting to cast protections.

To Thor, Odin bellowed. “Silence! He is not your brother or a prince and the other is merely a mortal. What I do is for the good of the realms! For the good of all of us! You too, are more of a fool than I thought, led by a heart blinded by lust and lies. I should disown you before you become more of a disgrace to Asgard than you already are.” Odin fumed and turned to Loki and Tony. “You dare to talk back to ME! You insolent ant. I am going to do with you what I should have done long ago.” Odin raged at them. Even the guards in the back looked nervous. He raised his staff pointed it at Tony.

Tony grabbed onto Loki, not knowing what else to do. Loki continued to cast his shields. Then instead of feeling some horrible spell being cast on them they watched Odin fall to the ground.

Thor and the guards ran to Odin. Loki, Tony and Jane just stood there unsteady feeling like they should be glad to still be alive. Loki looked back at the open door and finally recognized Frigga standing there a solemn look on her face. She entered the room and went to where her husband was on the floor. After picking up Gungnir and making sure Odin was unharmed she stood and faced the rest of them.

“Odin has gone into Odin sleep. Not one of you is to talk of this or of what you just saw unless it is with me. You wait here.” Frigga pointed at her sons and the humans. Then pointing at the guards. “You come with me outside for a minute.” She led them outside, only to return a few minutes later.

“They will not talk to anyone. You were right something is wrong. My husband can be harsh especially when he fears for the realms but something is not right.” Frigga said to them. “Thor, could you carry him to the sleep chamber with me. The rest of you will follow.”

Once in the chamber Frigga swept for spells and then requested Loki do the same. They found very well disguised spells that shouldn’t be there. Death and blood magic in specific had contaminated the sleep chamber. Loki and Frigga discussed how to remove it. Tony asked a few questions including one that led to something they had overlooked. They figured out how to move the spells onto a chair
in order to study them later. And finally they put Odin to rest in the bed.

“This is old death magic” Frigga said. “It has been here for some time and it has been affecting him for many years.”

“You guys made it sound like it just got a lot worse? If it’s been there that long I’d like to know why?” Tony questioned.

“He has only had to spend one day a year in it for a very long time. Until Loki found out he was adopted. When that occurred things changed. I believe, so did the nature of these spells. You may not know that he spent quite some there again after you fell.” Frigga said putting her hands on the chamber above Odin.

Loki explained. “Death magic spells are by nature very unstable and can change if they stick around. This one was designed to try to last, using blood magic, making it even more dangerous. I see your next question and I believe our enchantment to be completely stabilized now, do not fret Tony. If you wish to know more I can explain it to you later. Mother I would like to examine these if you do not mind?”

Frigga nodded.

“What did you do to him mother? Will he recover?” Thor asked holding Jane’s hand.

“I hope so dear. I had talked to him earlier and heard what he said in the throne room. He was not thinking clearly. He was very close to the sleep already, I only had to give a light push at the right time. I could not allow him to do something we would all regret.”

Later, Tony wanted to study the Bifrost and try to understand it, since they figured he couldn’t read anything in the library anyway. Loki took him to Skirnir who agreed to bring Tony back before dinner. Now that Odin was asleep they could afford to be apart.

Tony was dropped off later and went to the library. He saw the floor plan. It was huge with many levels below ground. It was amazing. The lower levels contained the rare books that required special care. Of course most the books Loki would be looking through were on a level that was fourteen levels down. After being advised of the rules and given a key to get into that level he went down. ‘Don’t these guys believe in elevators’ Tony mused as he went down a long spiral ramp.

He finally made it down and opened the door using the key. Books were inside clear glass enclosures. He saw no physical nobs, just magic handles. He was giddy in the realization he could open them if he wanted. He searched for Loki and found him way back and off to a side. Here the containers often held scrolls and were also magically locked. He would bet anything they were also filled with inert gases or something similar to protect the ancient contents.

Tony sat down and tried to get Loki’s attention.

Loki was so deeply focused he didn’t see Tony at all. He had found a significant section about the Aether in specific and the Infinity stones in general.

Tony sat and petted Trouble for a few minutes until he got bored. Then he tried talking, jumping up and down and finally when even trying to emote down the link didn’t seem to get his attention he pulled the chair out and plopped down in Loki’s lap and gave him a kiss.
“What in the nine realms do you think you are doing?” Loki hissed at him as the scroll he was looking at fell to the floor.

“God, I’m been trying to get your attention for the last ten minutes. And you warn ME about letting my guard down. I could have killed you Bambi.” Tony snickered. “You’re even ignoring Trouble. She was begging for attention when I got here. It’s a wonder she didn’t start causing havoc.”

Loki glowered thoughtfully for a moment. “You apparently count as part of me now. Otherwise you would have been a smoldering pile of ash before you got within ten feet. I think I am going to have to fix that.”

“Ah, ash? Really? In this library?” Tony challenged.

Loki turned his nose up. “Fine, frozen into place while alerting me. Then I would have turned you into ash.”

“Oh, you love me as I am…. Ahhhh.” Tony teased until Loki dumped him on the floor. “Ouch, I get it. Anyway you got anything for Jane?”

“I hope so. These scrolls explain more about the infinity stones and the one you made me drop about the Aether in specific. These are very old even to Odin. I should punish you for possibly causing them harm.” Loki spat out.

“Woah, I can see you are all sweetness and light. You wanted me to meet you for dinner. Not my fault I couldn’t get your attention.” Tony bit back, then looked up. “Beep, I call foul, you had Trouble here she could have just sat on them, I didn’t hurt them.”

Loki rubbed his forehead and closed his eyes. “Jane being human makes it so much more difficult. I have discovered several different ways that would most likely leave her dead. I need a way that works differently. Can you carefully help me roll up the scrolls? The seal must be on the outside. That pile is no longer of use to me they must be returned to where they came.” Loki sighed.

Tony started rolling up the old scrolls as Loki had asked. “So where is -14-25-75-6-189?”

Loki’s head snapped up so fast it nearly made Tony jump. “You can read the seals. Allspeak must travel through the link.” He exclaimed. “I think you may be able to help me Tony.” Loki was back to grinning now.

Tony laughed. “You didn’t bind yourself to just anyone. Genius remember.”

“It is Level 14 hall 25, row 75, shelf 6, slot 189. Now you can help me put them away. We will look at this more tomorrow. Mother will be sending someone after us soon, if we don’t show up for dinner.” Loki said getting back to work putting things away, now with Tony’s help. Trouble just rolled over and semi-successfully attempted to get their attention by looking cute.

Dinner was uneventful. Tony charmed Frigga.

It was a huge dinner, starting off with a smooth savory thick soup, followed by plate of perhaps appetizers? Tony didn’t ask. It was a Queen’s feast tonight, which meant foods from Vanaheim. Not at all like the meat only meals he’d had before this. The main course had huge eyes at one end, some sort of fish maybe and Tony just couldn’t eat it. Jane teased him, having had a father that fished and grilled it himself with the eyes. Frigga said something to a servant and he was served a plate of something similar but without eyes. He felt better.
For desert Jane and Tony laughed because Loki had apparently obtained something from earth for Thor. They found themselves served Poptarts, rice crispy treats, and brownies. Not surprising Frigga liked the brownies best. Thor gladly gathered the leftover Poptarts for himself.

The next morning Tony and Loki were again on the fourteenth floor of the library. Trouble had been left in Loki’s suite to sleep. She had found a small fountain and had played with it all night, even waking them up several times with wet feet.

Allspeak did not work on Tony as he had hoped. It worked perfectly on translating simple words; definitions and complex ideas not so much. Apparently only the elementary portion of Allspeak passed through their link. Still he was smart enough to start looking for patterns in the wordings he didn’t understand. Before long, with the occasional explanation from Loki, he was sifting through scrolls doing a first pass making it so Loki only had to look at a fraction of them in more detail.

It actually worked better than Loki expected.

At long last he had found an old Dark Elf scroll that told about working with the Aether. It was about midmorning and then the alarms went off. Loki looked up and grabbed Tony. “Asgard is under attack.” He teleported them upstairs. They grabbed Tony’s suit and teleported again.

The Dark Elves were attacking. Everything was in chaos. Loki sent Tony to help protect the queen.

Tony discovered that his guidance system was incredibly useful. Most fighting being close combat that system allowed him to shoot into battle and hit the enemy and miss the ally. In no time he made it to Frigga’s quarters only to find a monstrous Dark Elf already there fighting her.

She was amazing but he was bigger and she was tiring. The Dark Elf moved suddenly finding the opening he was waiting for. Tony saw it the same time and fired with both hands at maximum power at him making the monster miss a fatal blow. Frigga was still hit and badly wounded. If Tony could distract the beast she might live to see the day through. He charged and they fought. Tony doing his best to lure the creature away from Frigga. It, was doing its best to kill Tony. It took everything he had to keep it distracted while not killing him or Frigga.

Tony’s armor was dented and power was down to 16% when help showed up a short time later, in the form of Thor and two more guards. The monster continued to fight. Suddenly his head lifted and he ran as if someone had called him.

Many of the Dark Elves escaped. They learned the monstrous Dark Elf was a creature called the Kurse, created by Dark Elf magic. It was nearly impossible to kill. There were no doubts that they would return. They were after the Aether.

Frigga was alive, only due to Tony’s quick thinking. Eir told them that she was in critical condition. They set to work to stabilize her from both the wound and poison from the Kurse’s blade.

. The poison was bad, if she lived it would take some time for her to recover.

They needed a plan and they needed one fast. Earlier Loki had discovered that the method the Dark Elves used was a viable method to extract the Aether from Jane. Unfortunately they had not yet found the completed process.

Thor, Loki, Tony, Sif, Heimdall, and the Warriors Three met in the throne room. Thor took the
Loki verified that the Dark Elves were led by Malekith. He was only able to catch glimpses of them, enough to determine what realm they were momentarily on. They were in constant motion. Loki told them that the monster, Kurse, was only killable by a few methods. One of which was using a substance called Eitr. He felt it might be the easiest to obtain.

Thor looked pointedly at Loki when he was told this. Then answered knowingly, “I am not father, you must go to him. I will reward him for his help. I will give you the key, if he agrees to aid us and not to plot against us, use it to release him.”

“You know I will release him regardless. I cannot promise his help.” Loki uttered dejectedly.

Sif tried to protest but a glare from Thor silenced her from complaining about whoever seemed to disturb and even scare the others.

Thor grimaced. “You must try anyway for Jane, they will come back soon. Tell him, he will be allowed to go to Midgard with you then. Perhaps you, the Man of Iron can influence him? I do not wish him harm, nor do I wish to fight him. I have fond memories of him and kept visiting him until recently. Remind him of this. Remind him mother’s life is on the line as they still remain close.” And Thor once again holding Gungnir, sitting on the throne, opened a door and pulled out a container filled with keys. Concentrating on the box a single key appeared on the top. He took it, replaced the box and gave the key to Loki. The others in the room looked from uneasy to alarmed at this.

“Excuse me did I miss something? Who are you guys talking about?” Tony looked from Thor to Loki who were mostly ignoring him.

“I will tell him, and we can try to get his help. He must give it willingly. Thank you Thor… brother.” Loki nodded and took Tony by the arm and led him back to his quarters.

Sif and the Warriors Three watched Loki with disdain bordering on hatred, while Thor, smiled like the sun, at being called brother again.

Tony knew enough to keep quiet this time. Something big was up, the walls had ears and Loki would explain it to him soon enough.

Once they were in his room. Loki looked at Tony. “How much of your suit do you need to bring to have all your detections?”

Tony responded honestly. “Most of it. I have sensors embedded all over. Is there something in specific you want?”

“My magic will be of no use to us as we approach him. Not until I unlock him. We will need to be prepared for anything and to detect traps.” Loki shook his head.

“Who are we approaching? Can you share with the class now?” Tony quizzed Loki.

“My son, Jormungandr. He is held by an unbreakable chain and controls the area around him. I do not detect like I did before I fell, before you. His defenses will not recognize me and might attack us so we must approach with care. He has strong magic and changes the paths into his area regularly. Once we are near him and can talk to him he will know it is me but before that we must avoid his
traps.”

“Do you have another son? Wait, your blanket, they are all your kids aren’t they. Damn those stories are true. Which one is he?”

Loki smiled, Tony was indeed insightful. “Yes, they are all my children. He is the tall thin one. The others are: Hela, she rules the realm of the dead, and Fenris who is the one with the tail. We will talk more about them later. Gather what you need, we will leave shortly.” Loki commanded.

Tony thought, then. “Does he know Sheenr, Sleep number, Sleep Time, Slipper? Oh shit, sorry, your horse son? Would it be better if we took him?”

Loki started to look offended then not so much. “Slepnir. Yes! That is an excellent idea. I must tell Thor.” And Loki ran off. “Be ready when I return.”

“Watch out for those friends of Thor’s, I don’t think they like you.” Tony called after him.

Chapter End Notes

Asgard has books from everywhere magically preserved to last millennia many are probably several thousand years old.

Eitr - is a mythical substance in Norse mythology. This liquid substance is the origin of all living things. The substance is supposed to be very poisonous and is also produced by Jörmungandr.

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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Chapter Summary

Loki and Tony go to find Jormungandr. Things are said, and an argument ensues. But let’s have a fun argument!

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tony had just finished in the bathroom. Always use it before you leave. One thing his mother had actually taught him. Probably because his father would let him wet himself rather than stop. When he noticed Trouble sitting on his pile of stuff. “Oh, you are not going with us this time, you little devil.” He went into the bathroom and put some treats in her bowl, which she instantly followed to investigate.

When Loki returned Tony was in the hall waiting, not trusting Trouble at all.

Tony once again found himself upon Slepnir. No choice this time, since Slepnir could travel, Yggdrasil, the world tree and Tony couldn’t.

They arrived on a flat spot in foothills near a circle of very green mountains. Tony was forced to stay riding. The protections would not bother Slepnir and Jormungandr would not attack his brother without reason.

Slepnir explained that he and Frigga actually visited quite often. It was noted it was taking longer to reach the center despite the high speed at which Slepnir traveled. Loki chuckled and explained that Jormungand was changing the paths, using the time to try to figure out what was going on, as he was a very powerful sorcerer himself. Tony just hung on for dear life. It was so quiet, too quiet. Everyone felt very tense.

The center valley was covered with snow. Strangely enough the air was not very cold but their tracks were clearly visible. When they reached the center they heard a voice. “Slepnir, what trick do you play, bringing me two enchanted creatures one that looks like father.”

Slepnir whinnied back. “Father is alive and has changed. Did grandmother not tell you on her last visit? He is now bound to a human from Midgard.”

Tony watched as a large form began to appear. It was green and black and had red highlights especially around his face. His eyes became large globes. “A dragon!” Tony exclaimed and promptly fell off Slepnir, landing in a pile of fresh, soft, warm, brown stuff.

“Yes I am.” Jormungandr looked briefly at him, let out a laugh, and smirked. Then he turned his nose to Loki who had the exact same smirk on his face. “You must be my father, to bring me the first laughter I’ve had since the last time I saw you.”

Loki grinned and winked.

Tony proclaimed as he stood and wiped the literal shit off himself, looking at Loki. “You planned that!” Then pointed at Slepnir. “With your help!” Tony looked indignant, then cracked up himself. His fall had not hurt anything but his pride and had successfully broken the tension.

“Something drastic must have happened for you to come, and with Slepnir too. I believe I am about to hear several stories? And you must introduce me to our entertainment.” The dragon’s eyes glinted and twinkled.

“I’m Tony Stark, genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist, mage apprentice, and magic item.”

“Also accident prone, lacking in wisdom, assassin’s target, constant noise generator, clown, troublemaker and pain in my ass. Playboy? Really? You are still using that?” Loki mused.

“Oh you two sound like you are made for each other. No wonder you ended up enchanted together. Are you sleeping together yet?” Jormungand said.

“No. He is too much of a pain in my ass in addition to being a human.” Loki dismissed Jormungand’s idea, sounding offended.

“I’m trying to.” Tony said to Jor and turned to Loki. “You just refuse to take my hints as real. I’m serious about you and you laugh it off as a joke! And it doesn’t have to hurt, or even be your ass. Hell, what’s wrong with being a human?” Now, it was Tony’s turn to looked offended. Then realized what he had said opened his eyes wide and nearly put his hand to his mouth but stopped half way up choosing to stand straight and look defiant instead. He knew what his hand had just been in.

“Are you serious?” Loki snorted back.

“Damn straight. What’s wrong with me?” He felt his heart speed up. He couldn’t decide if he was excited or angry. Both, it was definitely both. Plus scared, this was it, ‘Oh god what had he done.’ He knew he would say something eventually, but in front of Loki’s sons? Why couldn’t he have chosen a better time?

“Have you actually been trying to woo me?” Loki looked skeptical.

“Yes, you blind asshole. Who the hell says wooing anymore? What’s wrong with humans?” Tony restated the question. He tried to focus on his anger so he didn’t stammer, overcome by an avalanche of emotions.

Loki growled. “Humans are stupid, short lived, argumentative, barbarians with no common sense at all, who can’t figure out lies from stories.”

Well, it was a lot easier to be angry now, after that. “Really. Did they teach you that along with what Jotnar are like? Barbarians indeed, you’re the barbarians. And I am not stupid, Princess!” Tony
declared. The audacity of that man, not taking him serious because he was a measly stupid human, maybe he wasn’t interested.

“Don’t you dare bring up Jotnar now! They are monsters. I should know! Stop before I flay you now mortal!” Loki was suddenly very angry and sent a blast right past Tony that hit a rock and exploded it.

“You know, he is no longer a human or mortal either father. I like him. He might make a good mother. He can stand up to you.” Jormungandr piped in noticing that Tony didn’t even flinch from Loki’s blast.

“Stay out of this!” Both Tony and Loki yelled at the same time.

“Mother? Father? Oh, they are fun together are they not?” Slepnir kicked some of the soft snow at Jor. His eyes had an evil glint.

“That’s right I’m not mortal anymore. Besides we’re stuck with each other. So there is no problem with the mortal part.” Tony stepped up closer to Loki.

“Only because you screwed up with that Killian bastard and his unobservant untrained sorcerer bitch. Both of whom were human with no sense.” Loki yelled back.

“Accidents happen to everyone. Even you, ‘Miss. I pretend to be perfect’. You are generalizing. Can’t you see what you were taught about Jotnar is wrong too? But I guess not, you’d rather get mad and throw a temper tantrum.” Tony shot back at Loki they were now very close.

Jor and Slepnir had started tossing snow slowly at each other by now. Both grinning and building piles of snowballs next to them.

“Don’t talk about Jotnar! What do you know about them? You imbecile.” Loki roared. And found himself hit in the back with a small snowball.

“I know one, and he can be a good man, when he wants to be, but usually he’s an asshole, with no common sense, just like what he thinks humans are. Plus you’d have to be a completely blind idiot not to notice I’ve been trying to get you to look at me for months! Fuck it all. I’ve been trying to get you to look at me since I met you!” Tony shouted back. He was pissed, not caring or thinking about what he said.

“Hell, I wasn’t getting any from you, you showed no interest in me. No signs of jealousy, no
suggestions that I stay home, you hardly even flirt back. Sorry if I like sex and wasn’t getting anything remotely positive from you. And for your information I stayed with Pepper for a long time and didn’t cheat! You know what, maybe I’m not interested.” Tony bit his tongue, a small part of his angry brain was saying you are going to be sorry for that one. He felt another snowball hit him and realized it was not Loki tossing them.

“Well then. Your commitment to me does not seem very real since you gave up so easily. I believe it is a good and correct time to completely stop sleeping with you, since you obviously do not require anyone to comfort you at night other than the meaningless strangers and assassins who seem to be willing to flock to your bed for sex. Perhaps Pepper or Bruce will comfort me when I find myself with a nightmare.” Loki growled, he actually sounded a bit weak and odd at the last part. He felt a snowball hit his bottom.

Tony glared at Loki. Did Loki actually sound jealous? He certainly was with that statement. “Fuck you, ice queen, fuck you. In fact, that’s exactly what I want to do, fuck you! Or you can fuck me! I don’t care! **I WANT YOU**, in caps, bold print and underlined. I couldn’t even get hard enough to do anything with those women I tried to go out with, because you were all I could think about, YOU! You drive me crazy, always changing the subject, ignoring my hints. And you are most definitely not going to go to Pepper. I was jealous enough of you when I was still dating her. It is I who’s always comforted you when you had nightmares. Not her. I do. I come to you, I listen, I calm you down, I hold you. Not her, not Pepper and not Bruce either. I give you a home, keep you on earth or Midgard as you say. God, I’ve even told you my deepest darkest secrets. I even got you a bloody cat that drives everyone crazy. I’m the only one who seems to be able to understand you when things get bad. The only one you can talk to who actually understand what you are saying. Yet I’m not good enough for you!...” Tony was all out yelling when a snowball hit him directly in the face.

Loki turned, “Slepnir, how dare you when I’m fighting Stark!” Loki picked up some snow and threw it at the horse. Hitting his son in the face. “Stark, I don’t think this is the time or the place for this argument...” And he was hit in the back of the head with a hard snowball from Jor.

“Agreed.” Tony never one to be caught with his pants down. Okay, so maybe he had been caught that way on several occasions. Anyway, he picked up some snow and threw it at Jormungandr since he had hit him in the face. He also hit the dragon in the mouth, who was laughing at his father and did not expect the human to have the aim let alone the nerve to respond so fast. “You little shit. Take that!” Stark yelled.

Before long it was Tony and Loki verses Slepnir and Jormungandr. Snowballs flying fast and furious. The argument was soon long forgotten.

The heavy wet snow stuck to them. They were covered and looked like Dalmatians with only spots of their skin, hides, hair or clothes showing through. They were laughing and throwing wildly. All of them were fast so from a distance it looked like a white blur of silliness.

“Hey hold them off for me.” Tony hid behind Loki, and threw a magic shield around them.

The next snowball stopped against the shield. Tony threw one around it. A couple more were thrown and suddenly everyone was looking at Tony.

“What?” Tony looked at shocked faces.

“Only Jormungandr’s magic works in this valley.” Slepnir sounded stunned.

“I forgot.” Tony stammered.
Loki grabbed him and held him by the shoulders. He seemed to be staring right through Tony.

“What kind of enchantment do the two of you possess? You penetrated my anti-sorcerer field.” Jormungandr asked.

Loki threw a small spell sending a firework up in the air, drawing just a bit from Tony. “Infinity stone style magic.” Loki said in wonder.

“I believe it is now story time father.” Replied Jor who, like the rest of them, was covered in white melting snow.

The snow didn’t bother any of them. Tony remained close to Loki feeling a bit drained but satisfied at his spell.

Loki told a brief story of Asgard and letting go from the Bifrost. Tony had not heard all of that, Jor and Sleipnir had from Frigga. He went on and gave an even more abbreviated version of being caught by Thanos, The Other, controlled by the scepter and trying to take over Midgard.

Tony grinned as Loki told how Tony took responsibility for Loki and stood up for him instead of letting him be sent back to Asgard. Then he talked about Tony being his apprentice, extremis, blood enchantments, and stabilizing the thing.

Finally they talked about Thor, Jane Foster, and the Aether, Odin’s anger and his sleeping, Dark Elves attacking and Frigga being in critical condition. Not stopping until Loki had given them Thor’s request and shown them the key.

Jormungandr listened until the end then asked questions. Frigga had visited him regularly and treated him like her grandson. He still loved her. He readily agreed to give them the Eitr in exchange for his freedom. He would never allow Odin to take him again though, and would try to kill the Allfather or anyone who tried to recapture him. Eitr, Tony found out was a deadly poisonous substance that only Dragons produced.

They unlocked Jor.

Tony happily invited him to live in the tower too. He was correct in assuming that Jor could become human when he wanted and asked how, expecting it to be a dragon thing. Only to be told it was a natural shapeshifter thing.

“What is a natural shapeshifter? Is that like turning into a werewolf on the full moon?” Tony asked.

“Hardly. Though I could shape change into a wolf on a full moon. I can shape change into anything I have seen. I retain all my mental and magical capabilities while shifted, as well as improved strength and healing.” Loki described.

“You’re telling me, you are a shapeshifter and can change into anything you want? They exist?” Tony asked unbelieving, then whistled shaking his head.

“Of course, why is that so hard to believe when you have my father living with you?” Jor looked puzzled.

“I thought that was only from Odin’s enchantment. Loki? Is there something you have not been telling me?” Tony frowned at Loki.

“There are many things about me you don’t know Stark. Yes, I am a natural shapeshifter, but you did know that I was a horse and bore Sleipnir. It is a very rare ability said to come from dragons. I do
not know how I came by it, but two of my children also have it.” Loki supplied.

“I thought that the horse was more of a temporary spell thingy, a transmogrifying thingy. I’m going to have to think about that for a while. Anything? You can turn into anything?”

“Yes, as long as it is alive.” And he promptly turned into Pepper and gave him one of her best glares. “You are not going to spread it around either Anthony Edward Stark!” Loki said in that condescending voice Tony had thought only Pepper could make.

Tony jumped back and held his hands out protectively. “I get the point. I won’t. Turn back. Please.”

Loki did and they made their way back to Asgard. Loki took Tony separately much to his relief, not riding on Slepnir. Falling off the huge horse once in a lifetime was enough.

They went to Thor who decreed Jor was safe as long as Loki and Tony were in Asgard and blanketed them in under Odin’s earlier decree. Thor was not comfortable making new decrees yet.

They failed to find the complete Dark Elf method to remove the Aether. Now they needed a plan to trick Malekith into removing the Aether from Jane and then to stop him.

Jor and Loki could offer Jane as part of some deal. He might go for it, but they feared he wouldn’t trust them to stay close enough. They needed to set a trap of their own and they didn’t have much time. It was clear given the timing that the Dark Elves wanted to use it in conjunction with the convergence. Loki noted as he had been planning on using the power from it too.

They had guessed that Malekith was tracking the Aether somehow and he wanted that in specific as he didn’t even try to go after the Tesseract or anything else in the treasure room. Malekith had made it clear that he knew it was inside Jane Foster. What he might do once he had it was just conjecture.

Loki had earlier found a ceremony that had more than a fifty percent chance of keeping Jane alive while removing the Aether. If it was done on Niffleheim they might be able to raise it to above seventy five percent with Hela’s blessing. If they set up to do the ceremony there, it might just force Malekith to attack and grab the Aether from her. They would have to be ready, set up to pounce as soon as he had it out.

It was getting late by the time they had things worked out. They decided to sleep the night before visiting Hela.

When they got back to the room they found it a disaster. Apparently Trouble had not been happy to be left behind. The suitcases were empty, contents scattered. The flower pots on the balcony were tipped over and she had left a present next to her little box instead of in it. A couple of dead birds adorned the center of the bed and books were scattered throughout. Only the areas Loki had magically shielded for Trouble’s protection were untouched. Fortunately Loki had spells to clean up the mess rather quickly, making Tony practice his magic at the same time. Tony wondered how often Loki had done this before.

After they were finished, Loki asked, as Tony crawled into the bed beside him. “What do you think you are doing?”

“Going to bed with my teddy bear. Just like we always should be.” Tony responded, hoping for the best.
Trouble jumped up and started padding one of the pillows getting ready to sleep next to them, despite still being mad at them for leaving her stuck alone in Loki’s suite all day.

“You talk about wooing me, argue with me, and expect to be able to sleep with me now? You presume too much.” Loki scowled at him but made no move to push him off.

“And I’ve been teasing you about it for months, flirting. Really it’s not my fault you didn’t notice.” Tony stated calmly not making any attempt to move off the bed, in fact he scooted on a bit more.

“Teasing me. That is indeed what it was. I thought you were joking or just looking for release. I was an easy good looking target. You flirt with everyone.” Loki said softly, looking at Tony and then at his hands.

Tony continued to climb into bed. “Not like I do with you. You turn me down every time too. How was I to know you didn’t think I was serious?”

Loki looked sad, defeated and shook his head. “Look at me. I am a Jotun. I am a wanted criminal. You see how people treat me here. I have never been wanted for me. I have newly figured out that by earth standards I am good looking. That is not the case in Asgard. I have also spent a great deal of time, since coming to earth, mentally healing myself. That does not happen overnight. In addition, you do have a reputation, I cannot afford to get involved with someone that would mess with my already unstable brain. Given what has happened to me. I have a lot to overcome to take you seriously.”

“Oh, Loki, I am looking at you and I really, really, do want you, for you. You are all kinds of hot in more ways than looks. You keep up with me in the lab and give me ideas. You make me laugh and listen to me. You even tell me I am a genius, but only when I actually deserve it and never out of lip service. I trust you despite you being the God of Lies. You care enough to look out for me and don’t really ask for anything in return. That surprised me. I want you wrapped up on a stick so I can lick every delightful part of you. I’ll help you overcome anything, hold you hand, you just need to ask. In fact I’m not sure you need to ask. Even me, who’s normally blind to things like that, notice your stuff.” Tony confessed sliding closer and leaning up against Loki.

“You are my friend, how can I be your lover without messing that up?” Loki asked.

“I know a few people who have been happily married for many years. Most of them say they are married to their best friend. Hell, I don’t want to mess up our friendship either, but we’re going to have to deal with the fact I am hopelessly attracted to you, and we’re in this for the long haul, not just one night.” Tony confessed back and put an arm around Loki.

“Then I want to be properly courted. No one has ever wanted me enough to try. I would like you to try to win my affection. Is that too much to expect? How can you do that when we are already sleeping together? I have never even considered you as a suitor.” Loki sounded almost lost.

“Oh Princess, If you’re really willing to give me a chance I promise to do all that when we get back. Honestly though with so much going on, we are both likely to have terrible nightmares. How about for now we just do the teddy bear thing?” Tony whispered as he curled up against Loki.

“We do need restful sleep. You are correct about our nightmares. I’ll agree for now. I have reinforced the protections so my room is safe. I’m going to use a slumber spell on us.”

They lied down and shared a pillow as Trouble had claimed one pillow and was ominously glaring, daring them to just try to move her.
“Ok, good night sweetheart.” Tony mumbled as Loki threw the spell.

The last thing Tony heard before going to sleep was “I’m not your sweetheart”

And Tony may just have mentally added ‘Yet’.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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Fighting for the Aether

Chapter Summary

They meet Hela. The Dark Elves try to take the Aether. Trouble causes a bit of trouble and Loki’s son comes to earth.

Chapter Notes

I'm not real happy with this chapter, I think my husband and I were both zombied out when we reviewed it. Please forgive me for it.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony, Loki, and Jor traveled to Niffleheim. Trouble was taken to the healing chambers to keep Frigga and Eir company, and hopefully behave. Tony once again found himself sitting on top of Slepnir along with both Loki and Jor. “Karma sucks. God forgive me, for ever saying anything bad about horses.”

“You are praying to the wrong god you numbskull.” Loki replied haughtily as he punched Tony in the shoulder.

Stark looked directly at Loki. “Sorry, God! Forgive me for ever insulting a horse and please don’t make me have to ride them again. No offence, Slepnir.”

“You do know that when you say ‘No offence’ it is because you are saying something that is offensive don’t you?” Loki smirked.

“I know. At least I got the right God this time. Right? God?” Tony smiled at Loki who shook his head.

Slepnir chose that moment to jump a wall, causing Tony to grab Loki even tighter. Tony had chosen to no longer hold back his obvious affection and thus had refused to ride facing forward and insisted on being against Loki’s chest, claiming he didn’t trust Jor not to push him off and knew Slepnir could make him fall. Loki would hold onto him for sure, he hoped.

A castle appeared in front of them and Tony recognized it as the one from the bedspread. They got off and headed to the entrance where they were greeted by a small girl who looked about ten. She appeared just like what Tony had read, one side of her face was beautiful with a green eye and black hair. She looked like Loki. The other side was like something from a zombie movie including maggots. The whole castle gave Tony serious creeps. He was trying not to be unnerved by Hela. He kept telling himself ‘The great Tony Stark cannot be afraid. I am not afraid. Especially of Loki’s
daughter. She may be family one day. I am not afraid. At least I’m not going to show it. Damn I’m glad Loki is close.’

“Father! I’m so very glad to see you. Jor! You too! But things are amiss, follow me.” She turned and they followed her into a small sitting room. Where she sat in a large chair in the corner with tables on each side filled with trinkets.

Loki went to sit in a chair but Tony grabbed him and pulled him into a love-seat to sit next to him. He was trying not to act unnerved around her, but he had lost his war with fear. ‘Fuck, the great Tony Stark is scared enough he doesn’t want to sit alone.’

Loki looked at Hela. “You could turn it down a bit. My human is about to make a mess on your furniture.”

“Oh. all right. He wasn’t reacting very fun anyway. I was hoping for more screaming.” She said, and immediately Tony felt better.

“Thanks.” He said and noticed the zombie side of her face was now just sunken and blue with lines on it and there were no signs of maggots. Also, the whole creepy feeling along with his goosebumps disappeared.

“This is Anthony Stark. I presume mother has told you about us so you might as well get to know him. He will be around for quite some time. He is a hero from Midgard and currently my custodian there.” Loki introduced him.

“Your custodian too? I heard he was more of a warden. Really you do end up in the most delightful circumstances father.” She mused.

“I am thinking he might make a good stepmother. I find him amusing.” Jor teased.

“Really? And what do you have to say about that Anthony Stark?” Hela’s one green seemed to swirl and the red one seemed to look into his soul.

It took a moment but Tony regained his composure and smiled. “I’m definitely not a warden, been used as a cot and pillow though. Not sure about the mother part. But don’t worry, I’m making him mine, for real, as in boyfriend, and they’re taking bets on how long it takes.”

Hela’s green eye lit up and sparkled. “Really now. You sound sure of yourself.”

Tony’s eyes lit up, he grinned and began. “When I know what I want, I’m not the type to give up and I want him... He’s gonna be my god and lover. I’m gonna make him want to hold me every night, we are destined lovers. I’m gonna woo him like he’s never been woo’d and hang on so tight that he never feels alone or unwanted again. The reverberations will be so loud that everyone in the nine realms will know Tony Stark and Loki are together.” Tony twittered.

Loki rolled his eyes and pushed Stark away just a bit. “You forgot dance when you come home and mourn when you’re not around. What is this, some third rate romance novel, Stark? I had no idea you could even spout such nonsense.” He turned to Hela. “I gave him reluctant permission to ‘woo’ me last night. I normally would not hold much hope except this little hemorrhoid is a determined bastard and is going to be around for a long time.”

Tony grinned and came back to cuddle a bit closer wrapping himself around Loki’s arm. “That’s right sweetheart. For you information I had to read a few classics in college. Just cuz I don’t normally say shit like that doesn’t mean I can’t, my sweet princess. We’re gonna be together and you know it. You should give in already.”
Loki produced a crumpet from nowhere and shoved it into Tony’s mouth. “Do shut up we have business to discuss.”

“I see what you mean Jor. He will be a fun addition to the family.” Hela giggled.

They really did settle down to talk about the plan; where to set it up and how to execute it. Hela had a gift of sight, similar to Frigga’s and had several suggestions.

Before they left she gave them another warning about some many armed organization. She had seen a sea creature perhaps squids or octopus, followed by more dark creatures. Bad things were happening on Midgard.

Afterward they went to a small hut elsewhere on Niflheim and set up a circle with runes and warded that place for the night.

They returned home and collected Thor and Jane. Sif and the Warriors Three came along to help Thor but made clear their dislike of Loki and Hela. Loki and Jor had managed to get Jane’s survival chances up to seventy five percent, even if the Dark Elves didn’t show.

They waited one day keeping Jane hidden and on the move across realms, stalling to get closer to the time of the convergence. If Malekith wanted the Aether before the convergence he had to attack soon. They needed to force his hand so he played in their ballfield.

When they returned to the hut on Niflheim Loki cast more spells to hide Thor, Sif and the Warriors from detection outside. Jor was also hidden but stayed inside close to Jane. Tony and Loki went to work putting finishing touches up around the room along with more protections. They talked and announced to any listening that they would not be attempting it until the next day. The convergence was late today.

So the three, of them Loki, Tony and Jane, sat down at the table and started to play a game of cards while they waited.

Three hours later they were attacked.

The Kursed one entered the hut first followed by several Dark Elves. Tony had the suit on in moments and Loki started fighting. They carefully allowed themselves to be separated from Jane who was hiding under the table.

Suddenly Malekith was there pulling her out. “What have we here? You have something I need.” He grabbed Jane and pulled her outside. The table had been placed so it was close to the door. Jor, all but tripped her, trying to squeeze out the door unseen not leaving her side. Outside there were more Dark Elves fighting Thor and his friends.

Loki saw Jane leave, gave a nod and watched as Tony gave a nod back. Stark sent a repulsor shot off, hitting the Kursed, who was fighting Loki. Loki was prepared for it and stabbed him with a long knife covered in Jor’s poison: the Eitr.

Tony took a nasty blow to his chest because of it and went back to fighting the other Dark Elves. He had taken two down, leaving only two, and the Kursed, whom Loki had kept busy the whole time.

A minute passed and the Kursed still had not fallen. Tony managed to get a head shot in and had taken the third elf. Then the Kursed starting to lose his balance. He knew something was wrong. He pulled a purple bloody dagger from his coat and swung it at Loki going for a hit. Loki dodged but
was caught across the thigh by the dagger taking a deep bleeding cut. He in turn, again shoved the long knife that had the Eitr through the Kursed and yelled ‘run’ to Tony, as the Kursed pulled out a weird bomb.

They flew out the door, literally, Tony grabbing Loki as he passed, knocking the fourth Dark Elf to the floor and out of the way. Tony took a blow to his shoulder that actually cut into the armor and pierced Tony’s skin. The hut disappeared seconds later in some sort of interdimensional explosion pulling anything inside or too close with it. Loki and Tony barely made it out in time.

Outside the Aether was in the air, already mostly absorbed by Malekith. Jor had gotten Jane pulled away but there were more Dark Elves than they had planned for and Jor alone was fighting Malekith, and his forte was not a hand to hand fighting.

Tony released Loki and shot into the air again, intending on ramming the dark leader. Loki tried to throw a spell to hold the Dark Elf and the Aether, but failed as Malekith jumped out of the way and up onto a transport. He left several Dark Elves behind to the fates Thor and his friends provided. He disappeared into the distance into the now visible ship already moving.

Loki noticed that his spell had somehow managed to grab onto about ten percent of the Aether. How strange, he did not think it could be divided. By the time he placed it into his container the fight was over.

Loki temporarily bound his leg, healed Tony and announced Malekith was headed to Midgard.

Jane told them Selvig knew where the convergence would be strongest. They headed to earth and to Selvig, whom Darcy had rescued and headed toward Greenwich. The other Avengers were called and they battled the Dark Elves leaving huge amounts of destruction. Thor battled Malekith. Selvig, Jane, Tony and a hobbling Loki planted the scientific equipment around the ship. There were many casualties. Thor finally beat Malekith to a stagger. Then the elf was poisoned by an invisible Loki with one more dose of the Eitr that only he and Jor knew about. That same knife also released a spell that allowed Loki to grab the Aether using one of the quick but exceedingly hazardous, perhaps fatal, ways he had discovered only days earlier. The broken ship was sent back to Svartalfheim, along with a dying Malekith and many but not all dead Dark Elves. The Warriors Three got caught up in the transport and left to finish off the Dark Elves.

Loki stayed invisible as did Jor. Tony and Sif searched nearby making sure there were no living Dark Elves. Loki only became visible afterwards as he prepared to take them back to Asgard, waiting on Thor who was now kissing Jane, promising that he would not be as long this time. The Aether was now contained in a capsule-like receptacle designed for the purpose.

Loki was exhausted and still bleeding by the time they had retrieved the Warriors Three. The Aether would later be sent off elsewhere for safe keeping. A victory for all. Well mostly, Sif was clearly pissed, she did not approve of Jane and made her feelings known to everyone but Thor, who seemed completely oblivious. Loki and Tony snickered about the amazing job Thor was doing being a perceptive diplomat. They headed back to Asgard to celebrate and collect Trouble.

Trouble had been kicked out of the infirmary and confined to a garden. One of the assisting healers had seen her and thought that a bit of catnip might calm her curiosity. With magic they caught her before she had completely annihilated the place. Once she calmed down she enjoyed the garden. Right up until she discovered that there was a magical spell keeping her in it.
Loki prayed to the Norns that his mother’s favorite flowers would return to their former glory and the roses could be saved. Someone, perhaps everyone, had forgotten that there was more catnip in the garden which Trouble, already being in a mood, had found and started to tear into about the time Tony and Loki showed up. After that it became a game. How fast could Tony and Loki repair the damage vs. how fast Trouble could make it? More servants were called to help. She was a devious wily beast, disappearing into the hedges over and over making it nearly impossible to corral her, as they followed her destructive rampage.

Later there were more visitors to the infirmary, victims of sharp claws, who had been in the garden helping chase Trouble. Some delightful plant had the amazing effect of, when Trouble ate it, it made her claws extra sharp, hard and more powerful. She also seemed to be faster than usual. They all counted on it being a temporary effect otherwise the Tower would be a cataclysm because of Trouble. Eir actually marveled at the fact the cat only ate things that seemed to help and nothing poison.

Eir looked over Loki’s wound and told them it would take several days to heal and Loki should rest. He was lucky, the poison was deadly for a pureblood Æsir. Tony wanted to ask questions but one look at Loki made him stop and leave the touchy subject alone. He would find out someday, he was sure.

Loki was ready to leave immediately but since Odin was still asleep he was convinced by Thor to stay until his mother woke up. He really wanted to make sure she would recover. Thus Tony played nursemaid as much as Loki allowed him too.

Frigga woke up about two days later. She decided that Thor needed to hold the throne for the time being. She agreed to let him use Slepnir to occasionally visit Jane as a reward for her service against Malekith. Thor and Jane were both thrilled. Thor had already planned on asking Slepnir to travel to Midgard and back for as long as Odin slept. Slepnir was pleased because it would also mean seeing his father more often. Frigga agreed that Tony and Loki could leave early. Jane wanted to stay until the left left was over and would use Slepnir to return.

Tony being Tony finally had to ask how Slepnir could travel like this. Loki explained. “Slepnir’s magic is practically all of the type that can travel Yggdrasil. No one has ever heard of a creature so in tune with traveling the great tree. That is all he can do, other than some basic magic for communication and protections. And of course sireing the finest battle horses in existence. He really enjoys that.”

“I bet he does.” Tony smiled at that, thinking about doing some stud practice of his own with Loki once they were back home.

As Tony and Loki were packing, Frigga summoned them to her chambers where she was now resting and expected to make a full recovery.

After verifying they had no intentions of leaving Trouble in Asgard she warned them. “You two must beware of SHIELD my dears. I do not know what is coming but it is bad and the time is approaching. Stay with each other. Whatever I am seeing, is complicated. I only know it starts with SHIELD. After that things may get very bad.”

“Damn, I wish you could give us something more. Hela said something similar, and you warned us before. Anyone who might have answers back home seems to end up dead before they can tell us.” Tony grumbled.
“It would be best to distance yourself from them if you could. Perhaps build a small but strong trusted organization without them. I see terrible things that make no sense right now.” Frigga told him.

“Can you give me a ‘what kind’ of terrible things?” Tony pushed.

Frigga frowned. “Monstrous creatures, people dying, broken cities, a river spreading out forming wide deltas with many outlets pouring into the sea, small black rodents and many other things. But the emblem for your SHIELD is always where they start and it always involves your group and Loki in great pain. With visions the details, are always changing and if you try to protect against one detail something else is usually just that much worse. They are often filled with symbolism. After the fact sometimes you can see where it was really a different meaning altogether. Nothing is straightforward. I have been doing this a long time. I wish I could give you more.”

Jor returned to earth with Tony and Loki. Pepper was waiting for them when they return.

“You destroyed Greenwich. You know that church you damaged survived World War II unharmed. It was a symbol of hope. Europe hates the Avengers now.” Then turning to Loki. “Welcome back. I don’t know how you managed to stay out of it but you are going to have to make a statement too.”

“I really didn’t. I find being invisible much easier to sneak up on one’s opponents… But I can see on your face that for the public eye, I was not there.” Loki divulged and then corrected after seeing Pepper’s face.

“Smart man. I knew there was a reason I made you the new face of Stark Industries.” Pepper grinned.

“I’m smart too Pepper! Damn, how are we going to make me look good, oh and the Avenger’s too?” Tony asked, he was concerned the public already had a bad opinion of them.

Pepper told them. “I’m not sure. Not everyone is against you. Some people know enough to realize we would be in a serious predicament without you. Unfortunately there are many rich politicians and former residents of Long Island, and let us not forget fans of Coney Island that hate you. Who is this?”

“Oh yeah, this is Jor. Jor, Pepper. He is one of Loki’s children.” Tony smiled.

“On my, I didn’t realize you were married Loki.” Pepper seemed legitimately upset, knowing she had not only auctioned him but pushed him as being single to the public.

“I’m not and it is better if they do not know he is anything other than a human.” Loki was sure Jor would want to keep his identity hidden.

“Nice to meet you Lady Pepper. How do you fit into this group?” Jor questioned, the first of many.

“I am president of Stark Industries, former assistant to Tony Stark. Also former girlfriend to Tony Stark. And thanks to Loki recently I am also former babysitter of Tony Stark.”

“Hey, you were not my babysitter.” Tony objected.

“Without me you would have not only drunk yourself do death but starved and fallen over for lack of sleep. Your company would not have survived and Jarvis would have had to hire a staff of six people just to see to your needs and put you to bed.” Pepper snapped back.
“I only had two people before you came along to help me.” Tony complained clearly losing, trying to ignore that Obadiah had run much of his company. Tony hadn’t even gone to bed for Pepper.

“I was not aware that I did that much.” Loki said.

“I don’t know what you do. But he doesn’t drink as much, goes to sleep and eats regularly with you around. You also take his place at many meetings. So I don’t need him to show up as much. The end result is that I don’t have to take care of him.” Pepper shrugged.

“So I really am his keeper and he is mine. Delightful.” Loki’s eyes gleamed.

“Yes and more very soon.” Tony wiggled his eyebrows at Loki.

Pepper looked on with antipathy and raised one eyebrow, as Loki rolled his eyes and Tony showed his devilish troublemaking grin. “I can guess but I don’t want to know.” Then she stopped and added. “Unless I need to make a press release?”

“He has agreed to let me ‘woo’ him.” Tony used his hands to quote woo.

“Woo? Who says that in this day and age?” Pepper asked

“That’s what I said. But he does. So I’m going with it.” Tony put his arm around Loki.

Loki stepped away and winced just a bit saying. “TRY and woo, you should remember that. Jor let me show you to a guest suite.” He led Jor to the elevator.

“Tony are you sure about him? You didn’t show any interest before.”

“Has everyone been blind? I haven’t been hiding it. Just ask Bruce, he’s sick of watching me flirt.”

“You usually don’t pay attention to anyone in meetings Tony. You usually just play on your pad when I make you go.” She started gathering her things.

Before she could leave Tony stopped her and said somberly. “Pretty sure, Loki’s my ‘the one’ Pep. It took me some time to realize because it didn’t start out as just lust.” Tony was watching the elevator move to another floor. “I always knew I wouldn’t fall for someone normal. After a time I gave up, forgot I was even looking. I figured there was no one on this planet that would fit me. Guess I was right. Never expected it to be a god though.” He wanted her blessing, she was his friend, part of his family.

She smiled. “I’m glad and wish you the best of luck Tony, really. But you two are in a very complex situation, and for you to be that serious, I do worry. I don’t want to have to find myself picking up the pieces. That would be a mess that’s beyond me, so make it work.” Pepper sounded concerned but had given him her approval. She hugged Tony and left.

Odin had kept Jor locked up for the last two hundred years. He had feared a prophecy that named him but was otherwise incomprehensible. Loki, Frigga, Hela and Thor had all visited Jor regularly until Loki’s fall when both Loki and Thor had stopped. Frigga of course, continued to use Slepnir to visit. She continued his education by bringing him books and teaching him magic.

He was not familiar with earth though and had been out of touch with anyone for some time. No one but his immediate family knew he was a dragon or a shapeshifter and he wanted to keep it that way. SHIELD was to be told that he was a friend of Jane Foster’s from college and was going to assist
Bruce. Jarvis set him up with a solid identity as Jorge Munger.

He would be Bruce’s assistant for now, despite Bruce not being sure he needed one. They had told Bruce about Jor. Jor was not happy about it but they promised no one else needed to know. Loki’s son was useful though. He had a good working knowledge of biology and genetics. He didn’t like to fight and had no plans to take part in Avenger business and kept his secrets. Thus, he saw no reason to let Bruce examine him, but finally agreed to analyze himself for Jarvis to keep records of in case of emergency. This satisfied Bruce.

Jormungandr settled into the tower fairly quickly. He was a natural diplomat like his father. He had many questions and listened very well. In fact he and Steve hit it off very quickly, Jor not being as chaotic as his father.

The rest of the Avengers ignored Jor. He would be judged by his own actions. Fury accepted him on Jane, Bruce and Tony’s word. Stark had vetted him, he was Banner’s assistant and thus now Banner’s problem.

Jorge Munger in his free time went about making sure his college degree was legit and read books taking credit by exam for most of the important classes as many as two per week. He didn’t want to be caught using wrong terms or being questioned. Then he promptly started on a Master’s program to legitimize his credentials. Bruce was impressed. The Hulk liked him too, not that anyone really noticed.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo’s button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Let the 'Wooing' Begin

Chapter Summary

Tony has permission now. He tries to 'woo' Loki.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Tony and Loki returned from Asgard, they had a meeting. Natasha, Clint and Phil had tried without much luck for a year to get information about infiltration of spies in SHIELD. The only thing new they had found was the assassination attempts on Stark appeared to be linked. Natasha was pretty sure she could trust Fury, but he told too many things to the WSC who she didn’t trust. SHIELD and Fury were kept mostly out of the loop.

Steve still felt it was time to approach Fury about the warnings from Asgard. They called Fury in.

Natasha explained she was getting confusing information from SHIELD. Loki informed Fury that, they were going to strike any obligation to SHIELD from his contract. His blood finding a way into terrorists’ hands clearly proved they were not keeping up their end of the bargain and protecting him. The warnings his family had given him only helped prove his point.

Fury found himself in a tough situation. He reluctantly agreed that until SHIELD could figure out and deal with the obvious spy ring, the Avengers could be on a looser leash, and yes, Loki was now free of SHIELD.

Loki also insisted they start working on Jarvis, figuring how to better protect the AI. If they could somehow find a way to incorporate magical applications into Jarvis’s programing it would not only protect him better but allow Jarvis to sneak into places that he currently could not without getting caught or damaged.

Tony officially started to try to ‘woo’ Loki.

He gave Loki flowers which were promptly given to the bots. The God of Chaos had a grand time watching them get instructions on how to care for them from Jarvis. It ended with DUM-E cutting off half of the flowers from the stalks and half of the bottoms and distributing parts around the lab. Loki was rolling on the floor and Tony looked discouraged.
He took Loki to dinner. Suddenly a crowd of people appeared asking for autographs and pictures.

They took a walk to the park and were soon surrounded by fans, then by haters who demanded answers about problems caused by the Avengers. Soon some of the fans were defending them. It shortly became a free for all. Someone pushed someone else, and another tore off a person’s sleeve. A few male teens got the idea they wanted to see some naked females. They picked the wrong group, a group of women who much preferred seeing naked men, after that the clothes flew. One woman got so offended she grabbed what she thought was her pepper spray but turned out to be her perfume and sprayed a whole lot of people with very expensive perfume. Then there were the dogs on leashes that got loose. They manage to knock people over like dominos. It had been raining recently, so there was plenty of mud to go around. By the time the police arrived there were several naked people and many fights that needed to be broken up. Along with barking dogs, crying babies, tripped bystanders and enough mud so everyone needed a bath. While amusing, Tony didn’t feel like it counted as a date.

Three weeks had passed since they came back from Asgard and Tony had been trying to be a gentleman and wait. Loki was being a brat and insisting they not sleep together yet, much to Tony’s frustration. They went to bed alone nearly every night yet nearly every morning they found themselves together. Tony thought it was a good sign.

Then one morning Loki woke to find a half asleep Tony trying to hump him. He jumped out of bed “Stark, what are you doing here again?! I told you to stop it. I don’t mind you coming in if you have a nightmare. But you continuously get into my bed at night. At least pretend you want to court me and not just sleep with me.” Loki growled.

Trouble chose that moment to pounce on Tony.

“Oomph, I was asleep. Geez, I don’t know how I get here and you’ve woke up in my bed a couple of times.” Tony whined still waking up fighting to find a sitting position. “And I was having a really good dream. I couldn’t help it. Would it help if I told you that you were the star?” He sat up and started scratching Trouble’s head.

“No it would not. I believe the phrase is ‘I feel like a piece of meat.’ It makes me question your sincerity.” Loki crossed his arms in front of him.

Tony closed his eyes in frustration. He had really been having a great dream, starring Loki and now he was the bad guy, again. “Jarvis, can you start playing any recordings you have of nights when neither of us had nightmares.” Tony asked his AI.

“Certainly sir. I suggest, perhaps you only want the sections involving moving to each other’s beds though?”

“Don’t be a wiseass J, I’m not awake enough. Start with last night and make sure you get the nights Loki came to mine too.” Tony looked at a display that Jarvis projected on the wall.

Sure enough last night Tony had walked in his sleep to Loki’s bed. Looking over the prior nights found similar behavior. Trouble was always beside him when he went.

“You think me a fool? Sleepwalking is not hard to pretend.” Loki was angry.

“Shit, you ended up in my bed too. Please tell me you have copies of that J.” Tony really didn’t want to be fighting with Loki.
When they looked at the nights Loki ended up in Tony’s bed they found Loki had teleported in his sleep to Tony, usually with Trouble going along because he was curled up against him. It had been happening for a long time, well before the trip to Asgard.

Then they found the most amazing footage of all. Tony had gotten himself twisted into his sheets and was rolling around trying to get free. Trouble had dashed down the stairs and head butted Loki. Suddenly a green light came bounding up the stairs wrapped itself around Tony and Tony teleported into Loki’s arms held open but actually still asleep in bed.

“Aw, looks like you want me with you. You doing a magic summoning on me Babe? Don’t think it’s my fault at all and it’s been happening since last summer.”

“If I didn’t know better I’d say it was Trouble causing it to happen.” Loki said bending over to both glare at and pet the cat sitting in Tony’s lap now.

They reviewed the tapes closer. Some nights Loki actually sort of called for Tony before the sleep walking started. On the nights Loki went to Tony, Tony always mumbled Loki. Trouble seemed to spend her nights going back and forth between the beds until they were together, then she would finally settle down.

Jarvis told them. “According to my files she has been doing this since she came to live here. It appears that the only time she stays in one bedroom is when you are both together.”

“See she just wants her parents to be together.” Tony’s eyes gleamed.

“It must be the enchantment causing us to be drawn together.” Loki was still looking at Trouble.

Tony smiled and looked so smug and proud. “No, you just really, really want me sweet stuff. You might as well just give in. This handsome peacock has just caught you, you hot peahen!”

For the next thirty minutes or so, the time it took Loki to talk to Jarvis, take a shower, get dressed and play with Trouble, Tony got to know firsthand what it felt like to be a peacock. Oh, Loki didn’t forget to take a few snapshots to show off of Tony shape changed. Loki would also remember next time that peacocks make an atrociously loud noise.

One night Pepper had a society party planned and Tony took Loki. Pepper started introducing Loki to some potential clients and it became business.

The next date was a weekend trip to CERN, the supercollider. This time Tony was the center of attention. Everyone wanted to know what he thought about this, that or the other thing Tony felt dejected. Loki had actually been interested in seeing the great feat that humans had developed. But because they were so interested in talking to Tony, others had shown Loki around.

That night at dinner Tony brought out two boxes. “I have something for you.”

Loki looked at the small one and opened it. Inside was an old fashioned sextant. He picked it up. “What is this?” He picked it up and looked through the eye piece.

“It is called a sextant. It was used by ships when they traveled across the oceans. It helped them use the stars for navigation. I have no idea what you like other than books.” He shoved the other box
toward Loki.

Loki gently set the sextant down and opened the box. Inside was a very old navigational book with maps of the Earth’s oceans.

Loki smiled. “Thank you. This is a very unique idea. I can see you put some effort into it.”

Tony hesitated. Did Loki like it? He had spent hours trying to come up with something that might spark Loki’s interest. “Do you like it though?”

“I think so. I am going to have to play with it.” Loki was studying the strange object. It had dials and this one even had colored filters allowing it to be used with the sun.

When they got back to the suite Tony walked in and sat down on the bed and hung his head. “I’m sorry. I keep screwing things up. I forget how many people recognize us.”

“Do not worry yourself over this Stark. I grew up a prince and am used to people fawning over me.”

Loki took off his coat and hung it up and picked up the sextant.

“I can’t seem to get anything right. How am I supposed to impress you when I keep doing everything wrong?” Tony sighed. He was getting nowhere fast. Was Loki even interested in him?

Wrong? Tony you are doing more than anyone else ever has. Why do you think it is wrong?”

“The flowers, the walk, the party, dinner in New York, CERN. You are not even sure you like my gift… or me.” Tony sounded upset and dejected. He added the last part softly, hopelessly. He had thought Loki was interested in Asgard but wasn’t so sure now.

Loki walked over to Tony and grabbed one of his hands. “Tony you have made me laugh. The bots with the flowers were delightful. The way those people fought in the park just because they did not agree, pure delectable chaos. The party was nice until Pepper made it into work and you did get to snuggle with me afterwards. Being famous has a price, you should know that, I do.” Then he took a deep breath. “I like you very much Anthony Stark, do not doubt that… Actually I think I am going to love your gift. Now, can you show me how to use it?” Loki held it up in his other hand.

Later Loki put his arms around Tony and kissed him. This was not a simple thank you kiss but a wonderful emotional kiss that Tony felt down to his toes. “Thank you Anthony. This has been a wonderful evening.”

Tony was feeling much better. “So, I gotta ask. Have I passed the test yet?”

Loki raised his eyebrows. “Test? Do you think this is something you must pass to win me?” He shook his head. “You were doing so well. That is such a stupid question Stark.”

“Guess I felt the need to be an idiot again.” Tony sighed.

Loki laughed. “Yes, but with more work you might become my idiot.”

“Really? I’m making progress? Can you give me some pointers?… Hey how long before we can have sex?” Tony snapped his mouth shut. Oops.

Loki was suddenly looking very stern. “Perhaps more work than I thought. Why don’t you sleep on the couch tonight. This teddy bear suddenly feels the need for the whole bed.”
Tony looked at Loki with sad eyes. They had actually been having a moment then he went and ruined it. He picked up a pillow and headed for the chair.

“Come back here Stark. I have reconsidered and realized that I am being difficult. I know waiting is hard for you. I guess, I am, a bit of a princess, requiring you to prove you will be true to me before I have sex with you.”

“First step down.” Tony was grinning Loki had decided to sleep in the same bed together. He brought his pillow back to the bed and sat down next to Loki.

“Anthony, this is not like your projects and I refuse to be treated like that!” Loki snarled.

“But babe, everything is a project. It’s just the way my mind works. I just want us happy together.”

“We are together.” Loki said in frustration. “Tony as much as I care for you as a person, until just recently I never saw you as a possible love interest.” Loki sighed.

Tony sat there for a second stunned. “But you do see me as one now right. Please tell me you are at least attracted to me.” This could be bad. Had Loki been somehow so screwed up he wasn’t capable of being in a relationship? What was he to do now?

Loki took Tony’s hand and made eye contact. “Look, I have been burned and used so many times by people. People who only wanted me in order to get to Odin, or Thor, or the military, or to get a special magical favor. There were those whose purpose was making fun of me, or just to obtain bragging rights. I have had many assassination attempts that way, and those who have tried to make me suffer for something Thor or Asgard did. I have even been raped as a form of torture. Early on Odin used me as a bargaining chip. I have walls miles thick.”

Loki sighed and looked down at their joined hands and continued. “You originally gave me food, shelter, protection and stood up for me. I began to help your people, the Avengers, your company and Pepper. I allowed you to become my friend. It was because of this I found myself bound to you for the rest of our lives, however long that is. I can’t help but fear what will happen next? Are you only using me to live longer, to learn magic, to prosper and don’t really care about me. Whether they are true or not I have these thoughts and feelings.”

Loki felt Tony put his head against his own. “In Asgard, as a prince I was not allowed to have friends in the peasantry, unless they were shield brothers. As a child Thor was my only friend, as we grew he gained other friends and I ended up tagging along. I was called too smart for my own good, a woman learning women’s professions. I was expected to be better than anyone else but Thor in combat and nearly everything else. When I surpassed him in things I was ignored or ridiculed. No one understood me. I had no friends. What does it say about a person when their mother becomes their only friend? You are the first person I have ever met who seems to understand me. In many ways you are my first friend. Your friendship is more precious to me than you can imagine. One of my biggest fears is that I will mess that up. Or worse yet, it is not real and I am imagining it all, once again being used.” Loki could feel Tony through the link. It was strong and very emotional. More likely it was more than one emotion.

Loki let go and pulled away from Tony putting his arms around himself as though closing himself up. “It has not been a month since you declared your intentions in Asgard. To me you are moving so very fast. Circumstances have us sharing a bed. And if you ARE using me, I will still have to live with you the rest of my life. I find myself opening up and being honest with you. I am terrified that I trust you so much already. I anger easily to hide my fear. More so, you have a reputation for using people for sex. I need my partner to be faithful to me.”
Tony sat there stunned. “You’ve actually been in my head as my magic teacher. Surely you can tell my feelings are different with you? I can feel your own anguish now Princess.”

“I will not pry into your mind that way Stark. I am willing to give you touch and cuddles as you would say. But sex, for me, with you, or anyone, requires more trust than I have given in a very long time.” Loki tightened his arm around himself.

Tony wrapped his arms around the god and thought. ‘What can I do with that? I’d say I’d kill anyone who ever used him like that but then I’d be the world’s biggest hypocrite and have to kill myself for all the people I’ve used.’ So instead he said, “Loki, I do care, look, tear my mind apart. I don’t care, if that’s what it takes to get you to see how committed I am to you. I want us to be happy together. You are perfect for me.”

Loki released one hand from around himself waved it. “Perfect? Look at me. I am such a grand creature. I have such a fine character. A pillar of strength. An embodiment of godhood. A champion of fortitude. Steadfast in my capabilities. I have been granted sainthood for my ability to forgive. Noble in my breeding. With wisdom to always make the best monumental decisions. The epitome of a truly exemplar man.” He laughs. “Find someone who really has those qualities, you deserve someone like that. Not me, Anthony Stark. I do not deserve you.” He dropped his hand and put it over Tony’s.

Tony gripped Loki tighter where their hands rested together, adjusting to get a better hold on Loki. “Oh Princess. I’m not even close to perfect either. What’s more I don’t want someone with those qualities. If I did I’d date Steve and be bored out of my mind. I want you with all your chaos. You make me feel alive, even before the enchantment I knew I wanted you. I even told someone I think you’re ‘my one’. I’ve never even thought that about anyone before now. I’m so sure I’d stake everything on it. I’m terrified too. Terrified that you won’t want me, that I’m not good enough, that you’ll find someone better. Everytime I seem to find something that gives me some assurance you say something that dashes my hope away. I don’t know what to do. Tell me Loki what can I do? Please.” Tony was sounding and feeling desperate by the end. If they couldn’t get somewhere being as honest as they were right now it would never work. He needed Loki to understand his want, his need, to see how much his world revolved around his princess. He felt Loki relax a bit.

“Oh my little hemorrhoid, you are such a determined creature. I do find you very fascinating and I appreciate the fact you have not been willing to give up. I care for you, you is just very difficult to show when I am so unsure of myself and don’t trust my own feelings. Try to have some patience.” Loki said and leaned up and kissed the man. He thought. ‘I’m in a relationship with Anthony Stark, someone I actually care about for the first time.’ Then his mind got lost in a long delicious seductive kiss and then a few more.

Kissing which didn’t last long enough. In Tony’s opinion it ended too soon, before anything else could happen. He had hope now at least.

Once home he told Jarvis all about it. Then asked. “Jarv, how the hell am I going to be able to wait? What do I do?”

“As much as you will hate it sir, I believe you are going to have to finally learn the definition of patience.” Jarvis responded dryly.

“That’s worked so well in the past.” Tony’s voice dripped with sarcasm.
Near Christmas Loki decided to have ‘fun with bots’ time and came into the lab with an artificial tree and several boxes of ornaments. Tony just shook his head when Loki told them he had got them for them to decorate the lab

The end result was a tree that was actually sort of pretty. It had an interesting chemical foam on several branches, tinsel hung down like bars on all sides. There were groupings of ornaments on various places, reminding one of birds in nests. The lights were actually on an Ironman suit just behind the tree. On the top was tied an old arc reactor frame with a green light inside that Loki felt was needed. The tree skirt was in a box underneath and became Trouble’s new hiding place.

Tony was impressed. “Hey, you guys did great! Look there is only seven broken ornaments and the tree’s in one piece. That is so much better than last year,”

“Have you ever thought about giving the bots speech?” Loki questioned.

Tony smiled. “Once, they mimicked the most common words I used. Decided that motherfucker, son of a bitch, damn, shit, asshole, fuck it, hold this and hand that to me, were about all I say in here. Definitely wasn’t something I needed to hear in chorus. If they have to report something Jarvis does it.”

By Christmas the existence of SHIELD was broke to the news. The US demanded to be more informed and involved with SHIELD. This brought the official announcement that the secretary of defense Alexander Pierce was now on the WSC council. He had of course already been a member.

Christmas came and went presents were exchanged between the Avengers.

Jor was included too. He was fitting in rather well. He had finally slowed down on classes he could take by examination. Steve even joined him and audited the history classes.

New Year’s Eve came. Tony had put up his traditional mistletoe. He wasn’t sure how Loki would react to his annual kissing trick but it was tradition. There were several potential new Avenger’s there tonight along with several from Coulson’s crew and a few extras that SHIELD had suggested. He really wanted the party to be fun.

A man with dark hair from Coulson’s crew, Grant, didn’t like Loki and was carefully feeling out people’s opinions on aliens and Loki in general. Eventually he settled down in a conversation with a few chosen people and Loki. They were talking about Tony, his conquests and that they never heard of him dating a guy. Loki was looking very uncomfortable and trying to move closer to Tony but the whole group was also shifting keeping him pinned in place.

Tony was drinking rather heavily, it was New Year’s Eve after all, and he’d gotten ahold of some Asgardian ale.

A girl approached having moved from Loki’s group and said. “I hear you are dating Prince Loki now.”

“Yup, that tall handsome dude is mine.” Tony grinned and looked at Loki who was only a few feet from him.
“So is sex with a God better than with a human?” She asked getting close.

Tony stopped for a second taken aback then. “We are actually just dating….exclusively… That’s sort of personal isn’t it?” Boy, he was too drunk for this conversation.

“You mean the great handsome playboy Tony Stark, the sex with a new girl every night is not getting any?” She smiled at him provocatively.

She was pushing Tony’s buttons and he was drunk. She continued her teasing and started flirting. They were nearly under the mistletoe.

At the same time Grant was saying something about how he wondered what the inventor wanted from Loki because he would never give up women to be with a tortured alien monster. I bet he doesn’t even trust you yet. You did try to take over our world. You should be locked up. The others in the group seemed to look like they agreed. Loki was looking paler than normal.

Suddenly Tony yelled. “I’ll show you I still like women” And kissed the girl under the mistletoe full tongue and she kissed back.

Loki stared at Tony.

Grant said in a loud voice. “Told you he didn’t really want an alien monster.”

Tony’s brain actually heard this. He dropped the girl and turned only to see the last bit of Loki disappearing in an outline of green. He started to shake and grabbed a chair for support. He couldn’t feel Loki. The god was beyond twenty five miles, maybe not even on earth. He felt the apprentice link try to slam like when Loki had been in the cuffs. Loki was actively suppressing it or was just too far away. It was an enchantment now and would not close like before but it felt similar. The only thing passing between them was the blue green magic that never stopped flowing across Yggdrasil.

He looked at the girl, at Grant, at the others. “This party is over. Leave NOW! GET OUT!” He yelled and ran to the elevator. He needed to find Loki.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Loki Returns

Chapter Summary

Loki disappeared at the end of the last chapter on New Year’s, now we get to find out what happened,

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

The nightmares are quick but a bit graphic and there is another graphic bit too when they talk of where Loki went.

Pepper threw everyone but the Avengers out. Coulson she sent to Clint’s floor telling him he had better come up with some answers.

Jarvis played excerpts from the party. Loki had been set up by Grant and the girl who was still an unknown. Coulson was summoned and apologized for Grant’s behavior. He knew Grant had lost a couple of close friends to the Chitauri attack and was angry, but claimed not to know the girl.

Pepper went up to find Tony. Tony was in his bed holding and petting Trouble, the small black cat they had adopted, together, who clearly loved them both, together. Jarvis had shown him their findings from the party. He was devastated, he had been played, and after Loki had opened up to him about his fears. Beside him was an empty bottle and an unused glass. Tears ran down his face, he was still shaking. She came over and reached toward him, but he shook his head.

“Are you going to be alright tonight?” Pepper asked, because he clearly didn’t want her near him.

“Just take the bottle and leave. I don’t want him to find a woman in my bed even if it’s you sitting and hugging me… I need to be alone.” Tony was fighting to talk clearly, overly slow and over enunciating everything.

Pepper could tell he would pass out soon. She grabbed the bottle and left as asked.

As soon as she was off the floor, Tony bawled. He hurt, he had hurt Loki. It didn’t matter that they were set up. He should have been able to handle it. He knew the mistletoe was a bad idea. Why was he always such an idiot?

The nightmares were horrible that night. Loki was torturing him, drowning him. He couldn’t catch his breath. Then he was cutting up Loki. Telling him he had to do it. Had to cut the bad parts out so people wouldn’t hate Loki anymore. He cut off his tongue, his hands, more body parts and then
screamed and screamed when all he had left was a bleeding heart and it stopped beating. In another one Howard was beating him with an arc reactor. ‘Look at the foul thing you have made yourself into with this. You should have stuck with making weapons like I wanted you to.’ Howard was red and hot, Tony was blue and cold, his chest open bleeding.

Tony left and went to his lab and worked. For three days straight he worked. Trouble was annoyed at him as he had left her outside of his lab and shut all the blinds so he could ignore her. Natasha had to feed her. Steve and Clint finally broke in and dragged him out of the lab so Jarvis could lock it down.

Tony needed some sleep, he was getting careless and having accidents. So after being forced from the lab he went to his room and tried to pray. Maybe Loki would hear him. It gave him something to do rather than sleep. He finally ran out of new apologies and promises to tell Loki and fell asleep as he repeated himself.

His nightmares were not all his when he finally fell asleep. He was being tortured by the Chitauri when he finally woke up screaming. He prayed again. This time offering words of strength, hope and care. If Loki’s nightmares were that bad… Shit he was worried. He felt like he had lost his connection to life. Only the thought that killing himself would probably kill Loki too kept him from doing anything too stupid.

The woman’s identity from the party was a complete unknown, she had used very good prosthetics on her fingers as the prints matched someone who had died years ago. She was there on purpose. Natasha was convinced that she was somehow attached to Grant Ward because they had talked quietly early in the party. Coulson’s crew had been called away so it was unlikely that she would get to interview him anytime soon.

Jor was realizing that he really didn’t want to be part of this. Tony had visited several times asking about his father’s return looking for reassurance. Jor was brutally honest, he didn’t expect Loki to show up for a few days at least. He was known to go off for months in the past after something like this.

Jor just wanted to live his life in peace. He was a serious introvert. He loved his father but this was too much. Now he found himself being asked to reassure Tony, Bruce and even Pepper, that his father would be fine and that he would not return on a killing rampage. No, he really didn’t think Loki would suddenly try to attack. A silly idea, remember? He had been controlled.

While Jor liked the Avengers, they were a needy bunch. Only Natasha didn’t seek him out ‘just to talk’. Despite the fact Clint and Steve didn’t know he was Loki’s son, they had been friendly and needed to tell him their worries about Tony, Loki and what had happened at the party. Jor hadn’t even attended the party. He had somehow become the new person to dump on.

Bruce admitted he was glad it was Jor now, explaining he had told the rest of them many times that he was ‘not that kind of doctor’.

A few days later, January seventh, the first Sunday, a heavy shopping day, Doom attacked. He had
chosen a mall. The Avengers were uneasy about having Tony join in. He’d only had one night’s sleep in more than five days. Jarvis tried to keep Tony locked away from his suits. Tony didn’t give a rat’s ass, over-riding Jarvis and flying himself there. He sent one more attempted prayer at Loki this time asking him to keep him alive and not let him do anything stupid. He sort of felt like an idiot with these stupid most-likely unheard prayers, but the last few days he’d made it a habit, of praying to his god. It had sort of helped, making him feel like Loki was still out there and that he was forcing the god to hear him beg forgiveness.

Tony arrived and started moving people to safety actually listening to Steve’s orders. The fight was not going well. The mall was crowded and there was madness.

Then he felt his magic and Loki. Loki was back!

An invisible source started shooting the doombots. Tony heard Loki’s voice in his head. Ordering him to shield a place in the mall with his magic, then another and another. Each time Tony did, a doombot exploded and caused no damage or harm to people or the mall. It took about ten seconds per bot. This was a practiced move Tony and Loki had played with. Minutes later the Avengers had won.

SHIELD sent a cleanup crew they still wanted the doombots. Tony went to grab a bot but most of them were piles of what looked like weird ash or dust. Loki had been angry was his best guess.

They went back to the tower. Loki was not there, but he was near, Tony could feel him.

Clint was the first to speak. “Was that Loki? Those weren’t green. The blue-purple bolts sure had a lot of punch.”

Bruce asked. “Tony, you were putting up those magic shields weren’t you?”

Natasha confirmed for Tony. “Yes, he was. Someone was also directing you on where to stand. Those bolts did not come from you.”

“I think the bolts were his. He was near and directing me. He’s still near.” Tony looked worried. “I’m gonna go look for him.”

“Tony that was more power than we have seen from him or you before. We need some answers. What were the two of you doing? Fury will be calling.” Steve exclaimed, grabbing Tony on the arm before he left.

“Fuck Fury. We saved the day with limited injury and property damage. He should be happy for once. Now I’ve gotta find a… my god.” And Tony yanked his arm from Steve’s grip and left.

He had Jarvis search the tower. He searched the city. Loki was nearby but he could not figure out where. His heart was pounding from nerves. The turmoil he felt was crushing, why would Loki hide from him? Was he angry or just so hurt that he didn’t want to see Tony anymore? Normal means failed to find him, triangulation always ended up at the tower. He went around the tower begging for Loki to come out. Saying he was sorry, just please show himself.

Fury did show up and got few answers. He had brought a pile of doombot ash with him. Apparently even Fury found something that unnerved him. Tony refused to appear, letting Jarvis inform them he was looking for Loki.

The rest of the group looked at the pile and Jarvis ran scans on it. It was reduced to a pile of raw
elements, no evidence that there had ever been anything else. Bruce thought it was amazing and
unique, his curiosity piqued. The rest of them were more than unnerved. They had seen ash, but
nothing like this. This time it was like someone had just put an elemental sand mixture in a heap
before them. It hadn’t taken but a fraction of a second to occur either.

That night Tony slept poorly. He had started out sleeping in Loki’s bed but decided that if Loki was
that angry, finding him in in his bed would not go over well. He petted Trouble to try to relax, it
helped some. Exhausted and focusing on Trouble while mentally chanting ‘forgive me’ he fell
asleep.

He woke up with an arm around him, relief spread through him. Loki was spooned up tight against
him. He carefully turned his body and head just enough so he could see Loki. All the while holding
that arm tight for fear it might go away again. His breathed easier, his god was back, the other half of
him.

Loki’s eyes opened and he started to whimper. Tony turned more and pulled Loki’s head to his
shoulder finally able to get an arm around him. The sound Loki made was a terrified crying or fearful
whimper. He was shaking uncontrollably. Tony tunneled a leg under Loki and wrapped both legs
around the man. Putting his other arm across to hug him tight.

What had happened to his sweet trickster? At least he wasn’t screaming at the top of his lungs at
Tony. Tony seemed to have been forgiven for the moment as Loki clung to him shaking and staring
down at where their chests met, like he couldn’t focus, locked in his head with his own demons.

They stayed quiet like this for a long while. Tony squeezing tighter when an especially jerky shake
occurred reassuring him.

Then Loki moved but only to look into Tony’s eyes. Tony held tight and tried his best to send love
back. He briefly thought love? But Loki needed this. He did love his sweet alien in many ways and
for all the things he had done for him. This had to be love there was no other way to describe it. He
was so grateful just to have him back, to be able to give him comfort, to feel wanted and needed.
Tony wanted Loki to know that he was the center of at least one person’s world. Tony was not
going to let him down. He started to ask Loki what happened, but felt a ‘fearful shudder’ on the link.
So he just continued to hold Loki.

Hours passed and they held one another only adjusting now and then a bit for comfort, or to
accommodate Loki whimpering some more. Tony may have dozed a bit still being tired but he never
let go. It felt a bit like when Loki had first moved in.

About noon Jarvis passed a message on about lunch. Tony looked at Loki and knew he was hungry.
“Have them send some thick soup up. Maybe toast too.” Tony realized he had eaten very little the
last several days. “Just have them knock and leave it by the door, Jarvis.” Then he added. “Tell them
to give us some time…. Actually, tell them to please, please leave us alone until we come out…. But
keep sending food.”

“Sir, they are asking for a basic status and why. They are worried about Master Loki, Sir. What do
you want me to tell them?”

Tony nudged Loki. “Hey you, can I tell them anything?” He felt a slight nod so Tony said. “Tell
them I think things will be better later, pretty sure he isn’t physically hurt, I don’t really know much
right now. He is very shaky, and wants to be held. He needs a lot of peaceful rest and so do I.”
Fifteen minutes later Tony heard a tray set on the floor outside his door and a knock, followed by footsteps walking away.

He looked at Loki. “Do you think you can sit up long enough to eat?”

Loki closed his eye and nodded.

Tony helped him to a semi sitting position his knees were against his chest with his arms wrapped around them. Trouble had been sleeping on the corner of the bed. She came up and rubbed up against Loki. Tony knew it was bad when Loki didn’t even give her a head scratch.

He got Loki to relax enough to start feeding him. After a couple of spoonfuls Loki took the bowl and started feeding himself. He ate all the soup and half a slice of bread. Tony also ate, then took the empty bowls and placed them back outside the door.

When he sat back on the bed with his back against the headboard, Loki curled around him. Loki still was not up to talking so Tony worked on the tablet. Trouble was curled up on the bed again watching, occasionally moving to brush up against them. For once she didn’t climb on top of them or sit on Tony’s tablet.

Loki spent the afternoon going back and forth between whimpering to himself and actively touching and looking at Tony, who never avoided active contact with the god. Tony always made sure to give reassuring looks when he found himself being stared at, occasionally giving voice to a reassuring thought. Loki was home but what had happened? Was it his fault because of New Year’s? A few days earlier, he’d ordered Jarvis to never allow mistletoe in the building again. God, he felt like a jerk, Had he sent the god back to when he was alone and screaming from memories? If not what had happened?

The Avengers followed Tony’s request for once and left them alone. They even brought dinner with a couple choices including a pizza that Tony kept for later, just in case they got hungry in the night. He didn’t want to leave Loki alone. He was glad Trouble was finally getting an occasional touch from Loki when Tony left to get food, use the bathroom or get food for Trouble.

After dinner, Loki spent about an hour looking at Tony. He was actually sitting next to him with his chin and ear propped on Tony’s shoulder, arms still tightly wrapped around the him. Trouble was asleep next to Loki now.

Loki finally sighed.

“You gonna survive handsome? I’m not usually the type to worry but you’ve sure helped me get up close and very personal with that emotion this week.” Tony smiled weakly.

“Yes, thank you… for staying.” Loki whispered.

Tony hugged him tighter again. “You can talk again. One of my worries is relieved! Do you think you might be able to tell me what happened? At least part of it? Was this all my fault?” No one had ever accused Tony of not being curious.

“I’ll try.” Loki lifted his head to look at Tony. “Maybe if I tell it in order.”

“Whatever works sweetheart.” Tony hugged Loki, he knew this was going to be grim, as Loki did not make a comment about the sweetheart bit.”
“At the party there was someone who was… telling me… about your past.” Loki laughed bitterly looking at the blanket for a bit. “This is harder than I thought.” Then licked his lips and continued. “Telling me that, I was not worthy, a monster and you really wanted a woman. Then you kissed that woman and declared you liked women and I couldn’t take it.” Loki was quiet and sounded dejected.

“Yeah, I’m sorry. I’m an ass. More so that night. I wouldn’t blame you if you left me without giving me another chance, I’m such a horrible worthless mess.” He hugged Loki. “But you should know, they did it on purpose. I watched the tapes. Pushed both our buttons. Coulson says his guy didn’t know her and that there wasn’t a plan, but I don’t believe it.” Then he kissed Loki softly on the forehead. “Forgive me. You don’t know how bad I felt. How much I want you, I…..I need you.”

Loki put a finger to Tony’s lips. “I just had to get out of there. It had felt like a setup, I saw myself being manipulated but while attempting to be civil I could do nothing about it. I was angry and went to a place that I had been many times, years before, when I wanted to be alone. I thought it was safe.” Loki took a deep breath. “I was there for only about an hour when a portal opened…. and I ended up captured by the Chitauri and the Other.”

Tony’s eye widened with shock. “No!?"

“They caught me while I was unprepared, buried in bitter thought. They had earlier discovered the place from my mind, when they tortured me. There was a trap set, waiting for me. I only found out because they talked about how they could not trace me but got lucky because I had returned and set off an alarm. My energy signature has changed.”

“It’s our enchantment. Can they trace you now?” Tony was worried.

Loki smiled slightly, darkly. “No. Be silent, if you want to hear my story.”

Tony zipped his mouth with one hand. He still had one arm on Loki and was not about to let go.

“They took me someplace I know not where. The Other wanted answers. Not only had I been able to elude his hunt for me but I was now enchanted with an unknown type of enchantment.” “The first two days he had his Chitauri drones ‘soften’ me up. But I have been tortured before and I was in better shape than after my fall. Removing my skin was nothing...” Loki said flatly staring when he felt a hand over his mouth.

Tony felt a bit nauseous, that was not much? He looked Loki in the eyes and removed his hand. “If you really need to tell me about the torture, I’ll listen. Let me have a couple drinks first though.”

Loki looked back. “A drink might make this easier.”

Tony exhaled. “Now, don’t you disappear on me while I get it.” Tony got up and quickly grabbed two glasses, a tray and a bottle and returned to the bed. He leaned on the headboard and tried to put Loki in his lap. “You know, you are almost perfect. If only you were a bit shorter.”

At least he got an eye roll out of Loki.

They ended up turned sideways, facing each other. Loki had his legs on each side of Tony and Tony had his legs bent and over Loki’s thighs and partially around his back. He sat the tray beside them and poured two glasses.

After downing one glass and pouring another Tony motioned and said, “Continue.”

Loki did. “They didn’t want to hurt me so I couldn’t talk, so they left my chest and head alone. Late on the third day the Other came in. He wanted to know how I had changed my signature and about
the enchantment. Of course I refused to tell him anything. He had raped my memories before and was using that information to verbally abuse me. Apparently our enchantment makes it harder to mind rape someone. He did not find out about you and me. Still, he had a great deal to work with from before. I could feel myself crumbling a bit when I heard your prayers. “Loki smiled for the first time since he had returned.

“Really. Did you hear my words, what I said?” Tony finally had something to be excited about.

“Yes, I did. I had no idea prayers could travel that distance. It wasn’t coming through our link either, at least I don’t think, although it must have aided it. It was very late when they reached me. You were perfect, my renewed resolved frustrated the Other. He left me to think about things while his flunkies took my hands apart knuckle by knuckle.” Loki looked at his hands.

Tony poured them both another drink, a large one and downed his in one gulp, then leaned into Loki.

“Jarvis, put prayers on the list of things to test at some point.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“By the fourth day the Other was frustrated and getting nowhere. Once again he didn’t show up until late. I’d had little or no sleep once I was taken, but had mysteriously gained unknown strength. He wasn’t willing to wait months like he had before and was unable to break into my mind quickly. He cared not if I lived or died. He decided he would cut the enchantment out of me after detecting the core imbedded in my chest. This proved harder than he imagined. He was able to dig down to my ribcage but not through. He tried to dig up through my stomach. Then tunneled from my shoulder. Each time he hit a wall he could not penetrate.” Loki used his hands to point to the areas that were cut.

Tony was feeling a more than a bit ill but continued to listen. He was amazed that Loki had lived through it and was still alive.

“Simple magical weapons didn’t work either. I had felt pressure building up inside me, wanting to explode. I know not from where it came, but there was power behind it. Finally he left only to return with an ancient, very powerful knife. When it hit the core and started to penetrate, no more than a scratch. Everything exploded. When I awoke I was mostly healed and lying in the middle of a huge crater. Whatever installation had been there was gone. Everything nearby was reduced to piles of raw elements. Farther away was destruction as though a massive bomb had gone off, nothing was living. The Other was a magical creature, enchanted himself, at least in part. I found bits of magical cells still on the knife the rest of him a pile of mostly elements with bits of free standing magic, which is very rare. I grabbed the knife and put it away. When I did I realized I still had some pressure left inside of me and it was going to have to be let out. I headed to Niffelheim and was going to stay and figure out a way to release it. When I heard you say you were in a fight I went to you.” Loki signed and looked at Tony.

“So the piles of doombot elements were the leftover… whatever pressure/power it was?” Tony guessed.

“Yes. I had to find someplace to drain it. Saving you seemed appropriate. There is a miniscule bit left but it will not be a problem.” Loki downed the rest of his drink and leaned his head into Tony.

“That is some story. You have no idea where that ‘power’ came from?” Tony just had to ask.

Loki chuckled just a bit. “None whatsoever. I’m glad to be rid of it.”
“We’ll need to tell the guys something. What do you suggest?”

“I really don’t care. The Other is dead and the whole installation gone. I removed any traces of myself so tracking me will not be an option. I just want to sleep some more. Can it wait?”

“Most definitely sweetheart. And I’ll stay here with you as long as you want me. You do forgive me though, right? I mean I wouldn’t blame you if you don’t but my prayers did help you. So we’re ok. Right?” Tony hoped Loki would keep him close. He didn’t want to risk Loki feeling unwanted and leaving again. Hell, he needed to feel Loki close too, especially now that he knew how close he had been to losing him too.

“I am not going to get you to stop calling me that am I?” Loki smiled and nodded into Tony’s chest.

“Nope. And I may very well call you Princess, Bambi, Reindeer Games, Angel, Cupcake, Snookems, Lollipop, or any other name that strikes my fancy. Get used to it.” Tony teased holding tight.

“We will revisit this topic I assure you. For now I will take you up on your offer to stay here and hold me… It is much better than my closet.” Loki hugged Tony back and kissed him gently. “Thank you.”

Tony smiled. He could tell Loki had forgiven him and if he was lucky maybe even trusted him a bit more.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Chapter Summary

The world is a little brighter now that Tony has comforted Loki and they emerge from their room to face the others. Later Loki thinks about why he is keeping Anthony waiting on sex.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband and Shuonnyarr for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

Extra long chapter today. Hope you all enjoy it!

Warning: This contains explicit content. I left the story as Mature because as a whole I don't really feel it is explicit.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was not a restful night. Loki fought nightmares over and over. Tony woke him and reassured him every time that he was safe and not alone. It wasn’t until lunchtime the next day that they finally decided to leave the room.

They entered the kitchen to finding everyone there including Pepper. Lunch was waiting for them.

“Jarvis told on us I assume.” Tony looked around at the concerned faces.

There were a few nods and Steve said, “Yes, we’ve been worried for both of you.”

Bruce looked at Loki. “We’re so sorry about what happened New Year’s Eve.”

Natasha sighed. “I noticed it happening but not quick enough to stop it soon.”

Pepper was there in her suit. “Are you guys going to be alright?”

“We’ll live for now.” Tony breathed in smelling the blessed coffee he was getting.

“You know we have to ask questions. Fury has been demanding them and we’ve held him off till now.” Natasha said, but you could almost see a bit of regret in her face.

“Man, the guy is like a swarm of mosquitoes. You slap him away and he seems to come back twice as obnoxious.” Clint grumbled. “He’s only called about fifty times since the fight.”

“Twenty three. Twenty three calls since the debriefing.” Coulson corrected Clint. Phil had been ordered back to the tower by Fury to 'get details'.
“So what happened?” Steve asked.

“After I left, I got captured by some Chitauri and the Other.” Loki said wearily.

“The Chitauri are back?” Clint exclaimed with horror.

“No, I was caught in a trap. They did not use a true portal to get to me but a long distance teleport of sorts, set up in a hideaway I had, sending a small group to retrieve me.”

“So they are still out there. How much of a threat do you think they are?” Steve questioned.


“This group is no longer a threat. They are all dead.” Loki’s voice shook. He may have actually looked paler than before.

“Did you kill them the same way you took out the doombots?” Natasha had noted that Loki was not going to last long, asking questions to get to the point.

Loki hung his head against Tony and pushed. Tony took it as permission to talk about it. “Look guys Loki was tortured there, badly. Something happened, probably from the enchantment that we don’t understand, that caused everything, but Lokes here, to go boom. There was something harmful inside of him and he pretty much released the last of it against the doombots. We really don’t know much beyond that.” Tony looked around, and then asked. “Is there any way we can eat lunch and maybe avoid getting interrogated at the same time?”

It was quiet for a few minutes then. “Harmful and inside of you. How did it get there and will it return? You sound like there’s some left.” Natasha was pushing on.

Loki scowled over his fork. “It showed up when they tried to remove the enchantment.” He didn’t want to tell them any more about it.

Steve looked at them and said. “So we should be fine as long as no one tries to remove your enchantment.”

“That’s one hell of a defense mechanism if it is.” Clint whistled.

Bruce thought out loud. “That’s a good theory but still a theory. One that will be hard to test.”

“Yes, but it’s all you’re getting. Our enchantment is none of your business. This counts as pushing and interrogating.” Tony sounded annoyed again.

Loki took a few more bites. And Tony started eating.

“This isn’t going to satisfy Fury, Stark. Those blasts really shook him and you failed to tell me if there was any left.” Natasha informed Tony.

“It’s not my job to satisfy him Nat. He needs to get laid. Maybe Hill can help him with that. Unless you’re volunteering?” Tony smirked with cheeks filled with food.

“Tony!” Pepper warned.


“Tony, be serious for once. Give us something to tell Fury. What you’ve said so far will just make it worse.” Steve protested.
“Well I could make up some bullshit to tell him. It would be complete fabrication. You want bullshit? I can give you bullshit.” Tony mused at them taking another bite.

“That won’t help. I’ll talk to him. Can I tell him you will let him know if you figure anything out?” Coulson asked.

“Sure tell him that. But remind him that it may be above his ‘clearance level’. I don’t think he knows about the enchantment and I plan to keep it that way.” Tony grinned referring to Loki’s ‘can’t give out advanced tech rules’.

Coulson, Clint, Steve and an unsatisfied Natasha then excused themselves to have ‘the talk’ with Fury. Conversation turned more pleasant after that. Loki was actually glad to hear Pepper talk about Stark business for once. It helped him forget the last few days.

Phil came back later and uncomfortably told them the WSC was demanding Loki come in for testing. It seemed reducing things into elements not only scared the shit out of people, but got people thinking about all sorts of things, weapons, defense, and even greed thinking about an easy way to extract elements.

Tony had Jarvis start digging dirt about the WSC members. Actually cutting his funding to an organization that he had been warned about was probably a smart idea. Besides if they thought they could tell Tony what to do and think and he would roll over and obey like a nice obedient puppy, they were going to learn an important lesson about the difference between a puppy and an oversized wild tiger. Tigers have sharp claws and don’t play well with others.

They finally backed off when threatened with a war with Asgard.

Loki could still feel the power inside him. They both wanted to figure out as much as they could. Nothing seemed to work except the weird bouncing arc reactor readings. It appeared to be associated with the Astral Sea.

Tony was beginning to think that the bonds between atoms were being consumed. The energy used must have been immense, unstable and complicated.

After nearly two days both badly needed sleep. It was very late, they ate, showered and laid down in bed.

“I’m worried. Maybe this is what your mom was warning you about.” Tony whispered into the shoulder not looking at Loki now.

“I do not think this is what my mother is referring to.” Loki squeezed Tony.

“I hope so.” Tony was looking at Loki again.

Loki kissed his inventor for several minutes. He could tell his own body was responding and pulled away; they needed sleep. “I was a bit hard on you before and not fully honest. I have been attracted to you since you first opened your mouth. I have more feelings for you than I am comfortable with. It scares me very much. This link scares me too. We still know so very little about it. I am not used to being in the dark when it comes to magic.”

“We’ll figure it out together Lokes, I know we will.” Tony wanted to say more. Loki had actually
just admitted to being attracted to him from the beginning. But Tony had ruined too many moments, and he was not going to make a stupid comment right now.

“That ‘we’ is part of what scares me. I have always been a ‘me’. Even with Thor, I knew I could hide from him or walk away as I decided. Now, more so than ever in my life, I am part of a ‘we’. I am afraid to let go of anything more, to share more. I am afraid I might lose me. Every time I give you more of me, I fear I am losing it.” Loki was being far too honest, probably due to lack of sleep.

“You never told me that before. Do you really think that is happening?” Tony asked gently. Inside he was bursting with delight.

“Ever since I met you I’ve been different. Now, I know some of that is the fact I almost lost ‘me’ to the void, and then to the Chitauri. After finding out I was adopted and am a Jotunn monster, shook me to my core.” Loki put his finger to Tony’s lips to stop the obvious denial about monster. “I also know that you have been very instrumental in helping me find me again. But I am not the same me as before, so I am unsure, yet in a way, calmer, my anger appears less frequent, more controlled. I do not know if that part is you or something else?”

“So you really do care.” Tony smiled.

“Yes, you idiot.” Loki looked at Tony with a please understand me in his eyes.

“You know we make such a pair with all our insecurities and head problems. No wonder we ended up together.” Tony then kissed Loki again and again.

Finally Loki pulled away for breath. “Sleep Stark.”

Loki was the first to awaken. He turned to look at Stark’s sleeping form. He had been thinking about the man a great deal lately. Loki knew the man was more than infatuated with him. He had been unwilling to believe that someone would actually desire him that way. Stark did, or perhaps he should start thinking about him as Tony? No Anthony, better.

So why was he holding back from having sex? It wasn’t like he was a virgin, in fact he was quite skilled, albeit a bit out of practice. He hadn’t really felt like it for many years. For several hundred years he had enjoyed sex a great deal. He even garnered a reputation as a great lover.

He reflected back, remembering, Asgard’s prejudice against male sorcerers. Most people had a bit of magic, but the more powerful he got, the more people noticed and the more they looked down on him for it. He remembered the day he realized he didn’t like being used through sex. Before then he hadn’t cared too much. He used people as they used him and he just enjoyed it.

He had found himself feeling the need to be desired for himself. That plus several assassination attempts from bedpartners convinced him to decide he could pleasure himself just as well as with people who didn’t really care. For a while he continued to try occasional relationships when someone seemed sincere. It never worked out. He had mostly given up, believing his standards were too high. He really wanted a true partner, a forever partner. He hated Odin but was forced to admit Frigga and the Allfather really had a wonderful relationship most of the time, one to envy.

Anthony was the first to stir his interest in a very long time. He not only met but exceeded those high standards that had turned him away from other partners. He checked every box Loki had ever wanted in a lover and a few he had not yet realized. He wanted the man. After being with the Chitauri he decided he had waited long enough, made Anthony suffer with his ‘blue balls’ long
enough. He wanted his lover to know what it was to be loved. It was time ‘long enough’ was over.

He leaned over and started kissing the sleeping Stark, rubbing his body against Tony, very much like the way his Anthony had done it to him when having a good dream.

Tony being Tony started kissing back in half-sleep. His mind started to catch up and he began to feel this might not be one of his dreams. He enjoyed it for a few minutes before smiling and opening his eyes. “Is this for real? Please tell me this real and not a dream.” He adjusted to give Loki better access.

Loki smiled and held on tight, with his hips doing the obvious ‘I’m interested’ move. “I have been thinking. You have been very good and very patient. I think it is time for your reward.”

Tony’s eyes sparkled. The world could be ending for all he cared. Loki was talking about sex! At long last, after nearly a year of waiting. He lazily said. “I agree sweetheart, do you have anything specific in mind?”

Loki smiled, “I do. But I need to warn you that this is a turning point. It will mean I am committed for real, forever real. I’m serious, if you have any doubts about me, we should stop right now.” Loki closed his eyes waiting for what he expected would be a positive answer, but protecting himself just in case. He had used the dreaded ‘C’ word.

Tony smiled for a moment and answered with a partial joke. “I’m ready. I was born ready for you. It’s you and me against the world, forever. Well perhaps against the bed right now.” This was right, Loki had used the ‘C’ word and he hadn’t felt the panic. He’d given it a moment to raise its ugly head but it hadn’t come. Instead he’d felt warm and wanted. Perhaps the waiting had helped. Who knew, he didn’t care at the moment.

Loki opened his eyes and looked at Tony, his arms around the man. “Are you sure about this. I will not tolerate cheating and bound as we are, this is a step we will unlikely be able to undo. You should expect me to be angry and violent enough to kill any person you cheat on me with. I’m very serious.”

Tony felt like he had been waiting an eternity for this. “Don’t think I’ve ever been more, sure, Princess.” His own arms holding onto the man he had wanted for so long.

Loki felt the need to give and to be in control. He didn’t trust his mind to stay quiet. Afraid it might suddenly snare him with memories that did not belong here, now, in their bed. “Then I want you to trust me. Let me take control. I promise you will enjoy it. Can you trust me that much? To let me do most of the work?”

Tony didn’t care what Loki did as long as it involved the two of them having sex. “I trust you completely.” He said.

“Excellent, my Anthony.” The purr Loki put into his words made him like butter in a hot pan, melting and sizzling at the same time.

Stark wondered if he was about to have some sort of BDSM with Loki in control. He didn’t care as long as it was Loki.

Tony watched as Loki leaned in to kiss him again and he responded. It was gentle at first, hesitant even. As the kiss moved on to exploratory Tony felt fingers gently brush down his neck and slowly slide in front to undo the top button of his pajamas. A single finger slid across his neck and down his
clavicle to the second button and then moved on to undo the rest. It felt good. He rested his arms loosely around Loki’s shoulders reassuring but not confining.

Loki broke the kiss and started to work small kisses across his face to his ear. He felt the tips of Loki’s fingers sweep across his chest barely missing his nipple but close enough to feel a tingle. Tony tried to go for Loki’s shirt but got “No, let me, feel me.” Whispered softly into his ear followed by the sweep of a tongue across the earlobe, followed by a mixture of hot kisses, licks and pulling of that lobe. Tony moved his hands resting on Loki’s waist and just let himself feel. It was amazing, he was all the more sensitive for waiting so long.

Loki’s hands pushed the shirt off around his shoulders. Then with one arm against the skin of Anthony’s back he very slowly and gracefully held Tony closer, and lifted him enough to push the shirt off him. He lightly ran his nails down Tony’s spine, before setting him back on the soft bed, making the nerve endings quiver wanting more. Tony was vibrating with excitement, this was really happening, it was so hard not to push to make things happen faster. He moved his hands to Loki’s face wanting to feel his skin.

Loki returned to Tony’s mouth and started a slow easy yet passionate kiss, He felt Loki’s hand weaving back and forth across the chest and encircle his nipple, teasing it, threatening to touch but not quite. Then that talented hand moved toward the other nipple and repeated, sensitizing the small nubs. Tony raised his chest to try to get more but the hand moved to the center and started a playful dance. A dance that was excruciatingly slow, moving down the hairs of his happy trail. Tony was now massaging Loki’s back trying not to disturb and just ‘let’ his god play. Loki had moved and was applying kisses onto Tony’s neck, using his lips to tug and tease and the rough stubbly skin there. Loki’s movements were subtle so intoxicating.

Tony noticed Loki’s shirt seem to dissolve and he was skin to skin. His mind felt blown, his hands, his fingertips had tingled with erotic feelings as that shirt melted away, an exotic new feeling for him. They had been skin to skin like this before but it was so much, much more now.

With devilish care Loki teased with his dancing finger finally getting to his pants. Tony fought to remain silent but gasped as he felt hands against his waistband. He felt the tie to his pants release as Loki’s kisses move to encircle one of his nipples, buds that begged to be touched yet he refused to oblige. Loki’s hot breath was suddenly on one tender wanting peak and Tony let out a moan as a tongue finally gave him what his nipple had been so desperately craving. Loki moved up to kiss him on the lips again and he felt their bare chests meet again as both of Loki’s hands slid down his sides with touch so light that if he weren’t so aroused would tickle. Instead it only added to his pleasure, making his groin ache with anticipation. Those long fingers continued and slid down and started to remove both his pants and underwear, taking time to squeeze Anthony’s soft round globes. Soft tissue that Tony hadn’t realized were waiting for that magical touch. Loki squeezed just enough to stimulate his opening, making it twitch before lowering his pajamas gliding it over his sensitive length instilling more desire for things to come.

Loki’s leaned up and looked down at him. “What a magnificent sight you are, mine for the taking, and take you I will Anthony Stark” His tone was proud, loving and filled with promise. He gave Tony a mischievous smirk and wiggled his fingers and pointed to the partially removed pants. They glided off of Tony as though he were suspended in air.

Tony was aware Loki had gently taken the time to show him he was using magic as not to startle him and it had been perfect. Tony replied. “Yours, forever.” Even without sex, deep inside he knew he’d been Loki’s from the first time he’d seen his broken body on his floor. Loki hugged him and he melted into his god’s arms.
He felt Loki’s arousal. It touched his, they brushed against each other, like lovers meeting after a long absence. Wrapping together with soft smooth strokes of love and promise. Deliberate movements aimed perfectly to stimulate and reassure that there was more to come. He continued to hold Loki softly giving his god the freedom to show and give desire.

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“Feel me.” Loki whispered and Tony knew magic was coming again. This time he felt Loki blow into his ear while what felt like a tongue stroked his length now. Licking lightly around the head but holding back, taunting, flirting but never reaching it. Then repeating the tormenting movements. He wanted more, craved it, thirsted for it, but was forced to endure the exquisite torture. He wanted Loki’s mouth on him but was denied as that mouth continued to explore every nerve in his already sensitized neck and ears.

Loki turned a bit and Tony mourned the loss of their touching groins. He brushed his hands down Tony’s chest, still slow but this time taking time to avoid again, then finally touched, and massaged Tony’s nipples. Finally squeezing them to attention for being such good boys. He leaned down and Tony felt those amazing hands slide down his hips as Loki once again kissed his neck and moved to his nipples making them wet, sending shivers up and down and then across his body.

The sensation as his god’s hands felt their way around Tony’s soft lower cheeks and fingers explored down his crack make him release a soft needy moan and wanting words “Oh, Loki, yes.” Those hands and fingers were doing illegal things as they massaged and relaxed muscles that were begging to be touched and entered. He felt his sphincter muscles twitch and quiver with expectancy.

He felt hot breath on his ear. “That’s it, trust me, my sweet.”

“Always.” Anthony whispered back into Loki’s ear. He had his arms around the god’s shoulders now, nuzzling Loki’s neck with kisses and small nibbles. Then he felt one single moist finger discover his tight hole and encircle his opening. Oh how he wanted Loki to hurry yet he was talking so much pleasure from slow ministrations, struggling with his control, allowing Loki to lead rather than pushing against that finger. Each touch Loki gave him felt like his body was being worshiped. He lost his fight for control and tried to push himself onto the finger. Only to have Loki gently nip at his neck to remind him who was leading.

Finally that, oh so devoted, finger did start to enter. His request had been honored and the delightful satisfaction gave him strength to allow Loki to move his finger at his own speed again. It was tentative at first, then slowly, smoothly, gliding in creating a slick layer of ointment as it moved in and brushed against his prostate awakening it, making his breath hitch just a bit. Loki continued to pepper his chest with kisses, to nibble at his nipples as he slid in a second finger.

Tony was tight. It had been awhile since he’d been with a guy and never one like Loki. No this was not the rough play he had believed at the beginning. Loki was worshiping, praying over his greedy body, Loki, who was showing him what it was like to have someone put every ounce of attention into his amorous lovemaking. Loki’s two fingers slide back and forth, in and out, touching that sensitive spot in a calculated way such there was no rhythm, no pattern; every hit was unexpected and exciting. Earthquakes could be leveling the Tower but to Tony only Loki existed. Only the tantalizing tiny movements Loki was making in his wanting hole, the kisses that Loki was teasing his skin with and the electricity that made his whole body a single completely stimulated organ.

Tony was starting to grind air, he had been hard when this started and now his staff was achingly hard and jealous of the lack of attention. Loki’s tongue started down his chest like a hunter looking for the best vantage point to attack. Tony feared he would only be teased again. Then Loki’s mouth pounced, a quick suck and that fear was extinguished as Tony gasped, at the moment of rapture, and felt the third finger enter at the same time. Now three fingers were massaging that small knot lightly.
Tony was sure he was going crazy. He felt Loki’s teeth take a nipple and twist it around firm but with only pleasure. “I need you inside. Please.” Tony whispered, whimpered, begged; unable to hold his tongue in silence.

Instead of answering Loki’s tongue found Anthony’s long hard cock and spent a few more minutes licking it. With three fingers embedding, stretching and pleasuring and a tongue that was proving that silver was better than gold, Tony thought he was going crazy, pleasure was making his brain melt and need was shredding it to pieces. Loki’s tongue was doing things he was certain had to be illegal in most countries, brushing, swirling and stoking. Hot breath, followed by cold puffs of air and enough moisture to make him redefine ‘almost there’ into a whole paper full of noises and feeling. And those fingers kept hitting the sweet spot just when he had stopped expecting it. He couldn’t hold back anymore, he begged and gasped. “Loki please,… please, please. I want you… inside… when I come.”

“Are you sure?” Loki teased releasing his mouth and leaning to rub against Tony’s swollen member.

“Yes, take me now. Please.” Tony moaned. He had enjoyed the teasing the adoration of his body but his need was about to explode and he wanted to have Loki inside him, soon, very soon, now, really now. He felt the fingers leave his body as Loki settled between his legs, their erections caressing each other once again in the process. Loki easily lifted one of Tony’s legs over his shoulder, then used his hands to spread Tony wide, the tips of his fingers still teasing one last time while pulling at the edge of his opening. Tony bent and lifted his other leg to his partner’s waist in an attempt to give better access.

Loki’s slow penetration felt like heaven to his desperate nerve endings. The god knew how to move, to use his body to rub against his swollen organ as he did it too. Tony feared he would explode too early. Loki of course knew and stopped moving giving time for Tony to catch his breath and adjust to his size. Loki was not only long but thick. Tony looked to Loki’s eyes with encompassing warmth and fervent adoration. He saw it reflected back and felt the permanence of a cherished devotion snap into place between them across the link. Their enchantment felt happy, eagerness and renewed need flowed between them heightening the passion they both felt, a driving force for each to share and give pleasure.

Loki started to move a slow rhythm at first. Tony held on but looked into eyes of longing. Loki wanted this too, but there was more. Loki cared so much about Tony, more, an earth shattering craving to have him to be had by him in both mind and body. All this beautiful, delicate, honoring, touching was a declaration of love, Tony realized. His heart threatened to burst, he could hardly breath consumed by sheer emotion that was being professed here. He saw it, felt it physically, emotionally and mentally through the link. And he returned it trying to outdo all that he was receiving. He wanted Loki to know he felt it just as much. Then he was feeling it inside in a way that said: Loki knew. A new stronger bond spread across the link. This was real and forever.

The pace was quickening and he was enjoying the love for that’s what it was. Those overwhelming feelings were quickly being overshadowed by the physical sensations coursing throughout his body. Everything centered on Loki and what he was doing to him, words could not describe the increasing intensity Anthony felt all over. Too soon he could no longer concentrate on anything but the fact it was Loki inside him, his Loki, his other half, and the stimulating gyrations and exciting sensations, promising a soon to arrive overpowering orgasm.

Loki was pounding into him, never missing the sweet spot. He really was a god! One hand started massaging the base of Tony’s shaft in its own rhythm. The tip directed to brush against Loki’s stomach. Tony felt like a bomb ticking with a pending explosion about to start. Not yet, getting harder, unbelievably harder and fuller, so full, the pressure, the gripping stimulation brought more
sensation, he was at the edge trying to push off, trying to hold on. Suddenly Tony was falling, he was coming and coming hard. Over the cliff, blood pounding, heart racing, his insides screaming, brain frozen to everything but to his orgasm. He gasped. “Loki!” and felt Loki’s own orgasm start to rip through him and them rocking back down the link a wind tunnel focused, emanating with the soul purpose of pleasure.

“Oh! Anthony.” He heard a wind blow. This was something special because of the link not quite feedback but vibrant echoes. He knew they both felt part of the pleasure that the other was feeling it was like a new barrier was broken a pleasure one. A pumping powerful blasting geyser of freefalling feel, centered at their groins. Their hearts exploded, they gasped together for what felt like a lunar orbit.

Loki collapsed on Tony. Tony hugged Loki tight. He had never had sex like this. Before, it had almost always been a race to the orgasm. Tony didn’t consider himself an inconsiderate lover, still he was usually in a hurry, more sex less talk. This had not been a race. It had been a romance, promise, and binding through a declaration of love. Emotion and physical sensations attempting to make every movement excite the other a little more until it was no longer possible to continue. A marriage of mind, soul and body.

Tony had thought he had made love to Pepper. He hadn’t even been close. This was what it meant to make love. Loki had made love to him. Loki loved him, there was no doubt. For the first time in his life he was sure of it. He knew what love was and he loved Loki back.

Loki went to move off and out of Tony. Tony held tighter and said, “No, not yet.” Then because he couldn’t hold it in any longer he said. “God, I love you.”

He could feel Loki smile back. “And I you, my love.”

They stayed still a while longer just feeling each other, enjoying their togetherness in a way that neither had ever experienced before. Content with the world for the moment.

After a short nap Loki leaned up and looked at Anthony with a smirk. “Perhaps another round?” He pressed his suddenly again stiff cock against Tony’s prostate again.

Warmth blossomed again inside Tony as he felt blood flow again into his own stiffening erection. “You bet!” he said as he pulled Loki down to him and squeezed. “Mine, my god. I’m never gonna share you.” And then he was kissing Loki again.

They made love a few more times before the next morning came. Tony finally felt satisfied. Loki felt wanted. They both felt complete.

Chapter End Notes

I really don’t do sex scenes very well. It is one of my biggest weaknesses. I hope you all find it acceptable. Feel free to let me know if I screwed (lol) anything up.

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo’s button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
What Is That Tattoo?

Chapter Summary

Some experimentation and a party where everything that could go wrong does!

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

Tony and Loki made love one more time before getting up the next day.

They had many more questions about the power Loki still had a bit of. They nerved themselves up to experiment and discovered that the residual power could flow from Loki to Tony and back. They also learned that their chest cavities were changing, while their magic flowed between Loki’s gem and Tony’s arc reactor, it had become impenetrable by anything but Yggdrasil, unless you wanted an explosion.

“I thought you said this was stable, we were stable.” Tony asked watching as Loki tested shapeshifting. This was fascinating. He realized he’d only seen him shift into Pepper once, now he was running through dozens of creatures.

“As far as I can tell we are, or we should be. I need to go to Asgard and check out some old scrolls for a few days. Ours is clearly of a type that does change at least some.” Loki liked puzzles and challenges but this one was a bit more personal than he was comfortable with.

“Only if Alldaddy is still asleep. And remember I’m going with you. And I don’t trust Thor’s friends.” Tony pointed out.

“I remember. Thor’s friends have been a problem for a long time. I do not expect that to change. I hear, Odin’s vital signs look good, so unfortunately, there is a good chance he will come out of his sleep.”

“Hey, you’ve never told me what happens in his sleep chamber.”

Loki sighed, Tony and his bunny trails and endless questions. “It renews him and heals him. It is supposed to help release the stress of having the ruling power and living so long. Clearing his mind to help him think better and stay sane. That is part of the reason why it being corrupted was so bad.”

“There is a ruling power not just his magic. This isn’t something I have to worry about with you is it?” Tony sounded concerned.

“There is a great powerful magic associated with owning the throne and being the ruler. My body is designed to easily use the magic I have, honestly I could likely handle that throne too. Unless I
become the next Allfather though you don’t have to worry. That will be Thor’s job, I don’t want it.”
Loki explained.

“So does that mean he will like you again when he comes out?” Tony was hopeful.

“That is something I dare not even guess. Yet, I doubt it still. Anyway when do you want to go?”
Loki tried to change the subject.

“I feel the need to point out that SI has another event planned a week from Saturday in the evening
that you both agreed to attend, and a there are meetings of the Stark foundation and SI finance group
for Monday and Wednesday that Sir must attend because of his change in the funding to SHIELD.”
Jarvis informed them.

“Sunday or Monday after then?” Loki suggested

“As long as we’re free by that Friday.” Tony said.

“What is going on then?” Loki asked.

“Damn, you are not a romantic at all. It’s Valentines’ day. You know when lovers get each other
gifts and go out and kiss and love each other and stuff.” Tony smirked.

“Well, do you really think we count as lovers yet?” Loki deadpanned.

“Argh! It’s for anyone who is in a relationship. Like we are!” Tony sounded frustrated.

“Oh, does that mean the whole team is going, because we are shield brothers and that counts as a
relationship. And Jor, my son, is a relationship.” Loki was clearly trolling now.

“You asshole. You know what I mean. I want to celebrate it with my lover and not have to worry
about Asgardian eyes on us.” Tony groaned.

“Do you have someone who considers themselves your lover? I could certainly find something else
to do that night.” Loki told him not helpfully.

Tony squinted at Loki. He was about to say something, like he was going to go find someone who
wanted to be with him when Loki swooped in and kissed him into oblivion. “Don’t worry Anthony,
I’d never let you do that. I am your only lover and you are mine even if I do enjoy teasing you too
much.”

The Monday and Wednesday meetings were boring, Stark survived it, barely.

The event on Saturday had a great many political types there. It seemed that when Stark pulled most
of its funding from SHIELD, several governments had been convinced to take up the slack. Many of
them appeared to think the Avengers belonged to SHIELD and they could now make requests and
expect to be listened too. All of the Avengers had agreed to attend this function and none of them
were prepared for what they walked into.

“You know, now that we own part of SHIELD we need you to help us out with our little problem.”

“Our government would greatly appreciate it, if you could spend more time just walking our streets,
to show that you are behind us.”

“The President feels we need some extra security for the upcoming event and we would like you to
attend.”

“What days are you going to be patrolling our air space each week? We would like to be able to make plans based on when you are there.”

“There are some terrorists that have been threatening us. We need this group taken out like yesterday.”

“Would you consider coming to the political rally for our military, we would like to show the people that we now have your support.”

“I hear you make special tech for SHIELD on occasion, we have an idea we would like to discuss with you.”

“We have a problem with an information leak, could you do a covert mission for us and find him for us.”

“The local drug lord is not paying his taxes, we would like you to collect it for us.”

“Would any of you be interested in an arranged marriage with one of our King’s daughters?”

“Our neighbor is not paying SHIELD support. Do you help with border conflicts at all?”

“We need an assassin. I understand that you used to do that sort of thing. Don’t worry we’ll keep it secret.”

“Our president’s son’s birthday is next week. We need you to attend.”

“We have several candidates that we need to learn magic, I understand that Prince Loki is part of your group now and he can teach us.”

“We are counting on you to endorse the government sponsored international companies. We would like to arrange a time to film the commercials.”

“The US NSA is concerned about what you are going to be doing with all the other countries now. We will need a complete list of who you talk to and a list of what you choose to and not to do and of course who has asked.”

“Is Stark Industries part of the SHIELD deal? Because we could use to get some of their technology at cost.”

Pepper was horrified. Most of the Avengers tried their best to explain that what they were being asked was not happening. The Avengers were not part of any deal with SHIELD. Dignitaries didn’t seem to want to listen going to another Avenger if they didn’t get a satisfactory answer from one.

Tony finally got fed up, went up to the stage and took a mic. “Ladies and Gentlemen, I need your attention NOW! This is important and everyone needs to hear this. NOW!” He yelled as he looked at Loki who sent a loud crack across the room to silence everyone.

“Now that I have your attention. Many of you are under the false impression that SHIELD owns the Avengers. I don’t know what the fuck kind of tales they told you to get you to invest in them, but we are not a part of SHIELD. We do things for them on occasion, but the Avengers are an independent group. We chose what missions to take, not them. We don’t play favorites. My company, is not part of the deal in any way, shape or form. You are idiots if you would even think that. We are not interested in your political games, patrolling or providing security, marrying your daughters or any
other fucked up hair brained scheme you come up with, that you think, you could use us to your advantage. And we sure as hell, don’t collect taxes from drug lords! I don’t even want to know who asked that. As for SHIELD, I don’t trust them at all. Not everyone agrees with me so we continue to work with them when handling REAL threats. Look, for the most part we really don’t give a motherfucking God damn what you do in your own countries, just don’t expect us to do it for you and don’t bother asking either. Got it? Thanks.” Tony left the stage and there was complete silence for a several moments only Tony’s shoes moving could be heard. Then everyone was talking at once.

Tony grabbed Loki and headed toward Pepper. When he got there he told her. “We’re leaving. I didn’t sign up for this bullshit. Can you tell the others?”

“Sure, but next time, inform me before you insult every dignitary present over the microphone? Not that it wasn’t deserved.” Pepper was clearly angry at the situation too.

They found a dark hallway and teleported back to the tower.

Less than five minutes later Jarvis announced that the event was under attack.

“What the fuck? From where? How? Tell me.” Tony hadn’t even had time to pour himself a drink. He was angry from the party and all he wanted was to drink himself into a stooper, or at least as close as he could manage, and cuddle with his Loki followed by more mind-blowing sex.

“Sir. Gas was sent in through, what I would guess, was the ventilation system. When people started falling over near the vents, panic started. There are currently ten men in some sort of respirator masks with guns in the room, a few people seem unaffected. Steve Roger, Clint Barton and the Hulk are all up and functioning to some degree.” Jarvis informed Tony as he went for his suit.

“Once you have your suit, I’ll take us back. We need to stop them and find out what they want.”

Loki grabbed something out of a pocket, and threw a communication spell between them.

“Do you think you can stay invisible, Pepper is mad enough as it is without you shoving ‘the Prince’s’ magic in the world’s faces.” Tony asked as Jarvis dressed him.

“Sir, and Master Loki, a fire fight seems to be about to start. There are a few of the perpetrators looking at the people for someone. By bits of their conversation I have picked up they have not yet found their target but Sir is a shoot to kill.” Jarvis added.

“Ready, let’s get back there.” Tony walked up to Loki. “Thanks for the mental link.”

“No problem.” An invisible Loki said and they were back in the deserted hallway they had left from.

Tony flew out into the main area. “Captain and Hawk are fighting, there are only about six of the bad guys in here now. Whoa, now that’s new. Can you believe the Hulk is grabbing sleeping people and pulling them together and out of the line of fire. Hope he doesn’t crush anyone.”

“Interesting. At least one of the guys is in our hallway and searching rooms, I’m going to stop him and take his mask.” Loki responded.

Tony started blasting the gunmen.

Of the six left in the room one was now down due to Tony. Two men were trying to look at the people the Hulk was gathering but he kept tossing them out of his way and they were already looking fairly injured. Another had an arrow in his armor but was still shooting at Clint. One Steve had managed to get into hand to hand combat with and would be down soon. The last one had a
much larger weapon and was shooting it at Ironman having switched targets from the Hulk.

Loki mentally told Tony, “I got a mask and it comes with a headset. There are quite a few more of them than Jarvis first counted. Whoever they are after is someone they have spent a lot of resources on.”

“Keep me informed. We have the main room handled…” Tony replied only to find himself blasted through a wall. He got up and flew back in blasting the guy with the big gun just as it went off again this time at the Hulk who was knocked back onto some of the people he had been protecting.

Steve yelled, “I’m going after a couple more Tony, there are others in the building.”

Clint had killed his and grabbed a facemask and put it on yelling. “They’re looking for Loki.” And he too went down another hall.

At the same time Loki sent. ‘They want me. And they want me alive.’

“I’m going to look outside and try to figure out their exit plan. Those coms go somewhere.” Tony grabbed another mask with headset and attached the set to a sound transmitter on the suit. If there was still gas he didn’t want it inside his suit. They wanted his god. Angry determination was setting in. These guys were going to pay.

They all heard over the com. “Abort mission.” Just as Tony got outside.

Ironman found a van waiting. It was full of strange equipment; he blew out the tires first. It was not going anywhere. There were two more guys. One of them, the driver, was shooting at him. Like a normal gun was going to pierce the Ironman suit. Tony knocked him out first. The other guys was not a fighter and tried to run. Tony grabbed him and pushed him into a wall. “Why do you want Loki? Who are you working for?”

“I… don’t…. know. I was just supposed to keep him under.” The medical tech said.

“Who are you working for?” Tony pushed harder.

The guy had probably already wet his pants. He was shaking and sweating. This was clearly not a top dog. “Mark, he took off just before you got here. Please don’t hurt me. I just needed the money. He said it was a onetime thing.” He whined.

“Which way did he go and in what?” Tony lifted they guy a little higher.

“That way.” He pointed. “Running, but I think he had another vehicle. We didn’t all come in this van.”

Tony dropped him in the van, jammed the door shut and took off in the direction of the next man up the chain. He found no sign of the guy, had Jarvis check any possible surveillance cameras active in the area that he could find. The boss who was clearly the ‘on site’ coordinator of this attack, was caught on tape on a security camera outside. Jarvis would continue to do a facial recognition search for him.

Inside they had gathered nine living thugs, one medical technician, and six dead thugs, three of which had committed suicide.

Ambulances started arriving. There were only two civilian deaths and Clint suspected they were spies posing as wait staff. There were many injuries, most of which came when the Hulk landed on his protected people.
Pepper was one of the worst injured, with a badly broken leg. Loki surreptitiously healed her broken leg before the paramedics got there and had a chance to look at her. He also healed anyone who was still passed out before they might realize they had been hurt. Natasha was also in that pile but she only had a couple of bruises.

As they gathered Steve looked at Clint. “How did you manage to not be effected by the gas?”

He laughed. “I spent six months gaining tolerance to this particular poison gas for a mission. If they had used anything else I’d be a sleeping baby, like Nat. How did you manage?”

“I didn’t, I was fighting sleep the whole time. My body was just processing it fast enough for me to stay awake. If I’d been near a vent instead of the balcony door, I think I’d be sleeping too. I’m just glad I was able to shatter the glass to let some fresh air in.” Steve was tying up the attackers.

“Did any of them say anything?” Tony spit out. “I know the leader got away.” Heads were going to roll for tonight, he just needed a target.

“They were clearly getting information from someone else who was not here.” Clint added.

Loki looked up and saw Steve still in his now torn and bloody dress suit, with a haunted look on his face staring at the arm of one of the prisoners. “Steven, what is it?”

“Where did you get this tattoo? Tell me now!” Steve’s voice was loud and uncontrolled. That was very unusual for him.

“Fuck you!” The guy looked up and smiled.

Steve punched the guy so hard he passed out and probably had a broken jaw, but not before the thug bit down on something, probably poison. Steve’s breathing was increasing and he started tearing off the shirts of some of the others who he had tied up.

“Down Spot. What the hell, you don’t ever go mad.” Tony zipped over to Steve’s side trying to distract him.

Loki was there too, noticed Steve shudder again and looked. “There appears to be some sort of octopus tattoo on them. That is what has our cheerful Captain so upset.”

Clint had also come over. He noticed the tattoo and looked at Tony. “It looks vaguely familiar.”

“Fuck, its Hydra. Captain America and my dad battled them in WWII. Thought they were long gone. Thought they died out after they lost the Tesseract.” Tony shook his head. This was clearly not one of his better days.

“The Tesseract? I believe I am going to need a history lesson my little hemorrhoid.” Loki smiled at Stark.

“Later, can’t you avoid calling me that in public?” Tony grimaced. He was feeling a headache coming on.

“No! The organization, they were all gone.” Steve exclaimed to no one in particular after finding his voice.

Tony looked the rest over grabbed the one he thought might be the weakest. “Why do you want Loki? Why do you want me dead?” He sent a controlled amount of heat into the guy.
“Y..y..you control him because of an agreement, and are too smart. We need to remove you from the equation. I don’t know why they want him.” He replied. Just as he finished, a bartender from the crowd shot him and then bit down on their own poison.

The emergency personal inside watched the shooting with horror, momentarily unsure of what to do. They waited a few moments then went back to work as soon as they thought it was safe.

Bruce walked over with a tablecloth wrapped around him; dress pants were not designed to stretch. He was clearly not doing well. He looked at them, “I hurt civilians and now Hydra is back. Can I stop the world and get off now?”

Loki was looking at the tattoo, you could see the wheels turn in his head. He looked at Tony without saying anything to anyone else. Then he spoke directly to Tony’s mind using his spell as he pointed to the tattoo. “Octopus, Hydra, many legs, Shield, Danger.”

Tony nodded in understanding. This was what the warnings were pointing too.

The living prisoners were taken by SHIELD. After Tony and the Captain’s violent reaction they wouldn’t let the Avengers take them. Tony complained but was overruled. Without a cell or guards of his own in the tower he couldn’t make them see that SHIELD should not be keeping them. Tony had Jarvis hack into SHIELD security to keep an eye on the Hydra agents. He had a very bad feeling about it all.

Bruce was beside himself. “I hurt people, I could have killed them.” He said, then had voluntarily gone down to his ‘playroom’ and sat. Trouble suddenly showed up to follow him down. He/both felt miserable. Natasha and Loki went down to sit with him. Bruce was sitting at the table holding a giant crayon with Trouble desperately trying to get his attention by rubbing against him and crawling on him.

“I think what Hulk was doing was a good sign.” Loki broke the silence as they walked toward him. Bruce looked up. “We thought we were protecting people. Natasha, you passed out. You were under a vent. I think I started out by protecting you and Pepper. She had been telling me, Tony and you, Loki, had left when it started. I grabbed her, for some reason, I was not affected by the gas.” Trouble was in his lap and desperately trying to get him to pet her. Bruce was doing his best to ignore her head-butting,

“Keep going. Then what happened?” Natasha urged as she and Loki sat down at the table with him.

“Halfway over, Hulk came out. We already had a purpose to take care of you guys so I put Pepper down on the floor near you.” Bruce’s expression looked like he had run over a puppy.

“What happened next? I know you carried others over there.” Loki nudged him on. Then grabbed Trouble off his lap.

“Natasha was against a wall along with several others. I couldn’t put Pepper next to her. I saw two people run over trying to get somewhere, they seemed to cower down and pass out. I don’t know if they were trying to get to someone or just you know, get to a wall. I guess I got the idea that the people needed to be by the wall. So after I put Pepper down, I went and grabbed two from the middle and took them over to the area I had Pepper.” Bruce’s face was crunched up, remembering their thoughts.

He continued, “Bruce, I, urged Hulk to continue this. I remember thinking that, someone would be
following and it would be a good idea to clear the center of the room…. Hulk was not as careful as I wanted him to be and he was carrying four people at a time. I did some of those injuries then.” Bruce’s voice quavered, but his hands were in angry fists.

“I noticed the center of the room was clear when I came in. Did you move a lot of people?” Loki asked leaning back in his chair.

“Hulk did. He took them to the walls. It took a couple of minutes for everyone to fully pass out. So many people were weaving toward the exits already. Then those guys with masks came in. We had almost everyone on the floor by the walls. I even took them off chairs. I don’t know what he was thinking. Maybe we thought they needed to be like Natasha.” Bruce just looked pitiful, confessing his crimes. “Then they started firing I had just a few people left. They seemed surprised that I hadn’t passed out too. Hulk was so close to finishing and we felt compelled to finish. He threw chairs while he carried the last few people to where Pepper and Natasha were. Then you guys came in. After that I fell on some of them and I know we broke bones….. We saw you healing some of them later Loki, thanks.” Bruce finished, and glanced at Loki who was now sitting up straight, allowing Trouble to move once again back to Bruce.

“You do realize that by putting them on the floor by the walls, you got them out of the line of fire.” Natasha pointed out. “There would have been many more casualties if they would have been draped over chairs and tables. Or lying on the floor in the open fighting areas. You cleared the civilians the best you could.” She was leaning forward reaching toward Bruce.

“I guess. I still feel really bad about hurting so many people, I, we were not very careful.” Bruce still sounded morose, looking at his hands like they had blood on them. Amazingly they suddenly had Trouble climbing into them.

“I am quite sure. Most of the people there tonight would gladly take a few bruises in order to prevent the loss of another’s life.” Loki assured him. “I am more interested in that. This is the first time that the Hulk actively worked to protect people. That shows me amazing progress.”

“It’s been over a year. I don’t feel like we’ve made very much.” Bruce said dejectedly, finally running one hand across Trouble to scratch her neck.

“I see it very differently. You may feel like you are working with Hulk all the time but he is only really learning a fraction of the time. In order to obtain one year equivalent of a child will take many of yours. We have just witnessed the evolution of an angry child taking a first step into turning into a thinking child.” Loki explained

“I don’t know about that.” Bruce uttered looking at the floor.

Loki raised his voice just a bit. “Dr. Banner and Mr. Hulk, what you did tonight was not only a huge step in your progress, but an entirely heroic act that saved many lives. If you wish to wallow on the fact that you are not perfect, you join a very large and miserable group that came before you. I am fully aware of what it feels like to think oneself a monster, but this behavior is unacceptable and serves only to make your new self, loath itself and you. Neither of which I plan to enable. So once you have finished berating yourself for doing a good job, you will find me upstairs with Anthony.” Loki stood up and walked out.

Bruce watched him leave, Loki’s words sinking in. “He certainly has a way of putting things.”

“That he does.” Natasha agreed.
Will the real Howard Stark please step forward.

Chapter Summary

After the discovery of Hydra from last chapter Steve talks about Hydra and his history. Tony holds his tongue until he is alone with Loki before talking about Howard. Coulson comes to Loki looking for answers.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Upstairs Tony, Clint and Steve had been talking when Loki came in. Tony got him a drink and they asked about Bruce. Loki told them he would be fine as soon as he realized he was a hero and not a monster tonight. They had barely reviewed the facts from Steve and Clint’s points-of-view when Bruce and Natasha came up. Bruce looked much better. He was carrying Trouble who was purring quite loudly.

Steve had clearly come around after his shock tonight and was feeling much better himself although still a bit shook up. He knew that he needed to tell them all about the history of Hydra. It was important enough to wait for everyone to arrive. Now they were all here.

It took some time. He talked about the serum and how Red Skull had been its first test subject. What he knew about their search and discovery of the Tesseract. About Howard Stark, Peggy Carter, the Howling Commandos and of course Bucky Barnes his best friend. About Zola and finally losing the Tesseract in the ocean and himself in the ice.

When it was over they pulled first the public records about Hydra. Then the classified records about them from several countries. Steve was convinced that the spies that had been found in SHIELD were Hydra. The others accepted it without issue. It was morning by the time they finished talking. Steve decided to go for a run before retiring while the rest headed off to their rooms.

Upstairs Tony took his dress suit off and threw it into his dry cleaning hamper and fell back onto the bed. Loki had followed him up knowing something was wrong.

“That was NOT my father.” Tony declared.

Loki took his suit off too and sat down on the bed and looked at him.

“I never knew the man Rogers talked about tonight. To keep from screaming I had to imagine him as
someone else named Howard. How’s that for sucky? I can’t even bear to hear good things about the
fucking asshole who I see a resemblance to, every time I look into the damn mirror.” Tony snarled.

Loki slid back on the bed against the headboard and took Tony’s hand and squeezed.

“He spent all his time drunk, in his lab or yelling and beating me. He never talked over anything with
me. Did I tell you Fury brought me a tape that on the end he said ‘I was his greatest creation’ what a
load of bullcrap,” Tony spit out.

Loki shook his head. He knew Anthony needed to vent and held his tongue.

“It was part of a tape with a clue about the element behind the arc reactor. My best guess is that he
was either A) trying to look good for the guys filming it. Or B) he had plans to use it for
manipulation against me. I think it was the later.” Tony looked at Loki.

“He did things like that you know. He would tell me good things to get me to do stuff for him. Most
of the time, it was just bragging in public to get publicity for the company.” Tony pulled his hand
away and fisted it and slammed it into the bed, pinching his mouth closed and closing his eyes.

Tony was very angry and needed to talk, so Loki pulled Tony back and began to massage his head
and leaned back against the headboard himself. It was a similar yet more intimate version of when he
had healed him a year earlier.

Tony melted into Loki’s hands but fidgeted enough to get his head and back angled up against his
god’s leg and started talking again. “Sometimes it was worse. Like when I was in high school and he
told some important woman what a genius I was. I ate it up, later I had sex with the woman. A
couple days later I overheard my father laugh over how he got me to sleep with her so she would
sign the damn contract. I figured out it was the third time it had happened at a party. I didn’t fall into
that trap again much to his disappointment. He even told me one time that sleeping with clients was
sometimes necessary to get the job done, you have to do what it takes. I was barely 15!”

He looked at the ceiling shaking with anger. “When I was younger, he had this general who would
come and discuss business. Howard would brag about me and let me sit on the general’s lap and stay
there while he would gently bounce me up and down on his cock while they talked. I was young and
had no idea what he was doing. I remember wondering why his lap felt weird. But I was so starved
for attention and approval I’d do anything. God, one time my dad convinced me to skinny dip in the
pool that was under the guy’s bedroom window. God, I was lucky Howard didn’t just let the guy
screw me.” Tony put his hands over his eyes coming into contact with Loki’s hands for reassurance.

“Of course most of the time he would just tell me how worthless, or careless, or selfish, or stupid I
was. Here I was the top of my class, I could build and design detailed complex things most adults
don’t even dream of doing. But I was stupid, careless and would never make it without his legacy.
What a motherfucking load of bullshit.” Tony spit out, then sighed, sat up and twisted to look at
Loki.

“Then Rogers goes and talks about some stranger that works well as part of a team. Tailor makes
things for people to use. Listens to suggestions, gives encouragement and even pushes to make
Captain America better. How the fuck, am I supposed to reconcile that with the abusive man I knew.
Hell, I knew my father had a hero worship thing going, I just didn’t know it was so mutual.” Tony
adjusted himself so he was sitting in front of Loki with his back to him.

He leaned back into Loki’s shoulder, hands still in his lap. Loki put his arms around Tony and
hugged him close.
“And when I heard Steve talk tonight. I just wanted to punch something. Because inside all I could hear was how much of a disappointment I was and how great Captain America was. How much of a worthless, selfish, son of a bitch his son is.” Tony’s breath was unsteady. He sat up and turned around to face Loki crossing his leg tight to get closer. He looked Loki in the eyes and whispered. “And sometimes I believe it.” He quickly closed his eyes and buried himself against Loki wrapping his arms around him. They were holding each other.

Loki pulled him as close as possible. Deciding it wasn’t good enough, swept Tony around in his arms and pulled them around finally ending with them in a lying position with Tony securely wrapped in his arms, a leg holding him securely close. ‘I’ve got you my sweet, brilliant hero.”

After a short while Tony looked at Loki with large eyes, feeling more naked and exposed than he had ever felt in his life. Very quietly he said. “You know, if you ever leave me, I’ll break.”

Loki looked at the man who was his Midgardian warden, his true friend, and his first and probably the only apprentice that he would ever have. This was a man who shared a life link with him and trusted him enough to bare his most inner thoughts and fears. Anthony Stark was someone he had shared his nightmares with and could share his secrets with and he trusted him. The man that Loki had examined and understood and finally taken as his lover, tied so tightly it sometimes hurt, like now. It was the enchantment tightening its grip on them something had changed again. Revelation dawned they no longer had a choice, they were effectively mated for life, the enchantment would see to it. It scared him. “Anthony.” He said in a way that sounded like there was more.

“What?” Tony replied with such and array of emotions and apprehension in eyes that were locked on Loki’s.

“I think…I think…” What did he tell Anthony, who was already upset, he didn’t want to scare him. No, reassure him. “I will never leave you. I love you enough… We love each other enough… I think that we have made this permanent.” Loki said sounding shocked at his own words.

Tears that had been threatening to fall all night poured out of Tony’s eyes. They came from emotional overload. Joy sprouted from what had been feelings of self-loathing, guilt and anger. He grabbed Loki tighter and held on. Loki grabbed back. Loki had said he loved him!

Finally, Tony pulled back long enough to look at Loki once more, this time with a mischievous smirk and said “Thank god.” He watched Loki smirk back at the prayer pun. Then went back to holding and hugging but added. “I love you too, beautiful.”

They were exhausted but both needed to touch the other right now. It wasn’t long before it got sexual. Their emotions had more electricity than a power plant, touching and rubbing turned into pulling and grabbing that eventually turned into biting and scratching. It was rough sex, emotional sex but it was exactly what they needed.

They fell asleep wrapped in each other’s arms, and spent the night or rather most of the day sleeping blissfully without nightmares.

Plans to go to Asgard were put on hold for the time being dealing with a possible resurgence of Hydra had become the top priority.

Apparently five of the prisoners had died in their sleep. The others had been interrogated and turned
out to be either hired for a single job or so low level and new they didn’t know anything except for the other guys and Mark who had got away.

Jarvis’s facial recognition programs had come up blank. One goon had said he thought Mark was wearing some sort of makeup, another had agreed that he had a funny ripple near one ear that looked fake.

Fury wanted answers. He wasn’t convinced Hydra had infiltrated SHIELD. Steve said it was the only thing that made sense.

Loki had remembered to ask what had happened to his staff, from the invasion. The item was dangerous and belonged on Asgard. He also knew there were other potentially dangerous items on earth that should not be in the hands of mortals or at least those that didn’t know how to use and respect the items such as SHIELD. In reality he was now convinced that this was part of the danger his mother had seen.

Fury agreed that the staff probably needed to be taken back to Asgard at least. The rest were still classified and he refused to talk about anything else.

Coulson who was pretty tight lipped about most things anyway looked cross when they talked about the items. He later added he had implemented a couple more safety procedures that no one would know about.

The next week was spent looking for Hydra. Solid leads were non-existent.

Friday came and Tony took Loki to Norway to visit an Old Norse shrine, hoping to find a Hydra lead. This had been where the Tesseract had originally been hidden. While there he tried using prayer to communicate with Loki. Loki was blown away at the amplification of Tony’s prayer. This was something else they needed to look into when they went to Asgard.

They took a side trip and went out for a romantic dinner watching the Northern Lights from a lodge in the Arctic Circle. It was a great evening but cut short because Dr. Doom just had to pick that night to attack. If he had shown up personally instead of just sending bots Tony would have made sure he was dead, politics be damned.

Tony and Loki still had not found time to go to Asgard when March came. It was then that Coulson approached Loki.

“Do you think I might speak with you a moment Loki?” Coulson was if nothing else polite.

“Yes? You have news of the scepter?” Loki had been sitting writing occasional notes in a book and conveying the information to Jarvis to also record. Trouble was in his lap. He had been working on testing limits on illusions going across Yggdrasil. He had been finding that there were many things that this new enchantment affected. He had many tricks that he had still not had the time to test.

“I need to talk to you about some of the things SHIELD is hiding.” Coulson said.

Now he had Loki’s attention. This was perhaps the biggest hole Midgard had in her defenses that could be a danger to him. “I would love to hear this. But I must ask why you suddenly feel that I am trustworthy?”
“I must have your word, oath actually, that you will not discuss what I tell you with anyone.”

Loki thought about it. “How about I agree to a short term oath. Depending on what you say some of the others may need to hear it too.”

Coulson immediately answered. “No, it’s too classified, telling you is more than I should be. There are things I need information about that only you might have knowledge about. I cannot risk anyone else finding out. After reviewing information that I’m not at liberty to tell you about, I’m sure that Hydra has infiltrated SHIELD.”

Loki shook his head. “Fair enough, we have one issue though. Anthony and I share a link that is still changing. I cannot predict or guarantee that he will not find out. If the link changes, I need to be able to talk to him about it so he will not do something stupid on his own. There will also need to be a defined time limit set with contingencies for renewal.”

Coulson nodded uncomfortably. “I guess I’ll have to work with that, let’s work out an oath.”

Coulson was pretty good at blocking loopholes, leaving only one for Tony and the link of which he knew Loki would probably drive a Mach Truck through. Loki would at least attempt to keep Tony from talking about it, if, ‘most likely when’ he ended up telling him. Jarvis would keep it secret unless it endangered Stark’s life then he would at least try to inform Phil first. Coulson agreed to give Loki updates on certain goings on at SHIELD for a designated period of time in exchange for Loki’s knowledge and any research he might do. It had a one year renewal clause.

When the oath was finished Loki put some extra magical protections on his room.

“First off, Fury would never tell you, but your staff has been missing for quite a while now. It had been in a heavily guarded storage facility along with certain other items. When we discovered this we checked and discovered many other items missing.”

Loki shook his head. “If I had been in better shape before, I would have insisted Thor take it to Asgard with the Tesseract. But I was not thinking clearly. That is a very dangerous weapon it had a direct link to the Other and the Mad Titan. The Other is dead. He had the constant leash on its control, but Thanos can still manipulate someone through it, if he cares to watch. Fortunately he must use active effort to pay attention and he has many pies to juggle.”

“After reading the file, I was afraid of that. I also want to show you this.” Coulson brought out his tablet and a flash drive and set it on the coffee table in front of Loki. Bending over he opened a file and showed Loki. “This is the file on project T.A.H.I.T.I. I wanted you to see what they did to me and perhaps explain why you felt so strongly about it.”

Loki looked over the file. “I was not aware their alien blood could raise you like that. That explains why they wanted mine. I was angry about the fact you were dead and brought back. Your soul had passed on into the afterlife. Mistress Death does not take kindly to having souls yanked back from her. She and Hela are not nice beings, but can be dealt with on occasion for the right price or to the right person. But to steal from them is akin to declaring war on them, releasing them to use unimaginable powers on you. It appears most of those involved are already dead, that is a good thing.”

“It is? Why, what can I expect?” Coulson asked now squatting next to Loki’s chair.

“Yes, because it means most of those involved are already in her grasp and have paid for the stealing. You did not volunteer, as such, they will have to check with the Norns before they destroy you. If fate had a hand in your resurrection, as I suspect, you have been allowed to live, for now.” Loki
grinned evilly.

“And if not?”

“Then I would expect a very painful death. But that would not be my biggest concern after reading this file. There are going to be side effects from what they have done. I cannot predict what, without seeing the serum they injected you with firsthand. I would expect it to be similar to what some of these other people experienced.” Loki stopped and thought for a minute.

Coulson waited patiently, seeing that Loki had more to say.

“This might also be related to an alien artifact. If you get side effects, come to me, I may be able to help. Also, I am one of the few that Hela will talk to, I could find out what your status is for a price.” Loki offered

“Thank you, but I think I’d rather not know. Now I would like to show you some of the other items that have been stolen.” Coulson opened a master file with many names.

“These names mean nothing to me. Is there more information about them or perhaps pictures?” Loki looked down at the names.

“Each one has a file about it. The ones we have examined the most are listed first.” He showed Loki the files on the flash drive and opened the first one.

He read the information they had and it seemed fairly innocuous. It described the testing and the results. A communication receiver was what they determined it to be, having received what sounded like voices. Then he scrolled down to the picture. “One of these is on earth?” He said in surprised horror sitting up.

Trouble hissed and jumped off Loki’s lap but stayed on the opposite arm of the chair from Coulson. She looked at the screen. Appearing to be searching for what was so important to disturb her nap.

“I assume that it is not a communication device?” Coulson prodded for answers.

Loki looked at Coulson, remembered that Coulson was also under oath. “This device, allows not only communication but transportation between dimensions, Illitplass in specific. Asgard and most of the universe destroys them whenever one is found. There are things out there called Djofullin that are much worse than the Chitauri. If you find it, you must bring it to me at once. You will not be able to destroy it yourself.” This item was really bad news he suppressed a chill that ran through his body.

They opened the next two items from a long list.

One was something Loki did not recognize but from reviewing the tests done on it, he was sure it was something that determined if food was safe to eat for whatever species it had been made for. It was clearly something Tony would like to examine because it was probably not at all magic and just advanced tech.

The second made Loki laugh out loud. Those that had done experiments on it had finally given up on what it did because they couldn’t make sense of the results. “This is used for marriage enrichment. It is made by the Fae and very magical. It is harmless but rather chaotic. It was probably left here by some couple vacationing on Midgard eons ago. I would love to know what any married researchers experienced at home while they were working with this.” He was amused and found himself thinking about Anthony.

Phil ignored the remark. “Let me show you a couple more directories on the drive. These are items
that are still in our possession but at risk.”

They chose a couple more at random from the list. One turned out to be a power source for a Kree appliance. The other turned out to be a Skrull weapon but without ammo it was basically a non-functioning toggle switch.

“I am beginning to believe Midgard was at one point a dumping ground for unwanted items. Are you willing to let me keep this flash drive?” Loki asked knowing it would take a great deal of time to look over all these items. He rubbed Trouble’s neck absentmindedly.

“If you have someplace that you can guarantee is safe from theft. Maybe like that pocket you put in my suit that is keyed to only me.”

“I do have a places like that here. Even if you have magic you have to know it is there to even look for it. Will that do?” Loki offered.

“Yes, actually. If they are that safe would you mind keeping a couple more things there for me and agree not to look at them unless certain conditions happen?” Phil asked.

“I am sure we can make a deal.” Loki smiled.

That night he pored over the contents of the drive.

There were many things he recognized as junk. He found quite a few things that he recognized and knew would not be an issue. There were several items that could present complications. The dimensional portal was a grave danger, the worst that he could identify, hopefully the worst one there.

His fear was that there were nearly half he didn’t have a solid identification of. Oh some he could make educated guesses that they were broken parts of something larger, or simple things that might enhance a skill. Most of the weapons were named and could have more powers than what testing found. Several things the research showed enough similarities to gadgets he had knowledge of that made him confident they wouldn’t pose a threat. Two were clearly powerful non-magical items, but SHIELD had failed to activate them. He hoped they were so far beyond Midgard’s tech level they couldn’t interact with them. Then there were nearly two dozen items that he had no clue, no guess, and no theory about. The notes on some of those artifacts just increased his concerns.

Most of the stuff he was sure would turn out to be harmless or not very powerful. Unfortunately he could not count on there not being anything else like the Illitplass portal item. He needed to go to Asgard. The time to put it off was past.

Coulson sat in bed in the tower. Clint wouldn’t be back until later from his assignment.

“Jarvis, I know we don’t talk much but I understand you are quite capable and are adept at security and spying.”

“Yes Mr. Coulson, that is indeed correct. Is there something that you require?”

“Actually there is, if you can do it. First I need to know if you are able to keep secure intelligence from your creator.” Phil asked.

“As long as it is not something we learn concerning him in specific as well as information about Master Loki. My prime directive is to ensure his, or rather their safety. As long as it does not interfere
with that I shall be able to protect your secret.” Jarvis answered.

“Very good. In fact if it does become a threat to either of them, that would be a good time for them to know everything.” Phil took a breath, he was trusting a machine, a first for him.

“What can I do for you?”

“I have a list of things. But first I need you to break into SHIELD. Do you need a password?”

After a moment’s hesitation, Jarvis answered. “Mr. Coulson, I do not.”

The next morning Loki talked to Tony about going to Asgard leaving the very end of March. Of course the inventor was always glad to see Asgard’s advanced tech and started packing for a couple of weeks.

Loki phoned Coulson who had spent the night with Clint and quickly relayed what information he had already discovered.

Pepper wasn’t happy. Two weeks was a long time, but there was nothing scheduled, so she reluctantly gave her approval.

It was put on the Avenger’s schedule. There was nothing coming up that looked overly complex or dangerous.

Jarvis had also finally been upgraded. It had taken three months to figure out a way to incorporate any sort of magic into Jarvis’s systems. Now they were confident he was safe from viruses and being hacked into for the foreseeable future.

Lastly when Loki was alone with Tony he reminded him that he had been remiss on practicing and developing the link they shared. Oh, and just so he knew, there was something of importance that Loki would be researching in Asgard, and no, he could not tell Tony, by oath, unless of course the link changed. For Loki knew, there was no greater motivator for Anthony Stark than to be told… no!

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - is another universe from another dimension.
Djofullin - are intelligent beings that come from Illitplass.
When they arrived in Asgard they were asked to see Thor immediately. They found themselves being escorted by guards and both felt very apprehensive about it. Thor had visited Midgard a couple of times mostly to see Jane. Loki talked to Frigga less often now because the enchantment made it harder now requiring a circle. What had they missed, what was going on?

Tony was useless as he was now working non-stop on their link, trying to send fuzzy bits of images and emotions, those being the only things that worked at all so far. Stark’s mind bounced very fast from one attempt to another. After each attempt he asked seemingly inane questions and annoying the Loki who was more concerned about the guards.

They were escorted by guards. They found themselves carrying their luggage to the throne room. Thor was sitting on the throne Hlidskjalf when they entered. Frigga was there too. They were talking to a messenger, whom Thor dismissed when he saw them.

“Brother, welcome back to Asgard. We have missed you so.” He boomed and came down toward them.

“Thor, I’m not your brother. When will you get that through your head? And why were we escorted by guards to you?” Loki growled at him.

Thor didn’t appear to care that Loki was angry. Instead he ran up and grabbed Loki and picked him up and hugged him tight, even twirling around. Behind him Frigga had also approached smiling obviously waiting for her turn.

“What in Hel’s name is wrong with you, you moron. Put me down this instant!” Loki demanded.

“Be in good cheer brother! I am just happy to see you!” Thor finally put Loki down grinning brightly.

“Once again Thor, I am not your brother. Do not call me that. I know you have a brain in that head of yours somewhere. Use it.” Loki sneered at him.

“You are so very wrong brother!” Thor put his hands on his hips and laughed.
“You realized you have no brain? You finally admit it does not exist? I had not believed in miracles but perhaps I was wrong.” Loki teased.

Thor just laughed. “I have a brain. It is the brother part that you are truly mistaken about.”

Loki was taken back a bit at Thor’s statement. “And how is it that a Jotun and an Æsir are brothers. What foolery are you talking about?” Loki asked suspiciously.

Frigga hugged him. “Asgard has had many hidden lies over the years. It is time we started acknowledging them. Come let us go someplace better for talking.”

Tony was suddenly trying to send: laughter, good feels, and a failed attempt at the name Thor.

Loki magically sent Tony an image of a giant stop sign and a pulse of anger. He looked outraged at everyone and started moving. “You are all giving me a headache. Come Stark, bring our things.”

They followed Thor and Frigga into a private room behind the throne. It was part of the private royal suite. They sat down in a small grouping of chairs. Loki and Tony sat on a loveseat.

“Now what is this about Thor, mother?” Loki asked exasperatedly.

“Meow.” Everyone looked around.

“Meowrrrow.” It was soft but in the smaller room everyone could hear it.

“It seems to be coming for your bag, Anthony dear.” Frigga said.

Tony grabbed the bag and opened it. Out popped Trouble. “Damn, how did you get in there?” Tony picked her up and handed her to Loki, whose eyes had just become wide, while he closed his bag again.

“Oh my baby, I would never have risked you traveling between realms again if I had known. Stark, how could you possibly have packed your suitcase without noticing she was in there?” Loki scolded, while carefully checking to make sure Trouble was fine.

Trouble was purring loud and clear looking very pleased with herself.

“I don’t know! I know I would have seen her. I think she did it on purpose. You don’t think she did it herself, I mean she ends up weird places all the time. You sure she is a normal cat?” Tony was really, really sure she was not in the bag when he closed it.

“Do not be an imbecile. We picked her up from a shelter. I have checked her several times. You were clearly not paying attention when you closed the bag.” Loki sent a searing look at Tony, then turned to Trouble and purred. “You are such a good girl. We can’t help that Anthony is a moron.”

Tony mumbled. “I know she was not in there. We’ll look at Jarvis’s tapes when we get back.”

Frigga muffled a laugh. “I’m sure everyone will be… surprised, to have her back for a visit.”

Trouble climbed into Tony’s lap and rubbed up against his cheek then turned around so her butt was in Tony’s face, tail in his eyes and then settled herself in his lap so she was facing everyone else in the room. She looked smug, very noble and was still purring.

“Well, she clearly isn’t mad at you.” Loki said rolling his eyes, his anger momentarily subdued. “Anyway, so back to the matter at hand. What is this all about?” He looked between Thor and Frigga.
Thor started suddenly serious. “There is much that has happened since you left brother. I hardly know where to begin.”

“How about with all those lies you were talking about.” Tony answered, petting Trouble.

Frigga spoke next, her voice was soft but steady. It was clear this was hard for her. “The first thing you need to know is that I love both you and Thor equally… I am also not the mother of either of you.”

Loki looked rather shocked, while Tony stared at Thor, who looked down at his hands.

“I have learned to love Odin but this was not always so, he had many affairs early on. As time passed he learned that I was invaluable as an advisor. It was through my wisdom and visions that we went from tolerating each other, to political allies, to friends, to eventual lovers and finally partners in a true marriage where love existed.

It became clear along the way that I am barren. For me to have had this altered I would have had to give up my visions. We decided that was not the best option. I gave Odin permission to have two children out of wedlock and I would raise them as my own.” Frigga voice was very sad.


“Hush, let her continue. Please mother.” Loki said with as much interest as Tony had ever seen in his eyes.

“Thor’s mother was a being from earth who is no longer alive. Odin could be very charming in his younger days. She was killed in the war with the frost giants that started very shortly after Thor was born. Odin had taken Thor, for his safety, and she was distraught when she found out I had claimed him as my own. She was then sent on what amounted to a near suicide mission. She was probably not very careful and distracted which made a very dangerous situation fatal.”

“Does that mean Thor is half-human?” Tony asked suddenly.

Frigga smiled at him. “No, she was more of a nature goddess. One of the last of her kind.”

Loki was looking at Thor, who’s head was just hanging, elbows on his knees and very silent.

Frigga continued. “At the same time what became clouded and hidden from people’s minds and memories was that Odin’s mother was a frost giant.”

Loki’s and Tony’s heads both snapped up at that.

“Thor is part frost giant too? I didn’t see that coming.” Tony piped in.

“I always assumed she was Æsir. So that is why she is rarely mentioned and I have never seen a statue of her.” Loki responded.

“Yes it is. She was also one of the most powerful sorcerers of all time. Odin has magic but you inherited her full magic, plus more, Loki. Late in the war Odin tricked Laufey into a tryst after a battle, using magic to disguise himself. Frost Giants may identify with one gender or the other but most have the ability to bear children. When Laufey delivered you, I’m sure he noticed that you were clearly not fully frost giant, your hair is soft, it is the Æsir in you. Frost giants have hair nothing like that.

Odin did take you from a temple though, as that is where most frost giants go to give birth. You were
born in one that is deep inside the palace. Odin used his blood link to you to infiltrate the palace and come home with the Casket of Ancient Winters and you. They stole you away almost immediately after you were born, bringing an army right into the heart of their palace. I believe Laufey was figuring it out. You would have been dead if they had waited any longer. Laufey was very smart, but it is hard to kill your own newborn child.” She finished her tale.

Loki had taken Tony’s hand and was holding it very tight while Frigga spoke. He simply sat in stunned silence.

Thor who had perked up when she started talking about Loki’s birth now boomed. “You see we are indeed brothers and you can no longer deny it.”

“I guess we are.” Loki said sounding very far away. “So why did Odin treat Thor so much better than me?” He looked at Frigga. “If his mother was a frost giant. Or was I truly just a political tool?”

“He didn’t treat you different at first. I’m sure you remember he started out grooming you both to be king. I believe he hated the fact he was not pure Æsir and started to believe his campaign to make all frost giants look bad.

He did not understand you. I am not surprised you get along so well with the Man of Iron here. You are both of genius intellect and your thoughts are hard for most people to understand, able to run circles around people with your arguments. Odin too saw this and I suspect he actively tried to avoid your influence. It made you incredibly useful to him but also angered him that you were right so often.

Thor was always a natural leader, liked by all, but he benefited from being beside you. You may not think Thor ever listened to you but he did at least in part. Odin knew that Thor needed a good advisor and he wanted you to fill that role.” Now Frigga had sympathy in her eyes but was looking at Loki, hoping for understanding. “I hope that he can realize his errors when he awakens.”

“In the meantime, since I am king, I have officially pardoned you of all crimes past and present. I have also acknowledged and brought back the memories and knowledge of our grandmother Bestla. I even found an old statue of her and placed it for all to view.” Thor announced. “I would also like you to move back to Asgard and be my advisor brother.” He asked in a quieter voice.

“I appreciate the pardon you have given me, but for the foreseeable future I need to stay on Midgard.” Loki told Thor.

“Will you at least consider moving? I have learned that I relied on your words more than I thought.” Thor sounded unsure of himself. It was a rare occurrence.

“Perhaps in the distant future. But remember those who have never trusted me will not change their minds because you have pardoned me. They will resent me being around. And your so called friends will just as soon stab me in the back.” Loki responded carefully.

“Do not think that. They are your loyal shield brothers too. You should learn to trust them.” Thor scolded.

Loki didn’t believe him for a second. “If I am so loved and accepted, why the honor guard on my arrival?”

Trouble had gotten up and was pushing her head into Loki’s face. Her back end was still in Tony’s lap and her tail brushing his face. Tony finally grabbed the tail and held it away from his face. He had been trying to feel something through the link, since he couldn’t send, and actually felt Loki’s
“We have found out about the death magic spell used on Odin and there may be trouble.” Thor explained. “The spell, it turned out has been there for was over a century. It was made by Sigyn’s mother.” He looked at his mother.

Frigga continued. “The spell had degraded terribly and our best guess was it was designed to turn Odin against you, dear. More recently it had been driving Odin mad and causing him to blame everything on you, Loki, and more recently Thor too. His mind would not let him trust anyone but me.”

“We still don’t understand why Frigga was exempt.” Thor said. “Sif and the warriors three brought her in this morning. She has friends here who may feel the need to harm you. She claims the act was justifiable. Tomorrow afternoon we will be questioning her about it. Since the Norns have seen fit to bring you here at this time, I would, as king, request your presence.”

Loki looked at Thor and felt the pang of betrayal by Odin, Sigyn, and her father once again. Now Thor told him of Sigyn’s mother’s betrayal too. “If I do this, do not expect me to be civil.”

Frigga added brusquely, “Nor I.”

Loki did not like this. There were too many painful untold truths that he wanted to remain hidden.

“Dear, while I am glad both of you have returned. I am curious why?” Frigga asked as they were standing up to leave.

Tony looked at Loki who put his head down and replied. “I am under oath not to talk about something on Midgard that I must research. Not even Anthony knows.” Loki knew this would come up and had said as much as he could. Hoping to light more of a fire under Anthony despite his lover becoming a pain at times. Asgard really needed to know about the Illitplass portal item.

Tony did search his bag and found the clothes crunched and a couple of things he was sure he packed missing. Loki refused to believe Trouble had done anything wrong. Then they went to dinner which was in one of the big halls to celebrate the return of Sif and the warriors three. Tony and Loki ate but ducked out early. Tony detoured enough to grab a small cask of some alcohol and two glasses, winking and saying something about a nightcap for our room. That garnered a number of stares and murmurs.

“Well today has been interesting.” Tony said filling both glasses with the brew he had pilfered.

“Indeed. I wonder what other lies Odin as told over the years. Perhaps HE should be the God of Lies.” Loki took the drink from Tony not bothering to question where he got it from. “I think I would like to relax in my bath tonight. It is very large if you would like to join me, you are invited.” He gave Tony a wicked grin.

“Sure thing. As long as the water is warm.” Tony added still having bad memories of cold water torture. He had seen Loki’s bath, it was the size of an extra-large hot tub or better yet a small pool and could sit several people. But more importantly Loki had invited him and they would be in there together and his mind just started to run amuck with possibilities. He removed his shoes, socks, watch and emptied his pockets. Then he grabbed the cask and took it into the bathroom and set it up on the side.
Loki waved his hand. Water poured out of several decorative spouts located across the walls on two sides of the tub. In addition, water jetted out like a waterfall from lines of openings inside the tub. It was really very beautiful and definitely decadent. When the tub was full, the spouts stopped but the jets continued circulating the water, waiting to massage the bathers.

Tony watched Loki take his clothes off and get in. Yes, Loki was very gifted indeed. His hard muscles were well defined and his skin smooth and looked so soft to the touch. It reminded him of an Olympic swimmer’s body.

“Aren’t you going to get in?” Loki noticed Tony had been staring. He smirked, grabbed a bottle of something and poured some in and poof, bubbles appeared in mass. They hid his body quite effectively.

“Spoil sport. I’m coming. Want to help me?” Tony flirted, removing his shirt.

Loki waved his had again. Tony suddenly felt his feet fly out from under him as if he were on a slide and slid, pants still on, into the Tub.

Loki was finishing a giggling fit by the time Tony managed to right himself and remove his pants. “Not funny!” He said and threw his soaking wet pants and boxers at Loki who swerved to the side and missed getting hit.

“I think it is delightful.” Loki said and pointed above Tony’s head.

Tony looked up just in time to notice he was sitting under one of the spouts that was suddenly pouring out water. After getting his face splashed, he stood up and grabbed at the spout, then using his hands to restrict the opening and redirect the stream, he managed to spray Loki back in the face.

Loki disappeared under the bubbles and Tony started searching for him.

Loki appeared from behind and dunked Tony, but Tony grabbed Loki’s arm and pulled him under too. They both came up laughing.

Then Tony grabbed Loki and kissed him sending them both back into the water, Tony on top of Loki.

When they emerged gasping for air Tony was sitting in Loki’s lap, grin a mile wide.

“You are more trouble than Trouble.” Loki said cheerfully putting a dollop of bubbles on Tony’s nose.

“Much sexier too.” Tony leaned in and shared the bubbles on his nose with Loki’s nose.

“And more conceited.” Loki waved his hand and bubbles formed on Tony’s face and head to give him cat ears and whiskers.

“Maybe, but my tastes in men is impeccable.”

“You did choose me, I suppose I shall give you points for that.” Loki was smiling warmly.

“I’ll take whatever I can get.” Tony leaned in took a kiss from Loki.

“So forward.” Loki kissed Tony back.

“You should punish me.” Tony suggested continuing the kissing game.
“Oh? And I suppose you have a suggestion for your punishment?” Loki grabbed Tony’s ass and squeezed.

If Tony had meant to say anything else it disappeared. His response bypassed his brain and went straight from his groin to his mouth. “Force me to have sex with you. Please, I’m so bad I deserve that punishment.” And with that he smashed his mouth into Loki’s for a long passionate kiss.

That kiss led to more kisses and touching and groping. Bodies rubbed against each other. Hands touching seductively. Mouths kissing and sucking places that fueled their fire. They were rubbing and stroking. They took turns massaging openings and sweet spots, always stopping before one would climax. They played shark hunting for the prize meat. Building and building toward a joint climax that when it exploded was way overdue in coming.

Afterward both heartbeats finally slowing down. They held each other for some time, relaxing in the magically filtering warm water.

Tony had to ask. He just couldn’t stop his mouth from asking the question. “If I ever top, could I get you pregnant?”

Loki looked at him and sneered a bit. “My little hemorrhoid, you may rest assured, that you will not be doing that to me unless I have the answer to that question. That is, if I EVER let you do that to me.”

The next morning they went to the library after a small breakfast. While there, they were delivered a message telling them the interrogation would be postponed a day in order for Slepnir to retrieve a few witnesses.

Tony researched multipart enchantments. Usually they did not require parts to be together ever. Many were not very powerful although most were very complex. The more powerful, the more complex, most of the time. Items at the top end, were nearly always drawn together or actively separated as though fate manipulated them.

Loki spent his time looking for items off Coulson’s list.

Tony also spent time trying to send back and forth to Loki through the link. He kept getting frustrated when he came up with an idea and it didn’t work. He couldn’t be sure it didn’t work because he needed more practice to get it right or because it would never work. Magic didn’t have the same rules and it felt too much like exercise to him. Yuck!

Dinner time came and with it an invitation to joint Thor and Frigga again. This time it was a much more intimate setting. Trouble decided to attend too.

They set up a chair for Trouble and gave her a plate of lovely fish. She sat on the raised chair and folded her front legs across each other on the table in front of her. It looked almost like how a person would fold their arms and lean against a table. She looked like part of the family. Even Frigga was charmed.

They talked about their research for a bit, then about Midgard. Then Thor brought up the Bifrost. He wanted Loki to work on it if possible. Tony suggested that he look at it again. Now that he understood magic better he might be able to create something with Loki that sped up construction. Everyone liked this idea.
Then out of the blue Tony asked. “So, how do you become a god, not all Æsir are gods, how do you pick who is and isn’t?”

Loki nearly choked on his food. Thor laughed and Frigga looked surprised.

“Oh my Hemorrhoid, I hope you are not asking to be made a god?” Loki looked amusingly at Tony, taking a drink to wash down his food.

Frigga smirked at the nickname. “The Norns tell us who is to be given a title. They let us know, when the person in question comes of age.”

“So you don’t have to be part of the elite or royal family to have one? Because I haven’t seen any peasants with god titles.” Tony picked up his glass and swirled it liquid before taking a drink.

“Why godhood elevates them to the elite.” Thor made it sound like Tony should have already known it.

“Really? I thought you had to be a warrior to go up in station or even keep it.” Tony looked at Thor, while still drinking and playing with his glass.

“It is generally, but there are exceptions. Why do you ask? Is it as Loki said, you want to be a god?” Thor looked with suspicion.

“Oh heavens no. I really want to know about prayer and worshipers. Because when I’ve prayed to Loki he can hear me. He says it is because he is a god.” Tony finished his glass and poured himself another.

“What brother? Have you not learned to ignore all the constant begging for things that we hear from the thousands who are always praying?” Thor looked at Loki for help, but saw right away that he had made a mistake.

“No Thor. Unlike you I do not and never have had thousands from every realm praying to me.” Loki slammed his glass on the table.

Trouble jumped down to the floor and into Loki’s lap and rubbed up against him.

“You guys are worshiped in the other realms too?” Tony was taken aback. He had always believed it was a thing civilizations outgrew as they matured.

“Oh yes, godhood comes with responsibilities. We have some power to grant certain things to those who pray.” Frigga explained

“Wait, Stop, how is there science in that? How does it work? That seems so improbable.” Tony waved his hands as he talked.

“Why through faith, belief and of course… fate.” Frigga answered slyly.

Loki scowled. “It is believed to be a part of the Astral Sea that we do not understand either. Proof that it is out there. You will get no science on this subject.”

Tony looked frustrated. He wanted to make it work to understand it. “So Loki heard me praying to him. What does he get from it, and what can he do?”

“Not much as far as I can tell.” Loki muttered truthfully, petting Trouble. “On occasion I have aided someone but I used my own magic for that.”
Frigga had a sad smile. “Loki has never had many followers, thus he hears every one. The titles give him power over those areas, like Thor and his storms.”

“Well it sound completely ridiculous to me. Hasn’t anyone done any tests on it?” Tony sounded frustrated.

“Don’t be stupid, of course they have. I can give you a book filled with results that are inconsistent and show nothing. No formulas for you. You have used it the only way I have ever seen it work and that was only to communicate to me, one way only! I never liked it either. It is a waste of time.” Loki’s temper was rising. Once again reminded of his inadequacies.

Thor went on. “Brother I’m sure we can fix it so you can have more worshipers. I could make a holiday to worship you…..” Thor droned on.

Tony had been trying to feel for Loki again through the link. He heard his anger. Then Thor started talking and he felt the emotion just a bit. He tried to pull on the anger, drawing some into him and away from Loki. And suddenly it was like the dam breaking and he was filled with Loki’s anger. Tony suddenly shook and turned and leaned toward Loki, eyes wide and half crazed, then he fell against Loki as if he fainted with his eyes open.

Loki shot Tony a look of, what did you do? “Mother, Thor, I’m sorry to interrupt but there is something we need to attend to now. Please excuse us.” Loki grabbed Tony and picked him up bridal style and left to his room. Trouble followed.

“Great cat. It follows them like a dog.” Thor smiled.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Sad Memories and Terrible Friends

Chapter Summary

The trial of Lady Sjurde brings more horror to light. Thor's friends prove they are not really friends.

Chapter Notes

Warning; There are mentions of sexual abuse and Loki's children dying in this chapter.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

Tony had felt himself break through and pull Loki’s anger away from him. As he felt it drain into him, he found himself being overwhelmed and shaken. At the same time he felt Loki’s shock and made an attempt to lean into him, only to fall, limbs frozen, unable to control the flood of emotions that he was sucking out of Loki as fast as Loki had them. Tony felt anger, not his, worry, not his, surprise, not his and even love that was also not his, before he passed out.

The next thing he was aware of, other than Loki’s emotions, was being carried into their room and placed on the bed. Loki was worried and concerned, about him. That was kind of cool. It made him happy. He tried to send happiness back to Loki. He got more happiness back, along with a sense of being pleased.

They spent the next two and a half hours sending and taking emotions back and forth, before Tony was able to get ahold of himself enough to use his eyes to actually look at a smiling Loki.

“Hi there handsome.” Tony slurred.

“I believe that counts as a real breakthrough.” Loki laughed.

“Now I feel giddy…..um…any idea how to stop this share fest?” Tony noticed they were both laying on the bed. “Or…not.” Sending a very strong physical emotion to Loki.

“We are not going there yet! Try to actively stop thinking about my emotions.” Loki worked on shutting down his side.

It took them another hour to shut down the valve. Then they spent another couple hours gaining control.

Loki also tried an experiment. He shapeshifted into what looked like a very large oversized housecat. The magic valve stopped cold; in fact the only thing left was their ever present Yggdrasil flow.
Tony gasped, it was like New Year’s all over except Loki was in front of him. “What the…I don’t understand… can you hear me… are you okay… change back…please….LOKIIIIIIIIIIIIII!”

Anthony was in a panic while looking directly at very intelligent eyes.

A moment later Loki shifted back. “Anthony I am fine what happened?”

“Give a guy some warning! You went away, you were gone. I couldn’t feel you. It made me feel lost again. What the hell did you do?” Tony was perhaps overreacting but he didn’t need any more nightmare fuel.

“That is an antimagic cat or galdcat from Niflheim. For some reason magic does not work on them; they are very unique beings. Those cuffs that sealed off my magic are based on this animal. I wanted to see what effect shifting into one would have on the link as it locks my magic inside me. I thought it might be fun to surprise you.” Loki grabbed Anthony and pulled him to the bed. “I am sorry, let us practice a bit more by letting me take those emotions from you.”

“Smartass.” Anthony replied feeling better as Loki got to feel his fear of being abandoned.

“I assure you that my ‘smarts’ are in my brain and not my ass.” Loki deadpanned making Tony finally laugh.

They practiced sending and taking emotions a bit more after that. By the time were able to settle down and go to sleep, they had enough control to send, share, take and stop taking emotions.

They woke up late the next day. Trouble had moved from the bed to a sunny place by the window. Tony immediately wanted to know Loki's secrets but it was still not quite enough to satisfy the loophole enabling him to share his research for Phil. Tony was stoked though, he had not expected to make something work so fast and overnight it was useful.

On the way to the throne room Loki said to Tony. “Anthony, please do not use our link today.”

“Why not. You’re gonna be mad and all. I think it would be a great time to see if I can take your anger away.”

“It is too new, if something goes wrong it might be very bad.” Loki sounded strange sort of aloof.

Tony looked at Loki. “We had it working great last night and I used it this morning. I don’t see a problem.”

“Just do not use it. I do not want to worry about it.” Loki insisted sternly.

“What’s wrong buttercup, this isn’t about the link. Are you expecting something to go wrong?”

Tony dug. Feeling how troubled Loki was through the link. Small amounts of emotion had always slipped through on their own.

“Stop it, maybe, I just do not want you to, today.” Loki looked upset.

Tony grabbed Loki and took him into a side corridor. “What’s wrong? You are already leaking agitation, without me doing anything on my side. Tell me now or I make no promises to keep from using it.” He sounded concerned but made his point.
Loki looked up and closed his eyes. “Hemorrhoids, I functioned very well on my own before you… But, confound it, you will not shut up until I tell you will you. Will you?”

“Nope.” Tony spit out quickly.

“I am very likely to be forced to relive one of the worst times of my life. Painful truths may be revealed. I do not want to share it with you. I do not want you or anyone for that matter to know what happened. It is private and painful. I regret many things that happened during that time. You already know more than I have ever told anyone else….” Then he put his forehead against Tony’s and whispered. “I could not bear to have you to judge my actions and emotions of that time. Please.”

Tony put his hands on Loki’s shoulders. “Can I try to send calm and relaxing feelings through? Also since it matters you really are already leaking, just thought you’d want to know.”

“How distressing, thank you for informing me.” He stood up and regained his composure. “You may attempt to send to me as long as you agree not to pull, I suppose I will have to live with the leaks.”

They began to walk again and Tony continued. “Fair enough. See I’m not that much of a pain. All you have to do is give me information. If you tell me why, I understand it. I can understand not wanting to share something….” This time Tony had the ducktape off his mouth before they reached the throne room, less than a minute. Wisely he decided to shut up.

Once inside the throne room they were seated on a comfortable padded bench with a back, beside them was Frigga who was to the right and angled toward Thor who was sitting on the throne. Nearby were several important looking people, one of whom had a white cloak over their face. On the left side of Thor were Sif and the warriors three. Nearby a similar looking area had a few other important people but none had their faces hidden.

Lady Sjurd from Anaheim was announced and brought forth in chains before Thor.

Tony looked around. It was clear the Lady had supporters in that group on the other side.

Thor stood. “You have been charged with casting a death spell on the Allfather’s sleep chamber. How do you plead?”

Lady Sjurd stood proud and announced. “I plead justifiable circumstances forced my hand.”

“And it starts.” Loki murmured to himself.

Thor looked stern. “What circumstances?”

“Ones that involve that monster.” She replied pointing at Loki.

She continued without waiting for a response “And what could possibly justify attacking my former son-in-law? One who planned to murder me, and all my family.” She responded.

“You have proof?” Thor looked skeptical.

“I have a story that must be told, it will reveal the proof.” Lady Sjurd hissed.

Tony could feel Loki tense up.

“We all know how your Sigyn cheated on him. We all know that she disgraced herself. Kidnapped her children and had them killed. That your husband had her lovers killed. What more do you have?”
Thor said angrily. It was clear he didn’t want to hear the story again.

“My husband never wanted her dead. Sigyn loved her children and would never hurt them. Loki killed them and her in a jealous fit. Odin forbid my husband retribution. Loki, the murderous beast, planned to kill us all. He killed my husband and I did what I had to, in order to ensure Odin did not allow him to finish his evil plan. You may have pardoned him but with all the evil things he has done it should be obvious that he is guilty. I have witnesses, even his father knew the truth.” She exclaimed pointing at Loki.

Loki was standing and screaming before she was through. “You know nothing! I would never harm Narfi and Vali. There are things you don’t know! Why would I waste my time plotting against insignificant QUIM LIKE YOU? Your witness is a liar. If she had been there she would be dead!”

A woman from the other side of the room was also standing screaming. “I was there, that monster was out of control and refused to be stopped.”

Pandemonium broke out in the hall. Sif and the warriors three were looking at Loki with mistrust.

Thor stood and bellowed. “Silence!”

Tony finally managed to pull a heavy breathing furious Loki back down.

Thor looked around the suddenly silent room. “We suspected something like this would happen. And since it is a time for truth, Queen Frigga is now going to help us get it.” He held his hand to his mother and she climbed up to stand near Thor.

“I ask that you all sit and be silent now. You are going to watch as we find the truth, no matter how painful it is.” Frigga looked around. She had their attention and curiosity. “I wish to bring forward Myst, Valkyrie and seer of the past.”

Lady Sjurd was pulled from the center and placed in a chair between two guards.

There were gasps around the room as the figure in white stood and threw back her hood to reveal a Valkyrie with clouded eyes. She slowly headed toward the dais. Very quiet whispers were heard.

Loki trembled a bit himself and leaned into Tony’s ear. “Mother has called in an unbelievable favor to have her here. She has not been seen since before I was born. Most believed her a myth… Forgive me.” Then he pulled his hands and arms into his lap and ever so slightly slid away from Tony, refusing to look at him. Tony grabbed one hand anyway inserting his hand into Loki’s lap.

Myst stopped and turned for all to hear. “I only know truths of those who have died. But truths they are, be warned, they are very painful and disturbing.”

The room darkened and a three dimensional stage appeared in the center of the room.

They watched as Sigyn grew up, sexually abused by her father, an incestuous relationship that would only end on her death. A contract between her father and Odin, an army for a marriage and heirs. In reality it was a failed attempt to stop and limit her cheating on a jealous father. Odin needed the army and chose to look the other way as long as the children were Loki’s.

Gasps were heard all around. Tony noticed that Loki remained unmoved, unsurprised.

Tony realized that Loki had been forced to accept this arrangement and tried to his best to send understanding through the link. Loki face was blank but Tony knew it was an illusion feeling tears fall on his hand in Loki’s lap.
“This proves nothing. He still killed her in cold blood.” Lady Sjurd yelled, only to be subdued by her guards.

Frigga spoke. She looked weary and sad now. “I believe there is more.”

Myst showed Sigyn physically abusing her ‘abominations’. Followed by Loki lovingly defending his children, taking them, and abandoning her. Those in attendance watched as Sigyn kidnapped and starved her children, locked them away, tricked her current boyfriend into changing one into a wolf until Odin approached and she forced the half-crazed starved wolf child into attacking its weeping begging brother.

Plenty of emotion was leaking across the link, horror and shame first followed by gut-wrenching sadness and eventually absolute abject mortifying desolation.

Loki had his hand over his downcast face, he had dropped part of the illusion, allowing emotion to show. Around the room no one was unaffected by the visions, tears flowed from many. Even Lady Sjurd was taken aback.

Back in the vision Sigyn was telling Loki and Odin they had taken everything from her and she would take everything from them including their lives. Loki cried “NO.” and leapt toward his children. Sigyn’s boyfriend set a spell off. Odin grabbed Loki and blew the room to nothingness. Sigyn’s last sight was of Loki being physically held by Odin in one arm crying to his children as the world went red then dark.

Lord Bjorn was then seen weeping over Sigyn’s dead body crying ‘if he had only been there’. Then declaring vengeance against Loki and Odin. Telling his family the story lady Sjurd believed.

Loki stood, his voice trembling and looked at Thor. “I request permission to leave.”

Thor nodded and Loki left with Tony running behind to keep up.

Once safe in Loki’s now locked room they laid on the bed. The mask fell and Tony held Loki, who was trembling and crying uncontrollably. He sent comfort and even love, down through the link.

Trouble curled up next to Loki in what appeared to be an attempt to comfort him through her touch.

Tony could not believe what he had seen. From another talk Tony knew Æsir aged quite differently from humans, reaching puberty around fifty and adulthood around one hundred. Loki had been forced to wed at the human equivalent of sixteen and then saddled with the worst arrangement Tony could imagine. No wonder Loki was so screwed up. He felt grateful that America felt arranged marriages were unacceptable by the time he was of age, otherwise he was sure Howard would have auctioned him off to the best offer.

Much later a knock came at the door. Frigga’s voice said. “Loki dear, please let me in.”

Loki nodded to Tony who got up and went over and unlocked the door both physically and magically. Then closed the door and locked it after she was in the room.

“I never knew of it my child. Why did you never tell me?” She sat next to Loki and took one of his
hands. Trouble was now in her lap adjusting herself to find a comfortable place to curl.

Loki looked at Tony as he sat back down and felt the arm go back around him. “I….cannot.” he said clearly implying something.

Tony knew, Loki had told him about the deal. “Frigga, uh Queen Frigga, Odin made a deal with Loki he can’t tell you or he breaks the deal. I don’t think it is an oath but I know I wouldn’t trust your husband at this point.”

Frigga fumed. “That miserable man. I thought he was mostly settled by the time this happened. I won’t press. I can guess though as Loki suddenly had Odin’s blessing to learn more magic and he never allowed anyone to discuss Loki’s hand again.”

“Are you sure you aren’t his real mother? You’re very sharp.” Tony smiled at her.

She winked, “After Thor, for a time, I may have messed with the genetics of Odin’s seed”

This was enough to get a look of unbelief out of Loki and a response of. “What?”

“I wanted a son who was smarter. Thor was such a bulldozer of a child, as soon as he was walking, full steam ahead, without thinking. I just injected a bit of me, enough to ensure that any child got at least some magic and intelligence.” She smiled and squeezed Loki’s hand. “But please don’t tell Thor, I really don’t want to be seen as playing favorites.”

Trouble was purring now. All three of them occasionally rubbed and stroked her head and neck.

“Thank you mother.” Loki said. “I would prefer to hear what else happened after I left, from you. If you do not mind.”

“Certainly my dear, Lady Sjurd made a weak attempt to exonerate herself. The testimony from earlier was recanted, as it was made up from her husband’s word. Lady Sjurd appears to have tried to be a decent mother and did protect the rest of her daughters from her husband. She will be imprisoned and evaluated, then sentenced at a later date. No one blames you. Although many are surprised that you took the blame for their death.”

They talked a bit longer. She sent for dinner even though Loki claimed he wasn’t hungry and she left when it arrived. It had been a long day and they needed rest.

Tony gave Loki some words of comfort. He really couldn’t be expected to be quiet all the time. Eventually he just gave up trying to get a conversation going and helped Loki get ready for bed.

The next day Tony woke to find himself alone in bed. Loki was already in the library researching items. They didn’t talk much that day or the day after. Loki searching for items on Coulson’s list. Tony searching for more information on living enchantments or anything on magic that reduced things to elements. Pecking away at the link, mostly trying language or communication, but really anything that popped into his head. Which was quite a bit, seeing as he was researching enchantments on living thing and specifically multi-person or multi-creature enchantments.

Loki was distant much of the time. Tony knew he was mourning his children, feeling exposed and vulnerable. Who wouldn’t? After having everyone watch the worst parts of his marriage. Tony tried not to talk too much, immersing himself in his research and playing with the link.
Three days later Tony followed Loki down to the stables to see Slepnir. Loki needed to go to Vanaheim for his research and would be leaving Tony for a day.

“Father, I was worried about you.” The big horse said.

“I am fine, you need not worry. I am stronger than you believe.” Loki smiled and hugged his son.

“I was alive then father. I remember how bad it was. I too mourned.” Slepnir spoke softly.

“I am sorry, I forget that at times. How have you been? Are you well? I hope they are not overworking you? I have noticed they are using you to transport between realms a great deal now.” Loki was concerned.

Slepnir’s eyes sparkled. “Nothing I cannot handle, they are careful. Besides uncle Thor is allowing me to earn an income for stud services in exchange for my work. There is usually about one trip a week and I can earn a fee while we are there.”

“Damn, getting paid for all the sex you want.” Tony grinned and looked at Loki wickedly.

“I am glad you are finally sleeping with my father. He was in need of getting laid.”

“What did you say?” Loki pulled away from Slepnir and glared.

“Why everyone is all abuzz with it. I only hear the best gossip.” Slepnir said letting out a gleeful whinny.

“How did they get that idea? As far as they know Stark is staying in my spare room.” Loki looked suspiciously from Tony to Slepnir.

“I didn’t say anything. But we could….” Tony found more ducktape on his mouth, in fact it was all around his head this time.

“What exactly did you hear?” Loki’s squinted his eyes asking Slepnir.

“That Stark took a keg from a banquet and said it was for us in our room. Plus you two have been touching a great deal in public. Besides people know you are bound together. Thor has let things slip but does not explain further. Many suspected you were a couple from your last visit.”

“I will kill them all.” Loki growled.

“Why? When it’s true, sweetheart.” Tony said having removed the tape in record time.

“The tape is becoming ineffective. How would you like to know what it feels like to have your mouth sewn shut?” Loki grinned evilly.

“Not interested. But really, what difference does it make? Please tell me you’re not ashamed.” Tony asked cautiously.

“I have enough problems here without the old prejudices being talked about.” Loki was not cross, well maybe a little.

“Most people have stopped talking about egri father. There are several same sex couples in the nobility now. Thor, with Frigga’s guidance have even encouraged men with magic to be trained.” Slepnir pushed his father with his nose.

“You are trying awfully hard, what are you not telling me?” Loki allowed himself to be pushed and
Tony stepping up to take advantage and hug him.

“I may be guilty of spreading some of those rumors. Perhaps, I may even have a few bets placed, now that I have assets with nothing to use them for. Don’t tell me you haven’t done anything, I will lose quite a bit if you are not actually a couple.” The big horse put his head on Loki’s shoulder.

Loki rolled his eyes. “Anyone but you, I would of course feel obliged to leave as a smoldering pile of ash. Do not ever accuse me of not being a good father. Yes, we are in a relationship.”

“Definitely counts.” Tony smirked. “Although there is still room to experiment, things we haven’t tried.” He added kissing Loki before he could say anything and patting Loki’s butt.

“Great. I will commence on collecting. You are indeed the best father. I hope you remember it will look bad if you kill my future step father before I collect though.” Slepnir whinnied looking across the pasture at some of the mares.

Tony broke the kiss and broke into hysterics. “Oh god, you bet stud service fees didn’t you!”

Slepnir smiled as much as a horse can and nodded his huge head gleefully.

Loki finally smiled too, moving his hands down to Tony’s butt and squeezing it back. “Remind me why I put up with you, my little hemorrhoid?”

They spent the day researching. Tony kept trying things with the link and flirting. Then flirting with the link. They ended up retiring early to deal with the results of the, their, uh-hum, research.

The next morning Loki left for Vanaheim. Tony agreed to stay but only if he got to look at the Bifrost. He knew so much more now than last fall when they had been here. They would also try to send back and forth across the link.

Tony visited Skirnir who remembered him. Tony had also been practicing with transmutation. He was strong there. It was his strongest area. He had been training it using his knowledge of elements, compounds and molecular structures. Now he looked at the Rainbow Bridge and saw part of what was going on.

He had lunch with Thor and Frigga in a room where there were others eating. At another table he saw Snif and the Three Dicks eating. Snif and Fanboy maybe, were talking and pointing at him, with occasional snickers from a mouth filled Voltorb or was it Volleyball? Who remembered names anyway? Hulk Hogan was silent as always. He wondered what mischief they were up too.

After lunch he went back to the Bifrost and looked some more. He needed to look at some of the items like the Tesseract and Thor’s hammer but Thor was busy and it would have to wait.

He was really just thinking, wondering the halls, taking a long route back to Loki’s rooms when he noticed Fanboy and Snif talking.

Snif left and Fanboy walked up to him.

“So you are Loki’s boy toy.” Fandrel stated.

Tony smiled but it didn’t reach his eyes. “I prefer boyfriend or partner.”
“Yes, well he always has liked the strong-willed type. You are indeed not bad looking.” Fandrel was getting close to Tony.

“Thanks, we do make a rather handsome couple.”

“He is such a loser though. You are a friend of Thor right? I am also Thor’s friend. If you are just looking for someone to get closer to Thor, you needn’t pick him.” Fandrel was leering.

Tony backed up. “Not interested in Thor and Loki’s not a loser, don’t understand why you guys seem to think that.” Remembering that very few knew about the enchantment.

“I could show you one of the ways he is a loser…I can guarantee you would have a good time. I am very skilled at the art of lovemaking. You know, he is still a criminal in everyone’s eyes, you do not want to associate with him.” Fandrel was really getting in Tony’s personal space.

“I’m really not interested. I think you should leave me alone.” Tony was annoyed, who did this guy think he was. Then it dawned on him humans weren’t supposed to be in Asgard. Did that make him free game?

“I see he has left you all alone. What a silly thing for him to do with you.” Fandrel had Tony against a wall now. He put his hands on the inventor and went in for a kiss.

Tony reacted before their lips touched. He used his magic to fling Fandrel down the hall and slam him into a wall, yelling. “I said NO, DAMN IT.” He was angry but had controlled his magic perfectly, making Fanboy land just hard enough to dent the gold wall.

“Magic! You are using magic. You are as evil and deceitful as him.” Fandrel sputtered angry and in pain.

Suddenly Thor was there, he had finished his meeting and had been looking for Tony, arriving only to see Fandrel try to kiss Tony and Tony toss Fandrel.

“Friends what is going on?” Thor looked from Fandrel to Tony for answers.

“Tell me Thor is this guy always a motherfucker telling people how worthless your brother is? Do he and that fucking she-bitch, always make backstabbing plans like trying to seduce Loki’s boyfriend just after he’s reminded of his wife’s betrayal…. Never mind. Just a warning though, if they try it again, next time I won’t hold back.” Tony stomped off.

Tony left angry but smiled as he heard thunder and felt the palace rumble. Thor’s voice could be heard laying into his so called friend.

Chapter End Notes

I was out of town when I posted the last chapter and I didn’t feel it was very good. I hope you all find this one better even though it is rather depressing.
Chapter Summary

Tony gives Thor a serious talking to before Loki returns to find Tony was assaulted. Then Tony finally manages to do something through the link that will get him Phil's information, unfortunately he does it in the royal library.

Heimdall sees something terrible is happening on Midgard and the boys need to find Trouble so they can return.

Chapter Notes

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Sometime later a knock came at the door. Thor was waiting outside Loki’s room. Tony let him in. As soon as he entered Trouble started hissing. Tony ended up putting her in the other room.

“Tony, I’m sorry for Fandrel’s behavior, Sif too. There has been a long term prank war going. It was always in good fun. But they went too far this time. They will not be trying that again.” Thor assured him.

“Thor, that is not going too far. That is a personal vendetta out for vengeance. Did stuff like that happen before he fell? Did you take part?” Tony asked not able to believe Thor was making excuses for someone trying to sexually assault him.

“No, it didn’t. Well not usually.” Thor looked down.

“Tell me now. Was it really just pranks or did they hurt? Would you let them do that to Jane?” Tony had heard Loki say a few things but really didn’t have many details.

“I would never let them do it to Jane. She would be upset, it would hurt her. Loki likes pranks, he didn’t mind.” Thor explained.

Tony shook his head. “I assure you Loki minded. And it hurt him. Do you even want to repair the relationship with your brother?” Tony was getting angry again.

“Of course. I would never agree to help them now.” Thor defended himself again.

“You need to do more than that. How the hell do you to expect anyone to respect Loki if you allow them to badmouth and spread rumors about him?” Tony spit out loudly.

“But I am not. Why does what they do matter? I have told everyone he is pardoned and to be treated as a prince again.” Thor said, he looked so sad.
Tony was frustrated, did Thor really not see? He took a deep breath and reined his anger in a bit. “Look. As your best friends, they sort of represent you. If people see and hear them disrespect Loki they will assume that you do too. You may not see it but people work that way. People think, if the prince’s friends, who know Loki, act as if he is a bad seed, and see that his brother Thor doesn’t stand up and support the honor of his brother. Well, they assume you think that way too. It's even worse now that you are king, because you could certainly stop them now if you wanted.”

Thor sat there thinking. Reality dawning in his mind. He looked at Tony. “How do I fix this? I don’t want to hurt my friends.”

“Are they above the law? Fanboy and Snif plotted something today that others would be punished for right?”

Thor nodded slowly after realizing Tony meant Fandrel and Sif.

“If you let them get away with it you are condoning their actions to everyone and not just Loki. You are putting them above the law because they are your friends. Is that the kind of king you want to be? You have always allowed them to hurt him and get away with it because they were your friends. You wonder why Loki hates you. How many times did he rescue you? Yet you never stood up for him.” Tony was losing it despite Thor looking like a kicked puppy. “It makes me so mad that you didn’t understand how much you have been hurting him. I think you need to leave and go think on it. Maybe you should tell your mother. See what she says.” He snarled.

Thor looked up. “Yes, that is a great idea. She always has the right answers.” Then he got up and left.

Tony closed his eyes and put his hand over them. “Aww shit. I think I just fucked up again.”

When Loki returned, the first thing he asked was, “Why is Trouble shut up and hiding in the bathroom? You were upset earlier, your emotion seeped through.” He opened the door releasing Trouble.

Tony carefully had Loki sit on the bed, put Trouble on his lap and massaged his back while telling him about his day.

Loki was fortunately prepared for something and did not quite destroy the whole room. He never got to tell him about the talk with Thor.

Breakfast the next morning was very subdued, Loki fuming silently waiting for Thor to say something. Tony nervously watching Frigga. Thor looking like his world had shattered. And Frigga sitting tall and proud, and maybe just a little bit cross.

Finally Tony broke the silence. “I was thinking about the rainbow bridge and fixing it. Uh, do you think it would be possible for me to look at the Tesseract? The last time I saw it I didn’t have magic.”

“It is kept in the vault. Loki can take you there. The guards will let you in with him.” Thor said.

Loki glared. “You really think so? Since I am clearly still a criminal, evil and dishonest in everyone’s eyes.”

Thor winced. “They will let you in.”
“And what if Sif or Volstagg are there and say no? Do you really think they will listen to me?” Loki’s tone full of bitter scorn.

“They WILL listen to you now.” Frigga said testily.

Loki looked curiously at his mother, she rarely showed her anger. “Mother? You have heard what transpired?” He saw her nod very slightly.

“Yes, how long have you been keeping things from me? I have heard rumors over the years but you never said a word. I could not act on rumors. Now I have heard and have acted. So has Thor. I expect you to tell me when you are treated with such disrespect. I will not allow it.” She scolded Loki who was looking rather like a wounded child.

Tony now winced gaining the attention of the other three.

“I want to thank you Anthony Stark for sending Thor to me to talk. It was long overdue. It is a shame that an outsider had to be the one to get her children to do it.” Frigga was clearly pissed.

Loki looked with disbelief. “You got Thor to tell our mother?” Then he looked at Frigga. “It began when Odin forbade me from telling you anything negative about Thor or his friends.” Then he hung his head in shame.

“So what happened to them?” Good old Tony, could always be counted on to ask.

“I fear we were forced to be lenient on them because it is a first official offense.” Frigga said in a stern scolding voice, clearly disappointed that she had not been informed earlier. “Fandrel will be spending three months in prison and will be unable to have sex for the next decade. He is lucky we did not make it permanent given the circumstances. Sif will be cleaning out the royal stables by herself whenever she is in Asgard and not doing something very time consuming for the crown for the next decade. I plan to make sure she is not too busy. Volstagg is only guilty of not stopping the plot, he has been put on a diet with his favorite foods magically made to taste bad for three years. Hogan is tasked with enforcing the punishments of Sif and Volstagg, facing punishment himself if theirs are not enforced.” By the end she was smiling again albeit rather evilly.

“They now know if they say anything negative about Loki or his partner to anyone, they will face me in challenge.” Thor added, looking down. “I was forced to make this clear and had to extend Sif’s sentence from five to 10 years… When I found her, to inform her of her sentence, she was already blaming Tony Stark for coming on to Fandrel. I am sorry, I had not realized their hatred for Loki ran so deep. I truly convinced myself that it was good fun, since it never happened in battle, when we needed Loki. I have only myself to blame for not seeing it had gone way beyond pranks.” He sounded miserable.

Loki looked at Thor and smiled. “Very good brother. You might become worthy to be a king yet.”

Breakfast didn’t last much longer, but the tension was greatly reduced if not gone and conversation returned to pleasant things.

Tony’s attempt to pass words through the link was an utter disappointment. He could not make it work. Emotions were not enough to learn what Coulson and Loki were doing. He had been reading the same page for nearly an hour. It was talking about a multi part item that a Jotnar could send his ice powers to pets through. Where the Jotnar was the base himself.

Suddenly he remembered that Loki was a Jotnar. Tony’s fireballs were already pretty good, but he
had never tried ice. For that matter he had never seen Loki use his Jotun abilities before. Now he had a description of a simple one on paper before him. Couldn’t hurt to try right? He looked at the description of how it worked for the Jotnar. Then after mentally preparing himself, he tried to borrow a natural ability to form ice from Loki.

A spike of Ice shot up from the floor. He jumped back as Loki stood up from the table and the alarms started blaring. Tony briefly felt discomfort that dissipated.

“What have you done?” Loki screamed, holding his head as if in pain and staring at the ice and leaning over.

“I was just using the link.” Tony looked at Loki who bending over further. He ran to Loki and grabbed him. Something was wrong. “I’m sorry, are you all right? Please tell me you are going to be alright. Do you know why the alarms are blaring? Loki? Can you talk to me? What’s wrong? I didn’t mean to fuck up. Really it was an accident. Help someone.”

The guards arrived immediately, saw the ice and started screaming about evil frost giants. That was followed by a complete search of the library. As some started searching others grabbed Tony and tore him away from Loki who was still doubled over. They carefully picked up Loki and forcefully dragged Tony behind him. Question were shot at him about what he saw and what had happened to Loki. Tony didn’t want to mention that Loki was a frost giant. The result was it didn’t take long before they were accusing him of hurting the prince or letting in a frost giant. He mostly kept his mouth shut and changed the subject insisting on going to the healing wing.

Thor met them there. “What has happen friend Tony?” Eir was already there examining Loki. There were two guards still behind Tony.

“I did a magic experiment, the alarms went off and Loki fell over.” Tony said, then looking at the guards. “Can we have a moment please, uh security, top secret, private stuff. Thor?”

Thor nodded and everyone backed off but Eir, leaving Thor and Tony sitting very alone by Loki’s bed.

Eir said. “I believe he has somehow tripped the defenses on the library. And was attacked by them.”

“But Loki knows better than any, not to trip those. It is he that does most to make sure the defenses are maintained.” Thor complained as he waved a dismissal to the guards who could not hear but were still watching.

Tony watched them leave and looked crestfallen. “I tried to borrow a frost giant ability through the link.”

“Well that would explain it. He must have taken the damage for you.” Eir stood up. “You can take him back to his room he will recover in a few hours.

“What? How? It should have been me?” Tony sputtered, feeling even worse.

“I won’t even pretend to understand your link. You must ask the young prince when he awakens.” Eir stated and left.

“Did Loki not tell you that magic was not to be done in the library?” Thor said expectantly. Then standing. “Take him. You should leave the healing wing with him. I must go and explain it was an accident.”

“No, we never talked about it one way or another.” Tony stood and realized that Thor was waiting
on him to pick up Loki. “Oh sorry. Guess I owe you for the trouble.” Then he picked up Loki carefully, and to his surprise found his strength was enough to do it easily.

Thor laid his hand on Tony’s shoulder. “Just come up with a way to speed up the repair of the Bifrost my friend, then I shall be in debt to you.” Then he turned and left.

Tony followed Thor out of the infirmary but headed up to Loki’s suite. He momentarily felt weird carrying Loki into the suite, bridal style, man, he was going to have to have a good talk with himself one of these days about his issues again. But not today.

A few hours later found Tony on the bed, his back leaning against the wall, with Loki’s head in his lap. He was looking at a tablet when he heard his god stir.

“I do not think my head will ever be the same.” Loki groaned and opened his eyes to see Tony very concerned looking down at him.

“Sorry?” Tony smiled ashamedly.

“What exactly did you think you were doing down there?” Loki covered his eye with an arm.

“You said I needed to make the link do something else before you could tell me. I was trying something I hadn’t tried before.” Tony defended himself.

“You continuously surprise me. How can a so called genius use his brain so little? Given what you have learned about Asgard, what could possibly give you the impression that using not only magic but frost giant magic in the library might be a good idea?” Loki growled and winced from pain.

“We’ve been using the bond without any problems. Sending things back and forth. You never told me I couldn’t.” Tony whined.

“If I told you every rule and regulation about every place we go, we would get nothing done. I assumed you would remember that the link is internal and not detectable and that rare and fragile books might have some protections in place.” Loki said and winced as he tried to move his head.

“Of course I’d assume they had protections. Not that they would attack though.” Tony argued.

“I should have allowed you to take the attack. Perhaps I should share this pain with you.” He was moving to a sitting position trying to keep the light away from his eyes.

“Wait, you really took the pain from me? Why do that for me? I mean it was my mistake.”

“Because I knew it would hurt you more and take you longer to recover than me since I made most of the defenses. I was attempting to protect you. Besides you are still my apprentice, despite it no longer being a cast spell.” Loki said and waved a hand making the room darker.

Tony got up and walked over to a tea pot. He carefully used his magic to warm it up and poured a cup for Loki. “Thanks, umm sorry. Here your mom taught me how to make your tea.”

He took the cup. “She has been here?” Loki sighed.

“No, actually I asked her the day you were gone. Just thought I might surprise you when we got back home.” Tony sat back on the bed next to Loki.

Loki smiled just a little. “Did you now. So what gave you the idea to try to borrow a frost giant
“It was an item description I was looking at. Then I realized I’d never tried to borrow something you were born with through the link. The power was described really well, so I tried it.” Tony shrugged.

“Magic is like that. Sometimes you work on something forever and it slowly works like your gaining control over fire. Other times you practice and seem to get nowhere and suddenly it works all at once like the emotions going through the link. Then there are times that you understand something so well to begin with that you can make it work quickly, as you did when you altered the glue on that silly tape. And every once in a while something happens on the first try, we often blame it on the Norns or fate because it never seems to happen in simple practice.” Loki explained.

“Oh, so what was the reason for today? It seemed pretty simple, well until it worked, and the guards came and you fell over. Okay so I guess there was lots of commotion. Was there more to it then?” Tony questioned.

“Ah fate, that is the thing, you are never sure. I suspect I need to tell you about Coulson’s list, but it could be more.” Loki said.

“What about your frost giant powers? I didn’t know you could create ice like that if I hadn’t read about it. You don’t talk about it, like ever. You mom has said more about it than you and I live with you. Hell, I’ve never even seen you as one. What CAN you do?” Tony inquired.

Loki huffed and took a sip of his tea and said very coldly. “Anthony Stark, I cannot wipe the knowledge that I am one from your brain without doing serious damage. There are a few facts about my physiology that I have given Jarvis in case of a medical emergency. You should consider the subject off limits.” Loki sipped his tea in silence for a moment. “Besides don’t you want to know about Coulson and the missing items?”

Tony could recognize Loki actively switching topics on him. He momentarily thought about pushing the issue but by using only a very small part of that genius of a brain, concluded that now was certainly not the time, even if his Norns were hinting that those abilities needed to be looked into. So he went with his gut response and jumped at the chance to learn about Coulson’s missing items.

“Yes! Missing? Tell me now before I drool out in anticipation.” Tony joked.

“Well you remember us asking about my staff and Fury said he would look into it. It turns out it has been missing for quite some time, along with a fairly long list of other non-Midgardian items.” Loki explained.

Loki showed Tony the list, his added notes and explained about the Illitplass portal item. There was a bit more research to do. He had one more item that he suspected might cause quite a bit of trouble if Hydra learned to use it. He had been looking for a better description when he had left Tony that day. The item stole and converted power.

Loki spent a bunch of time talking in weird circles avoiding telling Anthony that Frigga needed to know about the Illitplass portal item. Tony finally got the message and decided leaving Frigga written research notes in an envelope for her when they left was safe and uncomplicated.

They kept talking, moving on to Tony’s ideas to speed up the Bifrost construction. Loki was impressed. Despite Tony being an idiot at times, he really was capable of figuring out impossible solutions. They needed to make an item for Skirnir before they left.

The next day their idea was well received by both Thor and Skirnir.
They returned to Loki’s room to pick up some things they might need and noticed that Trouble had managed to escape the room. Deciding she would return when she was hungry they went to try to finish up their research.

Later that afternoon Thor appeared, saying something was up. He thought they might need to go back to Midgard. They gathered their notes and went to see Heimdall.

“Heimdall, I need you to look at Midgard, at Stark tower and my shield brothers.” Thor commanded.

“I see a great deal of confusion at the tower you speak of. Something has happened, it appears to have to do with your Captain America. If you give me a moment I will try to find him.” Heimdall stood tall and told his king. “He is on his way back from your capital. He is wounded, your friend Natasha Romanoff is with him. There is a building with a broken SHIELD emblem on it that has many fires and large broken machines outside.”

“Shit we need to get back there Lokes. Like yesterday.” Tony said.

Then Loki looked cross. “We need to find Trouble, she seems to have left our rooms. Then we shall be ready. Please excuse us Thor.” Loki said.

“I, uh, think she has taken control of the throne room.” Thor said sheepishly.

A guard met them at the door of the throne room. There they found her. She was sitting on the Throne hissing at Thor and anyone else who tried to come near her. All claws and teeth.

“Brother, I have found your she-beast.” Thor boomed, then licked his bloody fingers after trying to pick her up.

“What did you do to her? You clearly provoked her, she is a gentle thing. You do know cats need to be handled with care and respect. Did you try to pick her up by her tail by chance?” Loki berated his brother and the guards in the room.

“No brother, she climbed into Hlidskjalf this morning and has not let anyone near since.” Thor said. “They tell me there are many who have gone to Eir with cuts and scratches. She has guarded Hlidskjalf well, nay too well, even I cannot approach. I fear she will kill anyone who tries to disturb her majesty.”

Of course now she just sat looking regal like she belonged there. Tony feeling the need to get back to Earth, ignored the nervous guards and Thor. He just walked up and carefully picked her up.

She purred and rubbed her nose in Tony’s face.

“Yes Thor, she is indeed a killer.” Loki smirked opening a box they had found to take her back in.

“Be glad she likes you. I believe she could take on several bilge-snipes at once and win.” Thor said shaking his head at how gentile she was suddenly. “Have a safe journey. Perhaps next time you might leave her home.”

“Thanks.” Tony snickered to Thor, like they had planned to bring her. “Now let’s get going hot stuff.” To Loki.

Frigga came to say goodbye. “Be careful Loki. I am seeing a great deal of tears and wailing in the future now. I am sure you yourself are in grave danger. It is getting closer. Protect him Anthony.” Frigga told them.
“I’ll do my best. Thanks for the hospitality.” Tony said and they headed back to Earth.
The Winter Soldier is Sighted

Chapter Summary

While Tony and Loki were gone to Asgard Phil and Jarvis worked in secret. Most of the events of the Winter Soldier happened. Jormungandr wants to move out because the Avengers are driving him crazy.

Chapter Notes

Things have happened to change things so the events of the Winter Soldier do not happen in the same order as in the movie. Most notably it is Phil and Jarvis that discover project Insight and the Zola computer has not yet been found and destroyed when the events at the SHIELD Triskelion building take place.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony and Loki arrived back at the tower. The top floors were in full emergency alert, meaning if you did not have a clearance code saying you lived there you were not getting up there. Not even guests were allowed. At least it wasn’t full emergency lockdown which would have meant that the tower itself had been breached.

As they walked in and headed to the elevator they failed to see anyone. “What the hell is going on here?” Tony demanded. “Did someone see a ghost and everyone is on the roof chanting ‘Zuul’?”

“Zuul would be the wrong being to invoke right now. He and Gozer would stifle the party. Well unless you brought graham crackers and chocolate.” Loki smirked.

“Wow, you got that and came back, I’m so proud of you.” Tony smiled. “J, status?” They dropped all the bags except for the box Trouble was in.

“Sir, it appears Hydra has attacked from within SHIELD. Ms. Romanoff dumped all of SHIELD’s files onto the internet and is currently with Mr. Rogers and Mr. Wilson in sick bay where Dr. Banner is looking at them. Mr. Barton is in his room, talking rather loudly with Mr. Coulson over the phone, clutching the Tumbler of Oaths that Master Loki and Mr. Odinson made. Miss Potts is currently in the air flying to New York to, I quote; ‘deal with this shit again.’ Colonel Rhodes is in Washington using War Machine to help clean up the wreckage in and around what was the SHIELD Triskelion building. Director Fury is presumed dead having died during an operation to save his life. Ms. Maria Hill is currently trapped inside the Helicarrier along with the rest of the crew above the North Atlantic of which I have on lockdown. Mr. Jormungandr has locked himself in his room and is
refusing to talk to anyone but remains in perfect condition.”

Jarvis paused a moment and changed his tone to concern. “I am afraid the worst of it is, it appears Miss Trouble is missing. We have been searching for her since you left, even checking shelters, animal control and police reports. She has not been captured on any security film anywhere in the building or the city; I have been checking. Her disappearance remains a mystery. Sir, is there anyone else you want an update on or more detail about at the moment?” Jarvis finished just after the elevator door opened and they reached sick bay.

“Maybe later, Thanks J. Oh, and Trouble was with us.” Tony said realizing Jarvis clearly didn’t have footage of Trouble getting into his suitcase, darn. They went down to the infirmary and opened the door to see Steve sitting on the table with bandages on him.

“It was Bucky, I know it was. I have to find him. He remembered at the end, he saved my life.” Steve was saying to Sam, Bruce and Natasha.

“Bucky? This is someone you know Captain?” Loki inquired.

At the same time. “I can’t leave you guys alone on Earth for a minute without you wreaking the place.” Tony said announcing his presence while opening the box to let Trouble out.

They quickly got Tony and Loki up to speed on what had transpired while they were gone. When Tony and Loki left, Phil Coulson had enlisted Jarvis’s help breaking into SHIELD’s files for him. He then sent Clint, Natasha, Steve and Sam on missions to gather evidence from various places. He continued to investigate and work with Jarvis to break codes and search for more evidence.

Coulson had told Fury about some of it and he in turn had gone to confront Alexander Pierce about a project that they had discovered called Insight. He had suggested that perhaps they needed to review the plans for the Insight Helicarriers. Nick had been attacked shortly thereafter by the Winter Soldier and escaped wounded. He went to Steve and Sam who had been in an apartment Stark owned but used by the Avengers when in Washington. He later died on the operating table.

Jarvis had discovered through files that Jasper Sitwell, a high ranking friend of Phil’s, was a Hydra agent. What they learned about project Insight from Sitwell was mortifying. The plot to kill potential risks to Hydra outraged everyone. It had meant killing many intelligent questioning people young and old, even children.

The disruption and loss of Stark funding and search for new funding had set them back several weeks. Hydra had manipulated SHIELD into focusing on getting the helicarriers in the air. The decision was made to keep the original launch date and finish the helicarriers while underway.

The World Security Council (WSC) members had gathered together for the launch. Fury had told the Avengers about the meeting and they infiltrated the Triskelion again. Steve broadcast throughout the building the discovery of Hydra and project Insight. Fights had ensued and all the WSC members, including Pierce (who turned out to be Hydra), were killed.

Natasha said she had dumped all SHIELD files onto the Internet. Jarvis informed them that he had stopped anything really sensitive about them personally from being dumped onto the net as he had a bit of warning and had taken steps accordingly a couple weeks ago. Unfortunately he could only protect so much without making the files look tampered with.

Meanwhile Steve and Sam were still in the building and had been assigned to get controller chips out of the Helicarriers before they took off. The fight that ensued was where Steve had discovered Bucky. The Winter Soldier despite fighting to kill Captain America had eventually questioned
himself and even rescued Steve. Barton with the help of Jarvis had managed to sabotage the helicarriers once Steve and Sam had the new chips in place.

They had boogied and regrouped at Stark tower when the US military finally showed up to intervene at the request of Phil Coulson. Phil was currently at the SHIELD Triskelion Building dealing with the US military as they gathered everyone they could find.

Clint came into the infirmary before long having delegated what he was doing. He was angry and tense, although he was glad Tony and Loki were back. He demanded to know how to use the Tumbler of Oaths. Previously he had always let others use it, but now he wouldn’t let it out of his hands. He didn’t trust anyone right now with the possible exception of Coulson and that was marginal.

Loki of all people calmed him down a bit, by showing him how to use the device along with giving him a wording for a simple truth oath that might make things go faster. The sorcerer found himself approved person numero two, after he took an oath declaring he was not Hydra.

Clint made them all take oaths they were not Hydra. He turned to Trouble and had a very long staring contest as he tried to figure out if she could be made to even take an oath or if she was trustworthy. She won the contest and he concluded she wasn’t trustworthy.

“I’m sure she’s a spy. I just don’t think its Hydra she works for. She can’t talk so I’ll let it go this time. You guys should watch what you say in front of her though.” Clint warned them all afterwards, while Trouble was rubbing everyone’s legs, re-marking them as hers.

“Really, the cat? Who has access to her even if she was a spy and could talk?” Sam asked looking very skeptical.

Clint’s eyes turned to Loki. “She could easily be yours. I think she plays mind games with us. Just because you’re not Hydra doesn’t mean you’re not playing a very deep game with us.”

Loki’s eyes popped a bit he thought Clint had trusted him.

It was Tony who spoke next though. “Could she be a spy Lokes? She really gets around. Are you holding out all the juicy tidbits she is getting as she spies for you? Do you have naked pictures of Natasha you haven’t shared? Maybe Steve?”

Sam looked at Trouble then at Loki and finally Tony. “I’m not sure it makes sense, you could have killed us all several times over if you wanted too and I don’t think she hears much that you don’t already know.”

“Is it even possible to use a cat as a transmitter or an information storage device?” Bruce questioned.

“You have Trouble taking naked pictures of Natasha and me?” Steve looked up from where he sat only half listening.

“I do wonder if she is really from earth.” Bruce said.

“Humans, she is a cat from a shelter. An earth cat. She had an owner who died because of ME! They told that us when Tony and I adopted her. We have run tests on her several times. What kind of things are you imagining? She is not a Norn or my mother would have noticed because she get information from them and would have told me. Are you saying the things she does are not what normal cats do?” Loki exclaimed with exasperation.
It was Natasha’s turn to talk as she grabbed Trouble and picked her up. “No, everything she has been caught doing is something normal housecats might do. Just not everything in one cat. She is remarkable but I think that it is unlikely she is something else.”

Trouble put her ears back and held still, tolerating Natasha’s loving on her.

Clint shook his head. “I can’t believe she has you fooled too Nat. Anyway Phil said, that the Helicarrier over that North Atlantic was our first priority. It’s on lockdown with all the bulkheads sealed and I understand that there is a hacker trying to break the control from Jarvis.”

“I assure you Mr. Barton, that I am quite capable of keeping the person, that I would hardly call a hacker, busy for quite some time. In fact there is also enough fuel to keep the carrier in the air for several days.” Jarvis announced.

Tony smiled. “J I know you can. If all the doors are sealed that means there are people who might be in need of creature comforts. Why are you controlling the helicarrier anyway? Tell me I don’t need to worry about mutiny, Jarvis?” Tony smirked.

“Of course not, Sir. It just felt prudent to take control over the only remaining helicarrier rather than let it fall into Hydra’s hands. It was a contingency that Mr. Coulson set up with me just after you left.”

“I didn’t know you could do it. Good job by the way.” Tony thanked Jarvis. “So was it your idea?”

“Sir, it was Mr. Coulson’s idea. I have informed him you have returned. He wishes to speak with you and Master Loki when he has a free moment. Perhaps later this evening after you have dealt with the helicarrier. Meanwhile he requests that if there is any way to magically speed up the process of determining who is Hydra and who is not, he would greatly appreciate it.”

Loki shook his head and looked at Clint. “Come Stark, Barton, it appears we have a great deal of work to do.”

As they left Tony grumbled. “We should have stayed in Asgard.”

Loki made a second temporary oath item Tony could use. The group trusted Loki enough now to use his own ability to tell when people were lying, bringing the number who could sort out Hydra spies to three. Even Clint admitted he didn’t think Loki was planning something. He’d just seen too many ‘good’ people proven to be Hydra over the last two days.

They went to the Helicarrier first. Hunger wasn’t the first thing on many minds, rather it was mad dashes to bathrooms. When they finished and left, there were cells full of Hydra agents. Surprisingly, there were still enough loyal personnel to pilot the craft, barely, and they set it down into the water.

They met Coulson along with Colonel Rhodes in Washington. Phil informed them that Fury was officially dead in spite of the fact his ‘ghost’ had helped Natasha dump the files onto the internet. He was minimally taking a break for an undetermined amount of time.

When the US military had finally intervened, they didn’t know who was ally or enemy. Rhodey had assured them that the Avengers had a way to sort it out. So for now they had corralled everyone who worked there or was a visitor. Then they had even gone out and collected anyone who had been absent from work at the time of the attack and were keeping them sitting in small groups in the now empty hanger with many military guards.
There were a number of casualties from the battle including several who had committed suicide once they were captured. The bodies had been pulled aside and put into a room with the AC as cool as the settings would allow. The dead had not yet been tagged, bagged or prepared to leave the site yet, when the Avengers arrived.

They walked into the cold room where they were storing the bodies. One of them moved accompanies by the sound of gas. “Shit, they’re moving! Should we expect a zombie apocalypse now? Wouldn’t put it past Hydra.” Tony exclaimed backing to a wall and raising a repulsor covered hand and giving a short blast.

“Tony, you know sometimes there’s gas in their systems that needs to get out. There are no Zombies.” Rhodey told him.

Tony walked around and went up to one that looked a little healthier and kicked it. “You sure?”

Phil looked calmly at Tony. “There are psychoactive substances that might cause one to believe someone is acting like a zombie but our research in Haiti was unable to prove anything like zombies exist.”

“God, I can’t believe you actually tried to make zombies. Scratch that. I can’t believe that I was surprised that SHIELD tried to make zombies.” Tony muttered in surprise.

“Have we showed Cap any zombie movies? I bet he doesn’t even know what they are.” Clint laughed thinking about it raising his arms in front of him, hands hanging taking a few steps and dragging one foot playing zombie.

“Guess we’re in for a zombie movie marathon when we get back home.” Sam shook his head at Clint.

One of other corpses suddenly started to lift up with its arms out as if mocking Clint. Several guns were out and shooting faster than you could scream.

Tony had backed up, jumped and rammed his elbow into a wall when the one started to get up. “You asshole!” Tony winced as he rubbed his arm looking at Loki who was barely holding in his laughter.

There were also several embarrassed guards putting their guns down looking sheepish.

“You just looked disappointed there were no Zombies.” Said Loki who was now bending over in hysterics and followed shortly by Clint.

Even Natasha smirked.

“I can assure you that your movie zombies are not real Stark. Death does not give up her souls easily.’” Loki gasped between laughs.

Coulson looked at the worried guards and smiled. “Telekinesis. Really, a pretty good trick.” Which he amended to “or rather a great display of trained magic.” After Phil saw Loki gave him a nasty glare between laughs at the word ‘trick’.

One short discussion later, they assigned someone to make sure all the bodies were dead. Tony postulating he wouldn’t be surprised if a Hydra agent pretended to be dead.

Dealing with the immediate fallout took three days. It was not helped by the fact someone tried to unsuccessfully, get a bomb into the hanger twice and poisonous gas once. Hydra really didn’t want
Meanwhile Jor had to move out, he was going crazy. Avoiding most of the group over the last few months had become a challenge. He was still enjoying working with Bruce. The two of them worked like well-oiled cogs in a machine when placed in a lab together.

The night after they returned from Washington Jor came up to the Penthouse where Tony was standing near the bar. Tony noticed he seemed nervous or stressed about something.

Leave it to Stark to change the mood. “Hey, what’s up Puff?” Tony joked.

Jor snorted and released enough fire to singe the trademarked beard.

“Damn, what knight’s been out hunting dragons? LOKI, YOUR SON IS HERE AND IN A BAD MOOD.” Tony called for his lover.

Loki appeared next to Tony and laughed. “You should not tease him when you can see his mood is off. Ever hear the saying do not pull the dragon’s tail?”

“It’s sleeping lion here.” Tony grumbled finding a mirror to try to primp his poor damaged abused goatee. He really hoped he wouldn’t have to shave it. Maybe he could use an artist marker for a couple days. He kept it short enough that fake ones looked fake.

Trouble stalked in to see what the commotion was. Tony was sure she was laughing at him as she tried to get between him and a wall mirror by jumping across from a conveniently placed cat tower into his arms then bounding to her overhead walking trail.

“What is wrong Jor? You look like someone stole your favorite toy.” Loki asked.

He went to Loki and said “Pa, I need to ask you something.”

Well that was enough to practically choke Loki up. Jor had only called him that as a small happy child.

“Whatever it is we will solve it. Tell me.” Loki smiled and put an arm around his son.

Jor looked away. “I hate living where there are so many people. I do not want to leave Midgard but I need a place to retreat to.”

Tony who had not yet tried magic on his beard, looked at him. “I didn’t think they were bothering you that much, you get along with Bruce and Steve seems to really like you. J says the others don’t talk to you much.”

Jor grimaced at the mention of Steve. “Bruce is fine. We can work or sit in the same room for hours silently working or whatever. Steve wants a buddy. He wants someone he can do things with, and talk to. The other day he came to tell me he would not be around if I wanted him for the morning because he would be running off some steam, working out and taking a shower. He even apologized for not calling me while he was in Washington or being very attentive the last few days. It is not like we are in a relationship. I feel like he thinks we are teenage best friends. I have never approached him first. I hate having to find reasons not to do things with him as he looks so lonely when I do.

Normally the rest of your Avengers leave me alone except when there is high levels of stress. Clint came down and made me take an oath that I was not Hydra. Apparently I am considered safe to
them, first by Bruce and Jane, now by Clint. Bruce explained it to me that they are trying to use me as a therapist since I listen rather than fall asleep on them as he does. “

Tony, who had figured out that he might be able to fix his precious beard by transmogrifying it and had started to do so, laughed out loud. “Are you sure you’re not a goat instead of a dragon? Because you’re such a good nanny.”

What was left of Tony’s beard was now gone and his face, in fact his whole head had a lovely burn with a bit of white ash where his hair used to be. It seemed a sensitive Jor didn’t take the joke well. “I am not a nanny goat, you pimple! I’m trying to be serious for once. If you can’t help go try to squeeze your head maybe the stupidity will squirt out.”

Loki didn’t help. “My little hemorrhoid has a pimple for a head. You should probably silence yourself before he give you warts and hives. I’d hate to see the bees and toads that would accompany them ruin the furniture. Now be still while I talk to my son.”

Tony just turned back to the mirror and listened while thinking about his poor head and skin diseases. At least Trouble was now rubbing against him. He was sure she was being sympathetic as he picked her up to snuggle.

Loki turned once again to Jor with realization dawning. Jor was indeed a dragon. Dragons usually lived very solitary lives spending years alone or with a very few trusted souls. It was why Jor had not been as disturbed about being confined as he was. Extremely social dragons might live near a village and visit once a week. The whole east coast of America was so densely populated that Jor certainly could not even go for a walk alone.

“Jarvis, do I have enough money to buy a decent sized island from what I’ve made from Stark industries?” Loki asked.

“Master Loki, I’m sorry to say that while you have accrued a lot of money, Islands tend to be quite expensive. You might be able to afford a very small one if you don’t care where it is.” Jarvis responded.

“What do you want to do on this Island?” Tony asked deciding his beard and hair was sadly a lost cause for the moment.

Jor sighed and moved away from Loki and started pacing. “Well, sleep peacefully for one thing. I wouldn’t mind a few people far away as long as they were not close and didn’t bother me.” Tony’s eyes twinkled. “I think I have a solution. Except working with Bruce here may be a problem.” And if he was lucky it might even save his poor head.

“Really?” Loki looked interested.

“Yeah, I’ve got a big island up off the coast of Maine. SI is doing secret research on some of the stuff Maya Hanson was working on. Attempting to find some sort of way to safely repair lost limbs. There are only a few very trusted researchers and their families there.”

Loki hissed at Stark. “You what? Extremis? Have you gone mad? Has your mind been invaded by dung beetles who replaced part of your brain? You better than most should know that is not something that should be played with you pinhead! Do you intend to invite Hydra to your secret playground too? Were you keeping this from me on purpose?” Loki was fuming.

Tony swiftly concluded Loki was the bigger dragon in the room as Trouble jumped down at the noise. Tony’s voice was steady. “Wait, let me explain. I gave them her earlier research, before
extremis. It had some merit and I hoped that they would be able to safely figure out how to regrow limbs for like: children. You remember when I asked you if we could use the Tumbler of Oaths for SI on some researchers and their families last summer while you were trying to figure out how to stabilize me? Well it was them for that research. I wasn’t intentionally keeping it a secret. Bruce has been overseeing it. In fact I think Jor may have even gone with Bruce to visit the Island.” This was a worthwhile project, he wanted some good to come from Maya’s sacrifice.

Loki was silently fuming when Jor looked at them. “Yes, I remember looking at the research and I did go there with Bruce. They are …..” Jor continued on detailing what they were doing using Maya’s research along with research that had been published elsewhere.

By the time he was done Loki had calmed down some. Tony suspected they would revisit this later.

“Anyway,” Tony started up again. “It’s a pretty big island and they are at one end. I could even give you your own lab there. I have a large empty building that I built at the same time on the other end for future research. It’s just a shell right now, but we could build it out to your specs.” Tony smiled. “You could set up your protections on that end. There’s already a place to land the twin jet on the island.”

“I remember liking the island. Perhaps Bruce and I could take turns visiting. I bet Hulk would like the place too. There is room for him to run.” Jor smiled at last.

Tony dismissed the sudden thought of Jor and Bruce getting together, too weird. “I’m sure something can be arranged.”

Jor smiled and waved his hand. Tony’s hair and beard reappeared de-singed. “I knew you would make a good step mother! Now you just need to learn how to turn into a dragon so you can go flying with dad and I.”

“I got a suit, haven’t I? Just because I’m not a shapeshifter doesn’t mean I can’t conquer and win!” Tony said smugly.

Both Jor and Loki rolled their eyes. Tony noticed it was perfectly timed and exactly the same way and laughed.

Steve was not himself. He had fought Bucky who had sort of recognized him. He was sure of it. He was helping with the mess but was clearly distracted. He asked nearly demanding permission to have Jarvis start a facial recognition on the east coast to start tracking Bucky. Tony told Jarvis to do it.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
In the days that followed Hydra’s attack on the Triskelion, SHIELD was reduced to a fraction of its size with only a couple of bases safe and staffed.

Coulson seized control of SHIELD. They announced that all the WSC members were dead including Alexander Pierce who had been found to be a major Hydra operative. The press release detailed enough of what happened to partially appease the public.

Hydra had originally seized many of SHIELD’s secret bases. Those bases were no longer secret due to Natasha and they suspected they would be cleared out and abandoned shortly. They needed to move as soon as they could before Hydra was once again hidden underground.

Loki got permission from Coulson to show pictures of the Illitplass portal device along with several other items to the rest of the Avengers, since a pile of pictures with several of the device thrown in apparently didn’t break the oath. Coulson was learning Loki was truly a master at manipulation. They called a meeting; that item needed to be found.

“We have another problem.” Coulson said handing out the specs on the dimension crossing item to everyone.

“Crap, it’s the Chitauri all over again isn’t it?” Clint exclaimed as he read the description.

“How much like the Tesseract is this?” Natasha asked. She knew that it had opened a portal. Most of them had never seen the actual specs on the Tesseract or Loki’s spear, and their only known examples of magical enchantments were Stark Tower, the Tumbler of Oaths and of course Tony and Loki’s.

“It crosses from one universe to ours. I have been told that the Tesseract is much more powerful,
most beings can’t even touch it, also it’s much harder to use. This item was believed to be a communication device by SHIELD. They successfully communicated with another alien race.” Coulson answered and picked up one of the pictures of item.

“Was this before Thor came to earth?” Clint asked suspiciously.

Phil looked down at his picture. “Yes, SHIELD’s had this item in our possession since the sixties.”

“Son of a bitch! So we knew there were aliens, does that mean all those sightings were real too?” Clint growled. “I spent two missions explaining to partners that they weren’t real and two more to discredit people who thought they saw them.”

Phil waited patiently for Clint to stop his rant. “We didn’t want a panic. Clint could we please stay on topic?”

Clint huffed but looked back at one of the pictures before him.

“Do we have any idea where it is?” Steve looked at Phil then to Loki.

“No, it was taken from SHIELD storage along with a number of other items quite some time ago.” Phil replied.

“That’s why Fury never brought us the mind fucking scepter of Loki’s. I wondered when he admitted it should have gone to Asgard.” Clint snarled and started playing with a very sharp pencil.

Sam paled. “They have that item too?”

Loki spoke for the first time. “I doubt any of them will be able to use the scepter properly. Its biggest danger is from attracting the attention of the Mad Titan. They will more likely kill themselves in their attempts to use it. There are only a very few on earth who might be able to use it. Let us hope that Dr. Doom does not get his hands on it. He is the only one I know of who might be able to figure it out.”

“Fortunately for us, Doom’s not a team player.” Tony looked at Loki and hoped he was right. Doom had tried to take Loki once too.

“Are we sure the guys at the other end of this dimension device are not friendly?” Bruce looked at Loki.

Loki looked at Phil, but remained silent.

Phil looked frustrated. “They are called Djofullin, I’m afraid Loki can’t tell you about the item. He took an oath not to tell anyone about it.”

“Who’s stupid idea was that?” Clint threw a pencil he was playing with into the wall above Loki’s head. It stuck.

“Mine.” Phil answered looking sternly at Clint. “At the time, I felt it was important. Unfortunately the circumstances that would void the Oath, have not yet come to pass so he can’t talk about it to you.”

Loki looked at Tony and then threw a spell.

Tony grinned that smirking grin that had everyone else groaning. “Actually circumstances have occurred so he can talk to me about it… In fact he has and is right now. Mentally of course. With
“Agent’s permission?” Tony made a hand sweep toward Phil who nodded permission.

He continued. “These Jofo guys are bad news. The devices always connect to the guys who made them. They are opportunists that make Loki’s worst chaos look mild and good natured. Think stereotypical devils out to have fun. They get their kicks off destroying things, betraying people, watching creatures suffer and generally causing mayhem by meddling.”

“Why can’t they just cause it in their own universe?” Sam asked.

Tony sat still, then answered. “We really don’t know. Best guess is they are always looking for fresh meat to play with.” He looked surprised suddenly. “I’d like to see the math for that…. Apparently the Dollfools make these things and send them off randomly, hoping someone will use it to let them in, as Fullies have to be invited or can’t send themselves or something like that… Loki’s not quite sure how the details work. He’s only heard stories about them getting here cuz those who do the inviting or summoning always seem to end up dead. ….. He has seen the results first hand once and heard about other stuff they’ve done once they got here…… What??? You’re shitting me…. Guess you can’t exactly kill a Dollis guy, they just pop back to their own dimension when you try.”

“Djofullin.” He pronounced for Stark. Phil looked at Loki. “What sort of things have the Djofullin done?”

Tony stilled again, clearly listening. “Depends on how big the Jofins at the other end are and how much power is used on this end to let them in. If it is just one Dojo, it can do things like set fires to places. Cause mass insanities. Structure to collapse. ….. Damn, larger groups of the Doritos can change anything about the planet, such as atmospheric conditions or makeup, alter dominate lifeforms, cause volcanic eruptions. ….. God, he’s even heard of one group of Dodos changing the orbit of a planet. We’ve got to get this out of Hydra’s hands guys.” Tony looked worried.

Clint raised his hand. “I vote we call them devils so we have something to call them rather than hear Tony call them dozens of different things.”

“Yes.” “Okay.” “Works for me.” Was replied along with a couple of head nods.

“I think I can remember that one. Da villains right?” Tony joked.

Phil’s face was steady and calm. “Fortunately Djofullin or devils need a magical power source to allow them through. We don’t think they have one, at least not yet. Unfortunately, Loki told me after some research, SHIELD did possess an item that could be rigged up short term for power by burning out some of the other items they took. Once again, doing this is extremely hard if not impossible to do without a sorcerer even if they have both items together. We think that’s why they want Loki. But Loki told me if these devils are talking to Hydra, he is afraid, they may be able to help Hydra figure out what they need to do.”

“Is there any way to amend that oath so we can talk to Loki directly?” Natasha asked.

Phil looked to Loki hoping for something.

Loki looked annoyed and answered uneasily. “This is one of the many reasons oaths have time limits. This one’s was a year. If all parties who were present agree to amend the oath, it can be done but it will be painful for all who were involved or even listening as oaths are made so they cannot be changed lightly.”

“So what are we waiting for? What’s a little pain among friends?” Clint looked between them with a half-grin.
Loki spoke quietly. “Jarvis was present I do not know how he counts, nor what he will experience as punishment.”

Tony responded with a start. “What! I’m not letting you hurt Jarvis. No way, no how. He is my stuff and you don’t mess with my stuff. It’s bad enough Agent told Loki and Jarvis, and not me, but you don’t get to do some random magical zap to J just because you were idiots when you made that oath. You can talk to Loki though me or he can tell Agent and Agent can tell you all. Jarvis is mine, he’s my baby. Forget it. You’re not messing with him.” Tony had worked himself up to livid in moments.

“Now that that’s settled. How about we calm down and come up with a plan to try to find this item that lets devils through.” Bruce voiced very calmly trying to sound reassuring.

Steve added. “I think that is an excellent idea. I’m going to be looking for Bucky. He’s alive and may have answers.”

Sometime later they had a plan. It was not a very good plan, as they had very little to go on. The item had been stolen long ago.

The hunt was on. Find Hydra, the item and destroy as much as they could.

Coulson made sure any items they found were brought to the tower. They found several things that which were on the original list he had given Loki but neither his staff, nor the Illitplass portal device were ever among them. There was a particular nasty device to extract magical power that also failed to be found.

Of course “No Tony, we are not playing with the elvish relationship enrichment item now.” Loki had to actually hide that one.

Clint was the only one not actively searching as he was kept busy being Coulson’s bodyguard. Coulson of course was doing his best to keep a minimal SHIELD organization in existence.

Coulson apologized to Loki about New Years. He had been disappointed to find out that Grant Ward had turned out to be Hydra. It was hard on Phil to discover that many of the people he thought he knew and trusted were actually enemy spies.

Barton had never had much faith in people and was always paranoid. Coulson had trusted people and it was Clint who found himself in the rare situation of him comforting Phil.

Jor moved out while the search for Hydra was on.

Steve was sad to see Jor leaving, but he accepted it as he had things to do, besides he now owned a Starkphone and actually knew how to use it, at least enough to call and talk to Jor when he needed to. Jor wisely choose not to bang his head against the wall about it.

Natasha had heard rumors about an assassin called the Winter Soldier for years. Steve knew him as Bucky Barnes. Rogers was spending most his time now out looking for clues about him. He spent time tracking down leads and in his spare time talking to Jarvis’s about spying and and looking over possible facial recognition pictures. Steve was always too late. Bucky was still in the US moving around constantly.
Steve eventually convinced Tony and a judge, who was a Captain America fan, to make it legal to
give Jarvis permission to listen into conversations across the country looking for leads on Bucky by
getting a warrant,. Even then it took some work convincing the judge that Jarvis could do it without
recording or remembering anything that was not about the Winter Soldier. Steve was going to owe
the judge big time because he was still barely convinced and felt it was very questionable at best.
Steve didn’t mind when he found out the favors he would be doing were mostly fundraisers for
charities the judge knew were good causes and legit. The only truly personal favor for the judge was
mandatory attendance for Captain America at his grandson’s birthday party which was going to be of
course Captain America themed.

Pepper had a publicity team working on as much damage control as was possible for the Avengers.
The people had lost faith in its leaders and heroes. Lots of people were still thankful for them when
threats came, like stopping Doom, but gone was the excitement that held people captivated upon
seeing the Avengers. Prince Loki even faded from the spotlight. Pepper was sure it was his
association with the Avengers and Tony. There was just so much turmoil, people didn’t know how
to cope and didn’t really trust anyone.

One dark night or rather very early in the morning Steve returned to the tower stumbling from
exhaustion and carrying a near dead man draped on his back. A metal arm mangled and hanging by
wiring, swung back and forth.

Bruce and Tony met them by the elevator.

“Can’t believe you actually found him. You sure that’s the real James Barnes? He’d be as old as sin,
or you grandpa.” Tony teased.

“I’m sure, Tony. Bruce, can you look at him he took a lot of damage.” Steve said as they entered the
elevator and pushed a button.

“Sure I’ll look at him but is he safe Steve? Do you know if he is really on our side?” Bruce asked.

“Jarvis, get Loki down here. I want some answers.” Tony said as they took Barnes up to the
infirmary.

“Sir, he has called you several things that I refuse to repeat for disturbing his sleep, but said he will
be down shortly”

“Great, just what we need a pissed off god.” Steve mumbled.

“You swore! Steve you swore!” Tony yelped.

“Tony, I was in the military. Now, do we really need to disturb Loki? I just need to talk to Bucky.
Bruce can probably patch him up.”

“Some of this looks bad Steve, we’ll need Loki to heal your friend anyway.” Bruce quietly
interjected.

“Sorry Steve, I can’t trust him on your memories. If Bambi gives him the green, I’m fine. If not, I’m
gonna want him locked up.” Tony said as they left the elevator on the medical floor.

Steve clenched his teeth for a moment. “He does not deserve to be locked up. We gave Loki the
benefit of the doubt. Bucky’s like that too. He’s clearly been controlled too.” Steve said growling like a protective mama bear.

“Look, I know how he was your buddy. If the last few weeks of you pining away for him didn’t give it away. The stories I grew up being told would have. But he is not that person now. He worked for Hydra. We don’t even know if it was voluntary or not. He may not have been controlled. We need to protect ourselves. You should be glad I even let him in the tower.” Tony tried a more serious tone.

Steve snapped. “I don’t see how you can say that if your dad told you about him. He would never have questioned Bucky. If Howard talked so much about us, you should know that. Howard was a great man, a great judge of character. If he were alive he would have understood and accepted things.” Steve responded indignantly.

Tony couldn’t believe what he had just heard. He had tried not to talk about Howard in front of Steve but now the dam broke. “Fuck you. You think you knew Howard so damn well. Well, let me tell you. I wouldn’t trust a word out of that foul man’s mouth. He was not the man you seem to think he was.” Tony yelled, he had held his tongue so many times when Steve had mentioned his father. “He beat me, lied to me, almost prostituted me out as a child, did as a teen. He hated me because I wasn’t his GOD DAMN MOTHERFUCKING STEVE ROGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA EXTRODNAIRE!! Nooooo, I was only his no good for nothing, fucking cocksucking, buggering, bastard of a son. Whose achievements or genius he refused to acknowledge because I WASN’T YOU. So don’t tell me how great Howard Stark was and that I should trust anything based on what that bastard said.” Tony finished his rant glaring at Steve. He wanted to walk out but wasn’t about to trust the Winter Soldier alone with Steve and Bruce. Not now. Not in his tower.

Steve was angry but with a little more caution said. “Now Tony, he might have changed but not that much. Please don’t exaggerate. I’m sure it wasn’t that bad.”

“God, do you need to see all my childhood medical files? My scars? Better yet just ask Loki, he’s healed leftover damage to bones. Howard was an abusive prick and I was his punching bag. Don’t even pretend to know him.” Tony spit out with disgust and hatred.

“Easy guys. Let’s just wait and see what happens right now. Steve help me get Bucky on a bed.”

Bruce had been told some about Howard by Tony, while half asleep, but hadn’t realized quite the extent of the abuse. Once Barnes was on the bed he pulled Tony away from Steve and tried unsuccessfully to get him to sit down.

In addition to the metal arm that was barely hanging on, Bucky had five broken ribs, a broken leg, a torn rotator cuff, a number of bullets holes, a concussion and it looked like half his mouth had been torn open to dislocate his jaw. Tony disassembled the arm and griped about the shoddy workmanship, but appreciated the user interface. Noting it was done by someone who knew their stuff or the arm wouldn’t have worked. He remained very angry through it all.

Loki showed up while Bruce was finishing taking inventory of Barnes’ wounds. He looked way too good to have just been startled awake.

“It looked like he used his artificial arm to tear out a tooth.” Bruce was saying. “Then he tried to tear off the arm.”

“Probably trying to stay alive. I think I see a mangled kill switch on this arm. His tooth was probably filled with poison and able to be remotely released. You didn’t find a tooth did you Rogers?” Tony asked harshly still barely controlling his temper.
Steve’s face and tone seemed to beg for understanding. “No, I had a hard enough time getting him out as it was. I had tracked him to an abandoned barn west of here, just inside Pennsylvania. But I wasn’t the only one, there were two Hydra agents already there. His mouth was already like that when I arrived. There was a fire fight happening and his arm was not working right. I took out one of the agents and his arm started firing on me. That’s when he tore it off. The other guy shot at him some more before I could take him out, and Bucky fell from the loft. I didn’t know where to take him. He wasn’t bleeding out, not bleeding much at all, and so I took the chance and brought him back here.”

“He shot at you and you still think he’s on our side? Steve, you can’t be that naïve.” Tony shook his head in disgust.

“It wasn’t under his control. I’m sure of it.” Steve protested.

“He’s been running from you. He may remember something, but he’s still Hydra.” Tony glared.

“Yes, he did recognize me. Why do you think running away from Hydra, mean he’s still Hydra? Bucky’s mind’s been screwed with. He was trying to save himself from them.” Steve glared back.

“I don’t care, he’s dangerous Boy Scout. Nat says he’s a top flight assassin, better than she was. He could probably kill you with his dick.” Tony bellowed his anger still raw.

“Tony, must everything be about sex to you! Bucky is my friend. I thought after Loki you would at least be understanding to give him a chance. We gave Loki one.” Steve yelled halfheartedly sounding too weary to fight with a wounded Stark.

“This is different. Loki helped us close the portal. And we kept him confined with his magic suppressed even then.” Tony shot back.

Loki had put his hand on Tony to try to calm him down and was looking at the Winter Soldier and asked. “Do you want me to heal him?”

“Yes, please,” Steve said as Tony said “Wait!”

Loki moved, pulling Anthony into his arms. Tony allowed it but remained stiff.

“Hush! Tony, we can heal him. Steve we’re going to secure him first. Just in case.” Bruce announced loudly. Then quieter to Loki, “You can heal his wounds faster than me, maybe then we can get some answers. These two will never stop arguing until we find out what’s really going on.” Bruce looked cross and a bit green.

Tony didn’t even look sorry, still standing relatively rigid. He’d mace Steve and a green Bruce/Hulk in the face right now if Loki wasn’t holding him and helping by pulling some of his anger away through the link.

Loki kept his arms around Anthony. He had never felt such anger from his lover. “Certainly Bruce. But what is going on here? Tony, Steve you two are about to explode. I missed something.” He said looking mostly at Tony.

Tony just turned his head and fumed.

Steve said in a calmer voice, once again staring at his friend on the table. “I stared talking about his dad. I guess his dad changed after I knew him. We argued when I talked about how understanding Howard was and that he would have trusted Barnes.”
That explained a lot. Loki was sending Tony feelings and warmth down the link while doing his best to drain off some of that long suppressed and time fueled anger. He still had his arms on Tony and squeezed. “I will tell you Captain. Howard Stark was very much ‘not’ the man you thought you knew. Tony is justified at him with his anger. For now, we need to all proceed with both caution AND level heads. Can you both agree to do that?” He glanced at Steve, trying to keep his focus on Tony.

They both nodded. Bruce seemed to have calmed down. At least Loki’s integration stuff was helping, otherwise they’d have probably had a Hulk to deal with too.

Steve helped secure Bucky and watched as Loki prepared to heal his friend.

Tony double checked to make sure he had his wrist bands on to call his suit if needed, then double checked the restraints on Barnes. Finally satisfied he moved to stand to the side of Loki with one hand touching, needing to know his lover was there and supported him, confident that at least Loki believed him.

Before long Bucky woke up, struggled desperately against the bonds for a few seconds then gave up and looked around like a wild animal looking for ways to escape.

Loki had kept his hands on Bucky’s thrashing head. “His brain has had a lot of damage done to it. There are pathways that are damaged that keep him from his memories. Unfortunately I am not as skilled in healing as Eir. I do not feel qualified to heal what I see.”

“But you can still heal him though, right? Maybe you could go to Asgard and find out?” Steve sounded worried.

“What I need to do, is to study the human brain. Perhaps Jarvis can get me detailed scans of healthy brains to look at? Do not expect your friend to be fully healed today Steve Rogers. This may take some time. Also, I do not know if you were aware but he was given something not unlike the serum they gave you. He is enhanced.” Loki looked intently at him.

Tony swore under his breath, but said nothing more. He gave one last glare at the Winter Soldier and at Steve neither of whom noticed. He had calmed down some while Loki had healed Bucky thinking he should learn some healing magic. He really needed to ask about how magic interacted with the super serum. His mind was suddenly going a hundred miles an hour.

Steve had taken Bucky’s hand and was looking at him. “It’ll be okay. You’ll be okay, I’ll make sure.”

Bucky looked at Steve’s hand with confusion. “Who?” He said barely audible.

“It’s Steve…Steve Rogers. We grew up together, we battled Hydra in World War II together. Remember the Howling Commandos. My mom’s apple pie. I was small, short and skinny.”

Bucky looked at him. Still confused but clearly trying to remember.

Tony’s mind had been whirling. “That’s right. How come you got bigger? Super-serum, magic, huh, Loki can we make me grow. Maybe only a few inches…..please.” Tony wailed.

At Super-serum Bucky turned his head and looked at Stark, confusion and perhaps some sort of apprehension crossed his face. He started to talk and looked at Steve and looked surprised. “You’re.” He exclaimed painfully and closed his eyes exhausted.
“Oh Buck, you remember.” The super soldier leaned his head down and touched Bucky and breathed a sigh of relief as the Winter Soldier passed out.

Stark huffed. Steve was assuming an awful lot if he thought that was recognition.

Loki said. “His brain is not stable and memories fluctuate, I know you do not want him treated as a prisoner, Steve, but he could still be a threat. I’m putting some wards on the room to keep him in here just in case.”

“I think he needs some rest. I’ll let Steve stay here to watch him. For his sake leave the restraints on so he doesn’t do more damage to himself. The rest of you, time to go.” Bruce ushered them out leaving Steve sitting next to the bed, holding Bucky’s hand with his head leaning in close, watching the Winter Soldier sleep.

Loki split his time over the next couple of days between working with Tony on the item for the Bifrost and studying three dimensional images of the brain, including MRI’s of the Winter Soldier.

Tony researched Hydra and SHIELD’s information on the Howling commandos and what little information they had on the Winter Soldier while not working on the Bifrost item. He ordered Jarvis to continue to search and break into secured sites that had leads from stuff buried in old SHIELD data.

Natasha and Clint came back a few days later with some very old tapes and announced that Zola’s brain or memories had been kept alive in a site they had found. With the help of Jarvis the only things left were the backup tapes and files. All of Zola was now gone. Jarvis was confident that there was no contamination either, mostly due to the magical work Tony and Loki had worked on earlier in the year.

It didn’t take long before Jarvis announced almost reluctantly. “Sir, I believe I have found the files on the Winter Soldier.”

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from.
Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
WSC - SHIELD’s World Security Council.

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo’s button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Bucky! Steve, and Howard Stark.

Chapter Summary

Tony finds out about the Winter Soldier and his parents. Loki finally heals James 'Bucky' Barnes. Who wakes up to see Steve, Loki, Tony and Bruce around him and starts talking.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

*Warning* I describe some of the torture that was done to Bucky by Hydra.

Remember this is an alternate universe and things are different.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Jarvis announced almost reluctantly. “Sir, I believe I have found the files on the Winter Soldier.”

Loki looked up from his scans. “I want to see this too, move over Stark.”

“My AI, I get to look first.” Tony announced, then Loki pushed him over and gave him a DNFW look. “Fine we can look at it together, put it on a big screen J.”

The data was pretty grisly really. It was pretty obvious that you needed magic to survive this serum. They had tried the exact formula used on Bucky, on well over four hundred men, women and even children. They had played with it at a concentration camp making various adjustments to the formula. They could not get anyone else to survive. The death toll that no one seemed concerned about, was over a thousand. Bucky was lucky enough to have the right kind of magic potential to survive it, well if you called what happened to him lucky.

Then to control him they had blasted him with electrical shocks that would have killed any normal person. Frying his memory connections in the process, teaching him key words. At one point he was barely capable of using the toilet, little more than a drooling mass of pumping blood and muscles in a skin sack. They taught him again giving him only the skills necessary to be their tool. Reinforcing their conditioning with words over and over. If he did start to remember they would shock him enough to re-damage those memory pathways. It was clearly painful teaching with a heavy torturous hand.

Then there was the list of missions. The assassinations were lengthy. Most were Hydra hits, a few were hired hits.

Tony’s parents were on that list. Stark spent the next ten minutes throwing things, breaking things
not meant to break. He was stronger now and it showed as the floor chipped as tools smashed into it, sometimes shattering themselves. Then something ricocheted and hit Dum-e who let out a squeal and a beep before retreated behind U. Tony stopped instantly, he had hurt his ‘child’. He was soon running his hands over Dum-e making sure his little bot was fine.

Loki had been watching Tony. “Well that was exciting.”

Tony didn’t look very happy when he looked around and said, “I want to read the details.”

Obadiah had been instrumental, while not the instigator he had been willing to sell information to Hydra that got them killed. He had even promised to look the other way afterwards for a price that was paid.

“Anthony, are you going to be alright?” Loki said when he felt Tony go still.

“I hated my dad, my mom was absent more often than not but I didn’t want her to die. I’m not sure how I should feel knowing they were murdered by Barnes other than anger. Obadiah was really nice to me during that time. I really thought he cared, I leaned on him. I had sort of convinced myself he became corrupt and stopped caring about me after I had wasted my life partying and being a drunken playboy. Now I see that it was always about money, he never did care.” Tony leaned his head against Loki. Obadiah’s betrayal had just gotten deeper.

Loki hugged him back. “Well, it was foolish to blame yourself for his betrayal. At least now you are aware his change wasn’t your fault. I’m glad he’s dead otherwise I would need to kill him slowly for the pain he has made you suffer. We have both been betrayed by those we thought cared about us. I will never betray you like that… Shall we go upstairs and you can use your laser pointer to frustrate Trouble while I fix us something to eat?”

“Yea, I guess.” Tony said dejectedly.

Loki turned Tony and steered him toward the door. “I also know you will never be an abuser like your father. You stopped the moment you realized you might have hurt Dum-e. That reaction makes it clear to me you would never be able to abuse a child.” He also grabbed Tony’s phone and activated the laser pointer and made Tony take it.

Tony nodded in agreement, took the phone, and let Loki pull him to the elevator. By the time dinner was ready, Anthony had gotten Jarvis to help him frustrate Trouble and he was laughing like a loon. Pets really were great for helping one to relax or dealing with trouble.

He and Loki had talked. Tony wanted revenge at first but, with Loki’s help, he slowly accepted that Bucky was little more than a robot at that time and he needed a second chance. Tony didn’t know what he would have done if he’d had to face this by himself, his anger had been so great.

The next morning after hours of talking and a nightmare filled sleep. Tony asked Loki and ordered Jarvis not to ever show or mention the file to anyone else. It was mostly old history, past stuff, nothing really useful and it would only hurt Steve and Bucky to know that the Winter Soldier had killed their friend Howard. Jarvis seemed only too happy to comply.

“I’ll start making a replacement for his arm today.” Tony told Steve later.

Loki and Tony had finally finished the item to help repair the Bifrost and Slepnir came to retrieve it.
Clint was there when Slepnir arrived. After making a few unwise comments he found himself spending two days unable to stop nibbling on oats, trying his best not to let on that he had ordered some hay and straw. That straw he lined his private vent nest with, where he hid sitting and chewing on the hay.

Jarvis made them all a video of Clint. The popcorn fight on the next movie night was especially vicious.

Another few days passed and Loki finally felt he was ready to help Bucky. He showed Bruce the brain scans of both Bucky’s and healthy ones and explained what he was going to do. Bruce paid close attention and was awestruck at the effort to detail that Loki had put in. He thought about it and couldn’t find anything Loki might have missed. In fact the god had discovered things that he’d never known about brain connections. Bruce inwardly marveled that Loki really was mentally very close to Tony’s level of genius.

Bucky hadn’t said anything more or even communicated with nods or shakes of his head, spending much of his time passed out. Steve had not left his side, sleeping in the chair then on a cot that Bruce had insisted be brought in. Steve had spent the Winter Soldier’s few waking hours going over memories of their childhood and stories of the war. He was always ready with food or water if he thought Bucky needed it.

Loki put his hands on Bucky and started working his brain connections. It would take longer than with other healing because of the precision needed to deal with the old and multi-scarred tissue of the brain. Since he wanted to preserve as much memory as he could, it took several hours. When it was done everyone held their breath as Loki woke the man up. Tony had come down to be there, just in case, with a hand repulsor ready, just in case, his suit on standby, just in case. Bucky’s upper body restraints had been removed. Tony was prepared, just in case. He didn’t trust that there would be no surprises. Of course the surprises were not what Tony expected.

James Buchanan Barnes woke up and looked around as in a daze. He focused in on Steve, recognition came. His face looked like he had broken through the fog. It was followed by expressions of sadness, and pain but turned into determination. His arm reached out to Steve for a hug.

Steve was there in a flash. Instead of a simple hug though, Bucky lip-locked the Captain in a long passion filled kiss. Steve was so shocked he opened his mouth and let Bucky in and sort of kissed back. Then James Barnes pushed Steve away, his eyes watered and a tear fell. “Oh God, Steve. The things I’ve done? Thank you for letting me do that. I will cherish it always. I’ll go in peacefully now.” He held out his arm as if waiting for it to be cuffed and led away.


Bucky looked around. There were no guns pointed at him nor were any new restraints being produced. He looked at Steve’s extremely red face and sadly sighed. “I’m sorry Steve, but I promised myself if I ever escaped and saw you, I wouldn’t hide my feelings again. Now you know. I will go to whatever punishment awaits me, happy that I got to kiss you.” He turned to the others “You can take me. I’m sure I deserve death.”
Steve was shocked but had refused to be pushed away completely and grabbed his hand. “We’re not going to kill you. It wasn’t your fault. You didn’t know.” He stammered.

“You really don’t know what I’ve done Steve, I’m as bad as the Nazis, perhaps worse. I don’t understand why I remember it now, but I really merit being put to death.” Bucky spoke with such pain.

“Your brain was messed with. You didn’t know who you were. You only knew what you were told to do. This is Loki. I know you’re going to find this hard to believe but he is a real life, honest to god, alien from Norse mythology and he was able to fix it so you remember who you are.” Steve explained not yet introducing Tony or Bruce.

“I’m not sure I wanted to remember. I think I’d been better off dying.” Bucky looked at Loki almost pleading.

Loki looked back. “You remember the pain, the horrible pain. Every time they did that they denied you your memories. You remember being as an infant again and relearning how to think and walk. You did not know who you were then, only the words they controlled you with. When you killed, you were rarely allowed to even remember the last kill. I understand the nature of torture and what it is to have your mind torn from you, as it has been done to me, only I was still aware of the atrocities I was forced to commit. You must face what happened and embrace the pain and torture, and accept that it is was their doing not yours. The murders your body was forced to commit were not yours for they were only orders given to a machine, not unlike closing a garage door or turning on the oven.”

An unsteady voice said. “You really believe that will help me? That I can learn to live with my past?”

“Yes, because it is the pain that helps prove you are not guilty. It is not easy, in fact it is hard to force yourself to remember, but you must to forgive yourself.” Loki was scary serious.

Steve had been about to object but when he saw Loki’s face and remembered the screaming when he first came. Instead he said. “I’ll be there for you Buck. Remember, I’m with you till the end of the line.”

Bucky smiled at that. His first smile. “For you Steve. I’ll try.”

Steve smiled back, then looked at the others. “Is he stable enough to move? We move him to my room.”

“You want him in your room? Steve, he might just endanger your virginity. I think I’m going to be shell-shocked.” Tony said bemused.

Steve’s red face brought forth a grin. “Not something I’m worried about. It’s not the first time I’ve kissed a guy Tony.”

Bucky smiled for the first time. “Yeah and I don’t have to worry about you and Stark doing horizontal polo anymore.”

Steve who’s hand was still in Bucky had turned even redder. “Bucky I didn’t think you liked guys, if I’d known, I would have been with you.” and he hugged him.

“Stark? Did I miss something? Anthony?” Loki interrupted the love fest sounding seriously jealous. He knew it wasn’t Tony but this was too much fun.

Bucky looked up at Loki and then Tony. “I meant Howard Stark…. He and Steve laid some pipe
back then, a well-hidden secret… ooooOh crap, that’s why you look like him, you’re his son... he was your father, I...I didn’t mean to…if you didn’t know that…about… him...and… and… Steve.” Bucky put his hand over his face.

Steve buried his head in Bucky’s shoulder but raised it enough to be heard, his voice hitching as he talked. “I’m not thinking clearly, and neither are you. I think we should stop talking before we make things any worse. Uh, sorry Tony. Can we get him moved?” Steve raised his head and looked at Bruce clearly avoiding whatever reactions Tony or even Loki had. The red was not just on his face but all over now.

Tony was in shock. For years he had suspected and perhaps known Howard had an obsessive and maybe sexual attraction to Captain America. Now, it was clear there had been something going on. He’d been right. Steve, he realized, was embarrassed from being outed publicly, to himself, Howard’s son, not about being in love with a man. Stark didn’t know what to think. Should he be angry about Steve keeping it hidden all this time when it was probably a secret relationship that happened in the forties? Hell, he’d just forgiven Barnes for killing his parents while controlled a few day earlier. Maybe he should be happy to find out he’d been right all these years and losing Steve really did break Howard. Or angry that Howard would let himself fall apart over a man only to whore himself out and not care as he grew older. Perhaps he should be angry at Bucky for not telling Steve he loved him years ago before the older Stark got attached, or laugh that they had both cared and refused to say anything to each other. Hell it was long past, and he had Loki. He really truly had Loki and would never be Howard’s scape goat again. This was ridiculous. It was the kind of chaos that his lover delighted in, in fact Anthony found himself smiling, humor was bleeding over to him. He found himself really happy, gloriously filled with mirth. So he started laughing, holding his sides, pointing at Steve and laughing some more.

Loki gave a small smile for the first time that day and put his arms around Anthony and said to Steve. “Yes, you should care for your friend. You should consider, as Anthony puts it, playing teddy bear for him. If he is really going to try to work through things it will really help. Wait to play ‘doctor’ until he is feeling a little better though.”

“No problem. Anything for Bucky. I never saw a point for the huge bed Tony gave me. Now I’m glad he did.” Steve smiled happily at Loki still embarrassed and then sweetly and caringly at Bucky.

Bruce finally chimed in while they were removing the straps keeping the Winter Soldier from leaving his bed. “It’s not really my business what you do and love is great, but seriously Steve, give him some time before you start the physical stuff.”

More laughs and embarrassment followed.

The next few weeks were busy as skirmishes with Hydra became a daily event. Visiting and usually attacking hidden SHIELD bases, dismantling them or destroying them and removing everything important. They followed up leads that Natasha and Coulson had found. Finally dealing with any other places or leads that Jarvis had discovered while searching for the Winter Soldier.

When they were through, Hydra was still clearly out there but had at least been heavily wounded. Many of the items from Coulson’s list were retrieved but still not the Illitplass portal device or any of the other key items.

There were still places Bucky had admitted to remembering that they had not found but he really didn’t know where they were. Time passed and frustration grew. Their plans to find the item failed and they were out of leads.
By fall Hydra had gone to ground and was keeping quiet.

SHIELD had scaled down and once again became a spying organization. There was still some research going on but it was now aimed at information gathering rather than being a strong military force.

Tony was getting better at his magic. He could transform things faster. In fact anything he could understand he could transform in moments. He stopped trying to do it to living things when he ended up with mouse guts a few times over. Loki explained that life was different and you had to go about doing it a different way. It was not something Tony understood yet. He kept wanting to understand details, form, processes, the chemistry and physics. Loki kept assuring him, he didn’t have to understand their biology. It was something he would get, he needed to make the leap of understanding, sort of seeing the forest without understanding each individual tree. He moved his practice to insects. Cricket and cockroach messes didn’t bother him like mammals or fish.

Tony also started talking about borrowing powers from Loki. Loki refused to let him even attempt to borrow use of his shapeshifting until he could master changing a rodent into something else. Yes, they were very different powers, but Loki didn’t want to risk losing Tony because he did it wrong.

Their emotions, sending and pulling were coming along nicely. They had advanced to sending simple yet now clear images so communication was slowly coming along. They had discovered that strong feelings could be sent with an image such as a ‘stop’ sign or a heart meaning ‘come to me’. A house shape or what looked like a large up arrow meant home, upside down it meant they wouldn’t be home soon, a black heart meant ‘I’m angry at you’ and of course Tony had to designate a symbol meaning he wanted sex. If they were close, they could send a small word or two in the image. More detail just came as static or a blurry mass. Distance was still a factor. The further they were from each other the more static they had. So simple shapes were used for important meanings.

Tony tried to borrow the ice again and Loki got so mad he shut down the apprentice link and everything else magic on Tony for two days. Tony spent the time figuring out a way around it. He managed to draw enough magic to put up a shield, do very small amounts of transmutation and of course make a decent fireball. He considered it a successful two days. Loki wasn’t so sure.

Bucky actually did what Loki had suggested and tried to embrace the pain to show himself he was not responsible for the things he was made to do. It was actually working. He was also touching Steve for support in the way Loki and Tony did for each other.

Trouble had spent much of the summer in front of windows as if storing the sun for the cold winter to come. Occasionally, she would go on panty raids and everyone would find their underwear and socks in a mixed up pile in the middle of the common area.

Bucky wasn’t sure if he should be pleased when Trouble started bringing him the occasional dead bird left in a shoe. It was supposed to mean a cat liked you. Even Natasha let her get away with it, so he chose to ignore it.

In addition Bucky had begun helping the Avengers on missions. His arm worked better than ever.
Tony had completely redesigned it with more capabilities. It was slimmer and looked like a very muscled human arm at first glance now. Well if he had on long sleeves and you didn’t look to close at his hand.

Loki still stayed out of the fights, he had obligations to Stark Industries and Pepper so he stood by when fights occurred and only appeared when someone needed rescuing or to heal them afterwards.

It was an overcast day in mid-November.

Tony and Loki had just had another major blow out over Loki’s lack of wanting to use or understand his Jotun abilities. The fights almost always started with Anthony trying to tell Loki what he had discovered about Jotun magic. Tony had once again pointed out that he, a human, knew more about it than Loki, who was in fact Jotun, because he had at least done some research on frost giants when they were in Asgard. Loki didn’t want to know. He accused Anthony of being a traitor for borrowing them to do research on, something Tony of course had been doing for a while now.

Steve was upset because Bucky had been acting depressed and was going on long walks without telling him.

Natasha and Sam had just come back from another failed lead to find the damn dimension devise. They hadn’t even found evidence of Hydra.

Bruce had been trying something new with the Hulk who just didn’t want to understand despite colors being soooo simple!

Trouble couldn’t get anyone to play with her as Jarvis was spending so many resources still trying to find Hydra and Tony had locked her out of his lab.

The only one happy was Clint who’d spent the night with his lover Phil.

So with nearly everyone angry, upset or out of sorts, Doom decided to attack in full force and this time he showed up in person. This time he had better doombots and a better strategy.

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djojullin are from.

Djojullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

DNFW - I'm sure you all know but it stands for 'Do Not Fuck With'
Horizontal polo - was an old phrase for sex.
Laid some pipe - phrase for anal sex from around the 30's

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤
This is Why You Don't Play With Matches or Uncontroled Magic

Chapter Summary

Tony wakes up to remember and discover what happened in the battle. Loki has to take Steve to Asgard for healing.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

WARNING- Steve's legs are a mess. I don't describe it in too much detail but at least some.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tony woke up hours later. He was in his bed with a very unconscious Loki holding onto him for dear life. His head ached.

After several minutes of failing to wake Loki and then assuring himself that Loki was just very deeply asleep he managed to wriggle out of his grip. Trouble hissed at his effort.

“Oh shut up. He’s passed out, I’m not going to abandon him. Can’t I even get some coffee cat?” Tony told Trouble and made his way to the bathroom.

His face was filthy but he was uninjured as far as he could tell. Loki was also uninjured; he had checked before he’d left the bed. The ever present flow between them felt like it was exhausted as from overuse of power, not unlike when Loki had come back from that Chitauri capture and fight. Oh shit, the fight.

Doom had been there in person with a seriously new and improved suit, lots more power, lots more magic but a bit less mobile than normal. He’d kept hidden through most of the fight. Plus he had more bots than usual. Everyone had been pissed going in and it just got worse.

When Loki had detected the use of raw magic in the area they decided to evacuate the buildings around Stark tower. Uncontrolled magic was extremely dangerous and could cause huge explosions.

Natasha began coordinating with the police, trying to get civilians evacuated out of the buildings and the area in general. In fact she had even had the smart idea to herd people into Stark tower because she knew they’d be safe inside because of the enchantment. Any doombots that followed the civilians ended up facing her but because she was angry. She didn’t do as much reporting locations on the doombots as she normally would have either.

The tower became crowded with people as the fight went on for hours. The people from the
buildings in the surrounding area were evacuated there. Police went door to door getting people and pets out. Helping with invalids. Even breaking a few doors down when they heard someone inside not responding to their knock.

Tony’s mind was still hazy, as he brushed his teeth. He’d take a shower after he remembered the rest, or at least figured out what happened.

He left the bedroom and closed the door behind him, only to have Trouble tap it so Jarvis opened it and then she left it open and sat in the doorway and sent threatening looks at him. ‘Damn cat had Jarvis pussy whipped’.

He went past the living room straight to the kitchen where Jarvis had coffee waiting for him. He took a cup, breathed in the aroma and took a sip. ‘Ah, now try to remember what happened’.

They’d killed many of the doombots, though it had indeed taken hours. The doombots were using a hide and seek technique with traps in and around the buildings that surrounded the tower. It was a new strategy for Doom and a real pain because the doombots kept hiding. Kind of like guerilla warfare. Because everyone was so angry going in, they spent a great deal of time arguing and just chasing the bots only to losing them again. Doom had clearly set things up to make the fight last wanting them exhausted before he made his appearance.

When Doom showed up his personal armor was super enhanced this time. It took being hit repeatedly without taking any damage and had attacks that seemed to get more bang per blast.

Tony remembered he got the smart idea that maybe they could overload Doom’s armor when, after several hours, they’d figured out where he was.

Steve had set up a plan.

Hulk got to try to pin him down in one place, ending up on a shorter roof that Doom had been hiding on. That had mostly worked, though he remembered a fair amount of property damage from the big guy.

Bucky had used his arm to shoot energy blasts into him. Those had somehow been absorbed by Doom.

Since Doom was on top of a building, Falcon had flown Clint up and held him up away from the Doom/Hulk fight as he shot electric arrows into Doom. Partially successful it had kept Doom from running away from the Hulk.

Steve was using his shield to bounce energy back at Doom from the few stray bots left that he was fighting. It wasn’t really doing much other than maybe helping to pin Doom down.

Nat was still working with the civilians. There weren’t really any left in the surrounding buildings but she had her hands full keeping the ones inside Stark tower from going out to watch, even yelling at some of the police now wanting to watch from outside.

Loki was watching from the penthouse with Trouble and a bowl of popcorn.

He was missing someone…. Oh yea, him.

He had started blasting Doom with his blasters, that maybe he had enhanced with magical fire and extremis. Then Doom had laughed, made some comment about his new secret power that would destroy them all. A new blast had sent Hulk flying and then he hit Ironman directly, nearly knocking him out. That’s where it started to get real fuzzy. He sipped his coffee trying to think some more. He
remembered smelling burnt flesh. His? He pulled up his shirt and looked again at his skin, no
evidence of it.

“Jarvis where is my suit from yesterday?”

“Sir, what is left of it is in the lab. But I don’t think that should be your first concern.” Jarvis
commented.

Tony wrinkled his face he was very confused. “So, give me a clue, what would be my first
concern?”

“If you would just draw your attention to outside the window. Sir.” Jarvis’s tone was just a little bit
off, actually sounding rather disturbed.

He walked to the window still holding his cup of coffee. He looked out and dropped the cup to the
floor. There was a crater, just outside his building. Wait, it was also on both sides of his building.
When he checked using video feeds from a distance, you could see the walls of the first two levels of
his basements. At least his building had shielded the buildings behind it from damage.

“Jarrviss, I..I seem to be having a hard time remembering… what happened… exactly… when
Doom hit me… with his magic energy beam…. Could you… uh, fill me in.” Tony stuttered
remembering pain, a massive explosion and bits and pieces of garbled stuff.

“As much as I can, Sir. He knocked out most of my sensors when his beam started and I lost the rest
as it continued to hit you, so I have no visuals from your perspective. Your vitals were not in good
shape and you may have even been passed out but the suit maintained its location hovering in the air
as you had magically designed it to, preventing you from crashing to the ground from such an
event.”

“Master Loki was watching the screens showing the fight from several vantage points. The moment
you were hit, Sir, he gasped and held his chest. I believe he also felt the beam. He disappeared and
reappeared next to you and shot a magical attack at Dr. Doom. Dr. Doom’s beam had not yet
stopped. Loki was unsuccessfully trying to disrupt it, or get him to stop, as it appeared to have locked
onto you. Then there was a flash of purple against your chest which exploded out causing the crater
you see. The total time from when Dr. Doom started hitting you with the beam to the time the crater
was formed was eleven point nine seconds, Sir. Most of that time was spent as Master Loki gasped
and transported to you.”

“How’d I get to bed?” Tony’s voice shook, he was mesmerized, unable to look anywhere but at the
crater. If not for his building it would be over nine full blocks gone. Hell, it was probably nearly
seven even with the part his tower blocked.

“Figuring the trajectory and power of the blast, you and Master Loki were blown miles away, Sir.
He must have found you because several minutes later he appeared back in the tower with you in his
arms. I took off what was left of your armor which I might add has an unusual amount of raw
elements embedded in it. Master Loki helped you both out of what was left of your clothes and put
you into bed. You, Sir, were passed out but seemed to sustain no other damage unlike what my
sensors had earlier detected.”

Tony continued to look at the crater. He was imagining the stores and restaurants and businesses that
were in those buildings that were now gone. His stomach clenched, guilt flooded him. Raw
elements? It was the enchantment, except he was the enchantment now, wasn’t he. He didn’t mean
for this to happen. “How about the rest of the team? Are they even alive?” His voice shook, had he
caused this? Of course he had. How could the others have survived this?
“Miraculously they are all still alive, Sir.” Jarvis announced and Tony released a deep breath that he didn’t realize he was holding. “The Hulk was sent flying through four buildings leaving holes. You can see where they start to your left. But he remains unharmed.” Tony looked and saw where the first hole started.

“Miss Romanoff was lucky to be just inside the circular door and thus inside the tower enchantment when it happened and also took no damage. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Barton were way behind your left side and slightly above and were blown several miles away riding the moving air currents in front of the blast. Fortunately Mr. Wilson had enough time and wits to slow them down before they hit the ground. They both are still suffering from several major injuries and burns. Dr. Banner moved them into the tower and Master Loki checked them last night Sir.”

“What about Steve and Bucky?” Tony had a hopeless sound to his voice.

“Sir, Mr. Barnes was also thrown but in his case he hit the tower and because he is currently included in your group, he wasn’t repelled, so he only fell ten floors to land on a balcony where he was protected from additional damage. He suffered from many cracked bones, loss of skin and muscle. If he were an ordinary human he would be dead, fortunately for him he is not. Master Loki did extensive healing on him, enough so that his naturally enhanced healing abilities could take over. Mr. Rogers’ shield protected much of him. But part of his legs are gone. Master Loki put a holding spell on him. Dr. Banner is afraid of Master Loki not being able to regrow the legs or even save him. I have assessed him as best I can through the holding spell and if something isn’t done soon Captain Rogers will not survive.”

“No way. God Jarvis, what have I done?” Tony slid to the floor and cried.

Now, Trouble decided to come and purr at him. He held her for several minutes and actually started sobbing. It was only a few more minutes before he felt warm arms gently reaching around him. Loki had woken up and was holding him.

Tony and Loki went down to medical. Tony kept telling himself he had been through bad things before. He had to be strong for now. He could do it. He had to for the team.

Bruce was very glad to see them. So was Pepper. Oh god Pepper was there. Tony thought. Pepper too, was in shock. She had been in the building when Doom had attacked. “What happened Tony? What caused the explosion?” she looked at him with eyes full of pain, worry and shock.

“I….I….I.think…I….did…. ” Tony started to say.

Loki cut him off grabbing him tightly. “It is now clear to me that our enchantment has a very powerful self-preservation defense mechanism. It releases an energy explosion that is strong enough to reduce anything within some as yet uncalculatable area to raw elements while at the same time perfectly healing all of our fleshy parts. Dr. Doom’s attack penetrated Anthony’s chest enough to hit the enchantment core. One could say Doom doomed himself by successfully attacking Ironman.”

Bruce whistled. “That’s some final strike.”

“Fortunately, for us not so final.” Loki added.

“I’m glad you’re both OK, Jarvis said you were but wouldn’t let me up to see for myself.” Pepper said solemnly. But hugged Tony and Loki anyway.

Bruce led them to the beds. Loki took one look at Steve and ordered “Put him on a solid stretcher
now. I’m taking him to Asgard.”

“Why didn’t you take him last night?” Pepper questioned upon wincing at the mutilated mess of what was left of Steve Roger’s legs.

Tony had never seen jagged bone like that on a living person, the flesh gone in most places, nothing below the knees.

“I didn’t have the energy to make the trip after I put him in the slow stasis. Slowing time is nearly impossible and I have it all but stopped, you cannot comprehend the energy I used to put him there. I did what I could for the others, then I had to sleep to regain enough to make the trip.” Loki sighed still looking exhausted.

Loki took an extremely brief look at Bucky taking no more than ten second, determined anything he had not healed the night before would heal itself, Bucky was likely going to be able to hobble around in several hours. He grabbed Steve and carried him to the roof.

“Heimdall! I need to bring Thor’s favorite shield brother to Asgard for healing. If he wants the good Captain to survive he must allow it. I’m sure you noticed what happened here. Tell him it is beyond my capabilities to heal him. Do not shoot me for bringing a mortal to Asgard.” Loki yelled out.

Tony wanted to go too but could not make himself move. He knew Loki wanted him to stay for the sake of the others and deal with things. His lover would be faster by himself.

Loki sent warmth and love to his Anthony.

Anthony, the name Loki called him only after he had realized he truly cared for him, after he was able to see him as a lover. Yes, Tony would stay. He had a strong partner who cared and would return as fast as he could.

Then Loki disappeared, teleporting himself and Captain America, to one of the secret passages that led to Asgard.

Loki arrived in Asgard and teleported directly to the healing wing of the palace. Eir was waiting for him. Thor was just entering as he was setting Steve Rogers down where Eir had directed him to.

Thor paled when he saw his friend. “Brother, what has happened?”

“Dr. Doom decided to escalate his attacks in Midgard. Your shield-brothers fought back.” Loki said as he watched Eir examine their friend. He hoped they could save Steve’s legs, he had only seen damage like this once before. At that time none of the Chitauri had even partially remained whole. Only the bits and pieces that remained were that of the Other that were enchanted and remained near his magical knife. Either Steve was very lucky, the vibranium had amazing capabilities or their enchantment final strike was partially selective. He wasn’t about to experiment to find out.

“Doom’s attack did this?” Thor was very bothered by what he saw. The loss of Steve’s legs was not the result of a sword or normal burn but clearly magic of enormous power. Thor had not been around when Loki had used the power on the doombots after being captured by the Other.

Loki stood still for a minute. He really didn’t want to talk about the explosion. He knew he would have to tell his mother, it was best to tell those who needed to know all at once. “It is complicated, is mother on her way?”
Eir answered for him. “I called her down when I got your message. I am going to stabilize the damage while your stasis is still intact, but to heal this I will need assistance from her, my assistants and you, if you are willing. I would very much like to know how this was done. It is very unique, truly he is lucky to have you around, otherwise he would not have survived until now.”

Eir went to work stabilizing the captain even more than Loki had been able to. With the help of a powerful item Eir finished what Loki’s stasis had delayed. The rough exposed tissue was now covered in a gel that kept tissue alive and him from deteriorating even slightly. Frigga arrived shortly before he finished. She too, was disturbed by what she saw. They retired to a private chamber to discuss what had happened.

“Loki darling, please tell me what happened to cause such damage?” Frigga was strength, love and concern all rolled together at the moment.

Loki drew some comfort from Frigga but it wasn’t the same as from Anthony. He still felt alone, like he was on trial and they were asking him to strip himself bare. He took a breath to steady himself. He had not allowed himself to stop and think since he went to rescue Anthony. He had felt Doom’s attack and Tony’s body being damaged. The unharnessed magic started to disturb the flow in their link as he had jumped to Tony. He had a horrible premonition when he remembered that that had happened just before the Chitauri dissolved. He had experienced terror when he couldn’t disrupt Doom’s beam and knew New York City was about to be hit by the power that reduced things to elements. A power that didn’t seem to need to consume anything to power it but nonetheless did something that required vast amounts of energy. It left no ash, no clue to where the energy came from. The remains were reduced and raw, with no evidence left of whatever existed before.

Thor was growing impatient. “Loki, tell us the story of what happened?”

Frigga put her hand gently on Thor’s. “Give him time.”

“The enchantment that binds Anthony Stark and myself together is not a simple one. It is not only magical but extends well into the Astral Sea axis of reality.” He looked at the three listening for their reactions.

Thor looked at Mjolnir which he knew also extended there. Eir was very still. Her eyes had gotten larger. She was clearly seeing Loki in a different light now. Frigga had put her hand over her mouth. She understood more about what this meant than the other two. She was also the first to speak. “My child, no one has been able to make an item like that in millennia. How did you accomplish it?”

He looked at Frigga, she had added pride to her look and perhaps a bit more concern to her strength and love. “It was not planned. You remember talking about Anthony and his unstable enchantment and you gave me that stone?” She nodded to him, he put his hand on his chest over his heart. “It resides in here now surrounded by a hard core. In Anthony, the core is the heart of his arc reactor that was so much like the Tesseract. Forces flow between us continuously… Odin may have been right that we are a danger, though he would have destroyed Asgard had he tried to remove it. When our item formed, these connections connected across Yggdrasil and through the Astral Sea.”

She looked at him. “May I touch your chest?”

He nodded. And she placed her hand on his chest. She concentrated for a moment. Then her face turned bright and she smiled. “There is a warmth there. I am certain it is not an evil enchantment.” She smiled brighter beaming with pride. “In fact I feel a blessing from the Norns.”
Thor and Eir watched Frigga, and Loki all intent. Thor asked. “So how does this explain what has happened on Midgard and to the good Captain?”

Loki took a breath, he knew he would have to tell them. At least Frigga was happy for the moment. “Our enchantment has a self-preservation feature. If the core is damaged it releases energy that reduces everything around to elements, while healing us. Dr. Doom attacked Anthony enough to break through his armor and damage his chest and scratch the core. The explosion did an unbelievable amount of damage. Captain America’s shield gave him some protection from the blast but it did not protect his legs. It appears there are a few non-magical things that the blast doesn’t destroy, but even that might be wrong.”

“And father wanted to remove it! He truly might have destroyed Asgard.” Thor said eyes wide.

There was a short discussion speculating about their enchantment with no real solutions or answers. Then more questions about Doom’s attack, the damage to New York and that everyone else Thor knew was still alive.

The conversation turned to discussing healing Steve. Eir wanted to direct Loki’s magic to heal Steve. She felt that because of his enchanted connections it would have a better chance of working. Loki finally faced the fact that he would be spending the night. Tomorrow he would be up to the task, today he just wasn’t.

He wished he had brought Anthony with him now. But the rest of the team needed him there, questions would be asked, a story needed to be told and someone needed to be there. Loki managed after some work to send a message, though the distance was a problem. He could tell Anthony was upset but he had successfully communicated that he wouldn’t return until tomorrow or the day after. Anthony, he would truly miss him tonight.

That evening Thor talked to Loki asking him to pass on thanks to Anthony for the item they were using on the Bifrost. At the rate progress was now going it would be completed in less than two years, maybe less than one if they didn’t have any problems. Loki couldn’t help but grin, because Odin’s anger and pride would have prevented the Bifrost from being repaired for decades. Without Tony and his knowledge they might never have made it work.

Back home Tony was miserable. He had made sure everyone was doing okay. When he had gone to look at the remains of his suit he had felt the impact of what had happened once again. The suit wasn’t even useful as scrap metal, hell it wasn’t even there mostly. He’d destroyed others but he’d never had one this far gone.

Then he had gone to the kitchen where someone had turned on the news. He stood still, frozen in place, as he watched report after report of the damage. Pictures from all angles bombarded his consciousness.

Eyewitnesses, many from within Stark Tower, told of their fear when they saw the explosion happen through the large glass windows of the first floor lobby. A man who had been watching through a telescope from a tall distant building described how he watched Doom disintegrate before his eyes. It was the first thing to happen and not even a moment passed before dust made it too hard to see anything. When it cleared - nothing, everything eerily gone. Jarvis had footage taken from Stark Tower that would never make its way to the news, it verified what the man said. Stark couldn’t face anyone now, he felt bleak, dejected retreating to the penthouse, inconsolable. He got two cases of the strongest alcohol he could find and managed to get seriously drunk. He sat planted in a chair overlooking the crater, unwilling to move.
“Tony, you need to stop this, think about what you are doing to Loki?” Pepper scolded having come to check on him with Bruce.

“See tha hole, I dis sit, m a munster. Purr Luoki stuc wif me. U shod shoot me, cept u’d die an I wooodt.” Tony berated himself.

“Tony, it was Doom’s fault. Not yours.” Bruce added.

“Ye, cuz he trns stuf ta ele ma ph ants, ele ma ants, ele ments!” Tony wailed angrily trying to say the words correctly. He was doing his best to block out any feeling to and from Loki who wasn’t coming home tonight.

They wouldn’t leave and he was determined to wallow in his own self-pity so he shot a small fireball at them.

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

This is not the world of Dr. Strange magic works different. Time is impossible to completely stop here. The rough draft was mostly done and this story had already started posting when the movie came out.

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤
Chapter Summary

Loki returns from Asgard to messes. Both the penthouse and Tony.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Two days later Loki returned to see the penthouse was a disaster, covered in empty bottles, scorch marks, and a glove repulsor was stuck in the ceiling near the cat tree. The carpet had a full circle ring where it was threadbare. There were well over a dozen open and untouched cans of cat food. One of the end tables was knocked over as well as the lamps and there were tread marks from the elevator to the kitchen and nearly everywhere else. The small coffee table had one half drunk smoothie and one untouched. There were perhaps the remains of two or three more splattered on walls elsewhere. One of the glass windows was covered in red. There were many broken arrows with broken tips on the floor and about a dozen in a wall. There was also a ball of used duct-tape on the kitchen floor.

“Jarvis, what happened?” Loki knew Tony was blocking him but he had been needed to stay to heal Steve. This was enough damage to be concerning.

“Master Loki, it is truly wonderful to see you back.” Jarvis actually sounded enthusiastically happy. “Sir got depressed after watching the news and seeing his suit. He then proceeded to get so drunk he could barely open a bottle. When Miss Potts and Mr. Banner came up to check on him he tried to use his repulsor to shoo them off but was unable to get it to work. He resorted to using his magic and made small fireballs to toss at them. I am grateful from the bottom of every one of my memory banks that you taught him control first Master Loki.

They, that is Miss. Potts and Mr. Banner, left and Miss Trouble came in. He remembered that he had forgotten to feed her before he started drinking and stumbled over to the kitchen and opened two cans in case he passed out and couldn’t feed her later. She was not interested in the food and kept meowing. Moving to his lap, she did manage to calm him down for about ninety minutes.

That lasted until Miss Potts returned with Ms. Romanoff and they tried to convince him again to stop drinking at which point he threw several of his empty bottles and Miss Trouble darted off to the bedroom where she tore open the partial bag of dry food and scattered it across the bedroom floor. When they left, Sir remembered that he had forgotten to feed Miss Trouble earlier but not that he had finally done it and proceeded to open three more cans of cat food which she once again dismissed and returned to his lap. Mr. Wilson came in next and made an attempt to steal his alcohol. The fireballs were somewhat larger that time.
When he had chased Mr. Wilson off, Sir once again went to feed Miss Trouble who was making noise again. He tried to feed her two more cans and took three back to his chair. She followed and he cried for a while on her fur.

Mr. Barnes then came up. He was not in good conditions and should not have even left his bed. He reluctantly told Mr. Stark that he had been sent to get the cases of alcohol away from him. There was a short show of firepower against the side wall with nothing really aimed at anyone. It was followed by a short discussion of who made the biggest scorch marks. Sir finally remembered how to put a protective shield around him and did so around himself and his cases. Mr. Barnes, who was now being shunned, left.

After that Mr. Barton came up and noticed Mr. Stark staring out at the disaster. He started out shooting arrows over Sir’s head but Sir failed to look. It didn’t take long for him to discover the shield that was around Tony and shot arrows that bounced off the shield for some time, experimenting with different angles and from various spots around the room. When Mr. Barton got bored with that he obtained a few rolls of duct-tape and proceeded to try to cover the shield with it. Both Sir and I were surprised it stuck. Eventually Sir ordered Dum-e to come up and chase Mr. Barton around the room until he left. Several of the vases and paintings were damaged by that.

Mr. Stark was a little more alert for a while after that and upon hearing Miss Trouble meowing, once again instructed Dum-e to open three more cans of cat food. I made an attempt to tell him there were already fourteen open cans around the room when he silenced me. Dum-e then made Sir a smoothie that spilled on the floor when the shield was brought down and the falling duct-tape knocked it over.

Dum-e made Mr. Stark another smoothie while Sir rolled the duct-tape into a ball and tried to amuse Miss Trouble by tossing it around the room like he does with her little sponge balls. That is when he knocked the lamps over.

Mr. Wilson came up again to attempt to talk some sense to Sir when I informed them that the shield was down. Sir, once again failed to make the repulsor work and ended up throwing his smoothie. Mr. Wilson retreated quite quickly after having blueberries and pineapple splashed across his face. If you remember he has an allergy to pineapple. Dum-e made a third smoothie which I must say that Sir actually drank a couple of sips of when an angry Miss Potts returned. He quickly put up the shield and added soundproofing after throwing that smoothie at a wall near her and picked up an unopened bottle.

They left him alone for quite some time after that. Miss Trouble tried her best to get his attention. She tried to dig under the shield pulling out the carpet threads leaving it bare at the edge of the shield. She was looking for a way to get in or perhaps just to get his attention. Dum-e, who had not been sent back to the lab, for some reason seemed to think she had the right idea and started helping her pull carpet threads out, after making yet another smoothie. He knocked over several other piece of furniture in the process and continued long after she gave up but made sure the threadbare ring around Mr. Stark’s chair and small table was complete. Dum-e does not like to leave things unfinished.

A few hours later Miss Trouble went out on the balcony and sat on it staring at him. He eventually removed the silence spell and ordered Dum-e to feed her and get him another smoothie since the last one that was made was warm and he didn’t feel it was eatable.

Dr. Banner showed up shortly after with a pizza just the way Sir likes. Mr. Stark took down the shield and took the pizza and the new smoothie and ate one slice and drank about half the smoothie. Unfortunately the good Doctor allowed the conversation to turn to Dr. Doom and Sir threw the pizza at the window where it slid down leaving the red you see, threw his repulsor at the ceiling where it
penetrated enough to stay and ordered Dr. Banner to get out as he threw the warm smoothie at Dr. Banner who followed Mr. Stark’s order and left.

Sir then grabbed a tray of ice, another can of cat food and Miss Trouble, sat down in his chair, once again put up the shield, and drank until about three hours ago when he started nodding off and Miss Trouble pawed his face enough that he was convinced to go to bed. You will find them both currently locked in the bedroom. Sir is lying passed out on the floor next to the two remaining unopened bottles of one-fifty-one rum and a half empty bottle of scotch along with another four open untouched cans of cat food. Miss Trouble apparently does not eat her soft food straight from the cans as earlier she used her cat tunnel system to get Ms. Romanoff to feed her from a proper dish before returning to Sir’s side where she is currently grooming herself and occasionally nibbling on the scattered dry food.”

“The idiot. I should have taken him with me. He was clearly useless here.” Loki scowled as he walked to the bedroom.

Trouble dashed up and practically jumped into his arms from her spot next to Tony’s prone body. Loki wasn’t sure if she had been guarding Tony or the bag of dry cat food that was lying next to him open and spilt across the floor. He suspected it was the latter.

After a few moments of cuddles he put her down and picked up Tony and laid him down on the bed. His suspicions were verified when he went to pick up the spilt food and got a hiss from an angry Trouble, who turned, raised her tail, and slowly walked away in a huff.

Loki then went down to check on Bucky.

Bucky, looked behind him expectantly as he walked in. His face fell as he realized Loki was alone.

Loki started looking at his wounds placing his hands on the man. Bucky flinched away from the touch.

“There is no reason for that.” Loki tried to put his hands back on Bucky.

“How’s Steve?” Came Bucky’s voice filled with so much trepidation.

“We managed to save him and regrow his legs. He will be in Asgard for a few days, but the danger is past. I hear you left your bed to go see my hemorrhoid.” Loki said, moving again placing his hands on Bucky’s head.

Bucky looked at him blankly.

“Anthony. I call him my little hemorrhoid sometimes.”

Bucky nodded smiling at the name and said. “I felt I needed to try to help him. Didn’t work… It feels weird when you touch my head.”

Loki stopped and removed his hands. “Can you explain weird a little better?”

“When you touch my head I feel like something is flowing. I’m afraid I’ll lose my memories again.
Not that I really enjoy remembering most of them. My mind is a mess.” Bucky explained.

“My dear Mr. Barnes. Trust me, I only have your best interest at heart. I suspect you have somehow managed to feel a bit of my magic. I need to make sure you are healing acceptably.” Loki replied.

“I’m not sure I’m worth it.” Bucky breathed.

“Your friend, the Captain would not like it if I healed him and failed to heal you properly. I am a god after all and have a reputation to uphold.” Loki argued taking his hands away. “I’m sure Steve wants you healed. So how about it?”

Bucky snorted. “Fine, for Steve. I don’t believe you’re a god though. I don’t know anything about the Norse Gods.”

Loki put his hands back on Bucky’s head. “Others might suggest you read your mythology, except it has so many inaccuracies it would be a waste of time in my opinion.”

Bucky found himself volunteering his thoughts. “I don’t want to lose Steve. I’m afraid of losing Steve. I was worried he wouldn’t survive this. What if he doesn’t really want me? So much time has passed and I’ve done horrible things, I’m not sure I’m the same person. I feel your hands or magic as you say and am afraid I’ll forget him again. What would he do if I disappeared again or my mind snapped? What will he think about all this, now that he is away from me and able to think alone?” Bucky’s voice wavered.

Loki sighed thinking, something his hands did must make mortals feel the need to talk. “Steve will be pleased to know I took care of you, seeing it was the first thing he asked me when he regained consciousness.”

“Steve’s awake and asked about me? What did he say?” Bucky was no longer scowling.

“Oh yes, he was more worried about you than himself. He is a selfless person.” Loki replied smirking.

“Damn, he always thinks more about others before himself. He has always been special that way. I remember getting girls and he would never act jealous. I wanted him to be jealous, but he’d ask if I would help him with the girls. That’s why I didn’t realize he liked men until he was already with Stark.” Bucky closed his eyes.

“You were all he could talk about. He wanted me to bring you to Asgard but it is not possible at this time. He likes you very much.” Loki’s eyes were twinkling as he checked the injuries.

Bucky suddenly smiled. “Really? Do you really think…” Then he frowned. “We still haven’t done anything beyond holding since that first kiss. He’s holding back. Perhaps rightly so there is so much he still doesn’t know he may hate me when he finds out. I’m surprised he doesn’t with what I’ve told him.”

“The past is not a factor for him. I think he is waiting on you to heal. You do not want to be reminded of your pain and torture when you think of your feelings for him.” Loki was smiling now.

“I guess I see, but I want to erase Howard from his memory, he needs to think of me when he... How much longer are you going to have your hands on my head? I think it loosens my tongue.” Barnes looked at Loki who was smiling a Cheshire cat grin now.

“I am done, you are healing fine. I think I will leave you to finish healing naturally. Steve will need someone to care for him when he returns.” Loki said taking his hands off Bucky and leaving the
Anthony was going to be a problem. Loki rested on their bed petting Trouble and looking at the unconscious inventor. Loki had spent decades fighting wars that were not always fair. In fact when the Allfather ordered it, they had slaughtered many innocents. He was too jaded to let it bother him. Yes, once it had been horrible but he had been made hard, not given a choice but to accept it and go on. He didn’t want Anthony to lose that innocence, that compassion, but the guilt was currently eating him alive. And if Loki didn’t figure out something soon, they were bound to find themselves in a downward spiral leading to places that Loki never wanted to see again.

He put Trouble beside him and reached for his tablet and pulled up the figures that Jarvis had prepared about the fight. There had only been 17 casualties. Most were people killed early on by doombots or a few too stubborn, who refused to leave the vacated buildings despite the personal door-to-door warnings. The physical damage was into the billions. Even Stark couldn’t afford to pay for the replacement of it all. Sure, much of it was insured but there were still so many things insurance couldn’t replace.

Tony woke up with his head in Loki’s lap with Trouble curled up touching both of them. “Hi, Herne.”

“Herne? That is a new one. Where does it come from?” Loki asked.

“Shakespeare’s The Merry Wives of Winsor. He’s a spirit or god with horns or antler’s on his head. I think I need some Merry right now.” He curled into Loki disturbing Trouble who looked annoyed and moved to the end of the bed.

“I would say so. Do you have any idea how much of your Midgardian ale it must have taken to get you as smashed as that? No, do not try to figure it out. What I do want to know is why with all that guilt, you were shooting fireballs at your friends?” Loki put his hands on Tony’s face and turned it so that he could see his face again.

“They wouldn’t leave me alone, tried to take my bottles. Ok, I know I should have just went down to my lab and locked everyone out, but I had to see what I had done.” Tony closed his eyes trying to hide. He thought about the coffee shops he frequented and all the places that had delivered food to him that were now just dust. Even with insurance the income to the owner and employees would cease. That was just the restaurants. Every time he started counting the workplaces and apartments in the smaller buildings that sat in the blocks that were gone he felt his heart, mind and body seep into a pool of black tar.

“And have you realized that it was not you yet?” Loki said gently.

“Damn it, of course it was me. This fucking enchantment did it. You should have listened before and taken me to some unholy shithole to just let me blow up. Then I wouldn’t have done this.” Tony swore. He really didn’t deserve to have been saved. He knew the shrapnel was gone but if felt as if they still tore at his heart.

“No, my sweet, it was Doom. You remember me telling you that his magic was not stable and that I was surprised that he had not killed himself with it?” Loki waited for Tony to open one eye and acknowledge that he heard before continuing. “Well the ray he was shooting at you was pure unfiltered, uncontrolled, magical energy. Somehow he tapped into Yggdrasil and opened it like a
spigot. I felt it hit you and jumped to try to stop it.”

“So what? There are still elements all over the ground. Unless you are lying to me, saying he did that too?” Tony argued harshly. His mind had started working, thinking about explosions from uncontrolled magic, from Doom and how it might compare to his blast.

“Actually you had an open channel to Yggdrasil before our enchantment was stabilized. Extremis going off would have drawn energy through it.”

“Still not seeing the connection, how does that makes it not my fault?” Tony grumbled. “I still caused most of it.”

“It was possible that Doom could have blown up the whole city if he left it on with the open channel long enough.” Loki touched Anthony and tried to get him to sit up.

He did sit up and said. “Let me get this right. Are you trying to say it could have been worse?” He was starting to see numbers run by in his head calculating bomb tonnage. He hadn’t been the Merchant of Death for nothing. He knew his stuff, and argh, was still destroying innocent livelihoods if not lives.

“Yes, I am. The longer it stayed open the more unstable it got. If he had held that beam on this building he would have taken out Manhattan.” Loki took Anthony’s hands.

“But it was still our enchantment that blew, right?” Tony looked more confused now. Was Loki right. He hadn’t spent any time measuring the explosions from his accidents when he first started to learn magic, he didn’t know the numbers.

Good Loki thought. He had been careful, to word it so Tony would see other possibilities. His partner was clearly so wracked with guilt he wasn’t even trying to see where Loki might be spinning the facts a bit to remove the blame. He really had no idea how long Doom would have let the power run. “Yes, but given the other option was letting the unstable power build enough to destroy the whole city.” Loki suggested, seeing Tony starting to question.

“If I had not gone off, the damage would have been worse. I thought this only went off for our protection?” Tony was searching for logic, he needed it. Tony worked with concrete facts. He needed a solid reason not to blame himself.

“Honestly, I do not really know for sure if he really scratched your core. This enchantment is not completely stupid, it is attached to two very smart ...”

“Geniuses.” Tony inserted

“beings. The beam was atrociously unstable, you were in serious danger, and New York was in dreadful trouble. It is possible that it took advantage of the path of least damage for our protection. I did not and do not believe that vibranium would have been able to stop what I did to the Chitauri when I experienced the protective explosion. Yet Steve lives because the vibranium shield protected him.” Loki finished.

“It still sucks that it happened.” Tony was clearly working on convincing himself to believe it now. He was smart enough to know that sometimes there were no good answers and you had to choose the lesser of the bad ones.

“No question about that. But it was Doom who forced it, we only reacted in the best way to reduce the damage.” Loki added.
“He must have run tests on that power. Why didn’t he blow up his castle?” Tony asked still searching for answers and explanations.

“He probably failed to test it for extended times. Stopping it when what he aimed at exploded. He probably did not think to try it against anything that was enchanted beyond a doombot with their dubious weak power sources. And he would not have stopped until you were dead, of that I am quite sure.” Loki looked at Anthony. “Would you have?”

Tony thought about it for a moment finally mentally switching, letting logic control his mind and dominate it, where previously his emotions had been running amuck driving him into deep guilt.

“My testing would’ve been better, but then again, I used to make weapons for idiots and am a genius. Shows us Doom was one of those idiots.” Tony smiled for the first time now, albeit grimly.

“Doom was clearly an idiot. Now, what have the press been told while I was gone?” Loki redirected the subject a bit. No more examining for possible flaws Anthony could latch onto.

Tony flinched. “Well I might have ignored Rhodey’s calls… and Pepper… and the rest of the Avengers, when they came to see me. I might owe them an apology.”

Loki rolled his eyes. “I am not sure I want you to see your living area if you don’t remember it. I believe the apology must be sincere and include several very expensive ‘I’m sorry’ gifts.”

Tony remembered enough of the mess. He looked at the bedroom floor noticing Trouble. “I think you may have to help me. They’ll be able to tell if J just orders stuff. How come Trouble eats dry food off the floor but doesn’t eat wet out of the can?”

“You are going to owe ME for this too. As for Trouble I believe the only correct answer is that she is a cat.” Loki looked cross knowing he had to help Anthony get back into his friends good graces.

“Jarvis, what has been said?” Tony asked shaking his head at Trouble.

“Bruce says that you are drunk and hopes Loki gets back soon, Miss Potts has been cross but fairly tight lipped and Clint says that if you ever….”

“I mean in the news. I’m surrounded by wiseasses.” Tony looked at the screen that Jarvis was putting newscasts up on.

“Why Sir, I do not possess any body parts, certainly not an ass, and Master Loki has assured me that wisdom is not located there nor that he will allow you to turn me into a four legged equine creature.” Jarvis announced causing Tony to stare at Loki.

“Perhaps you should start by apologizing to Jarvis, my little hemorrhoid.” Loki smirked.

Tony shook his head feeling ganged up upon, deservingly so. “Sorry, J. I guess you had to deal with everyone while I was having my pity party.” Tony acknowledged before turning to the TV.

So far the news was blaming Doom. He had a history of killing people. Pepper had released a statement that the Avengers were alive but some were in very serious condition. That had promoted the idea that it was Doom’s fault. Ironman was getting some blame with suggestions that his arc reactor may have blown up from whatever Doom shot at him but there was no close up public videos of the blast as it was starting. The only eye witness of the start and correct angle, had seen it through his telescope and had no idea how the blast started. Videos taken from further away just showed a cloud of debris starting. It was currently just speculation along with plenty of numbers and pictures of
the aftermath of the damage caused, along with more interviews.

They called Pepper who was relieved to hear that Steve was still alive and Tony had not drunk himself to death although she was still angry with him. She was more than glad to announce it was Doom’s wildly unstable magic beam that had caused the damage and made an official statement to the press to that effect.

Loki explained it to the rest of the Avengers, Hill and Coulson, the same as he did to Anthony. He knew that it would have probably taken quite some time for Doom to blow the city, but no one else needed to know that. Then again after looking at the numbers again, if Doom had really tried to take out the tower he might have taken out half the state when it blew.

Loki did end up reassuring his poor genius many, many times that it was not his fault. Tony was careful not to dig more into the details that would lead him to blame himself again. He was fully capable of avoiding looking too hard at things if it was in his best self-interest.

Loki helped pick very nice apology gifts and learned that Anthony really had no concept on what to give as gifts. Tony gave an extremely sincere apology both before and again when the gifts were given.

Clean-up would take months. Tony offered Stark Enterprises services to be in charge of that. There would be less questions about the elements that way and the profits made by selling those elements he would return to help offset some of the losses to the small business owners and the city. Notably his favorite close pizza places, delis, restaurants and coffee shops and Chinese deliveries were back in business very soon with grateful owners.

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from.
Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤️
Tony's Troubles.

Chapter Summary

Tony and Loki check on Steve and Tony suffers from an offhand comment and comes up with a plan to deal with it. Later Steve comes back only to act strange and Loki notices.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

A couple days later Loki went back to Asgard to check on Steve. This time he took Anthony with him.

Bruce volunteered to watch Trouble. He too was needing comfort from the fallout and Hulk really liked Trouble. In fact the feeling was clearly mutual, Hulk being Trouble’s third favorite person. Asgard on the other hand thought Trouble was the devil incarnate.

Steve was awake when they got to him.

“Hey buddy, I hear you’re gonna make it.” Tony smiled.

Steve nodded. “That’s what they tell me. I could definitely see a reason for healing magic being brought to earth.” He said and looked at the sheet covering his legs.

Loki lifted the sheet. The tissue on his legs was translucent resembling opaque jelly. “The magic is settling nice. It will be a couple more days before we can take you back to Midgard though.”

Steve acknowledged him, then said with trepidation. “How’s Bucky?“

“He is fine, his only thoughts are about you. He is worried you will leave him.” Loki smiled.

Steve shook his head. “Leave him? Never. I don’t think we’ve even ever had a fight in all the years we’ve known each other. When I think how stupid I was… He was made in heaven.”

“Yes, well perhaps Valhalla, his only thoughts have been on you. I shall tell him you have no plans to divorce him.” Loki answered straight faced.

Tony’s head snapped up. “Divorce? You married him and I wasn’t invited to the wedding?”

Steve’s eyes turned into large orbs and after several very long moments gasped and sputtered. “Www…what? I never. We didn’t. Married… But he’s only been back. Did he tell you that?”
Loki laughed. “No, but he is as concerned as any newlywed could be. You too. Your face was beautiful. Wasn’t it Anthony?” He looked at Tony.

Steve laughed. “I think you two are the ones who need a wedding. You’re a lot more married than we are. We’re still just looking at the baseball field.”

Marriage? Reception? Tony had turned his head back and forth between the other two, too stunned and losing the conversation. Oh damn, he thought he was over this. That was one of those ‘C’ words. He shot his hand to a chair to hold himself in place while plastering a smile on his face. He and Loki might as well...llllllllllllll be and what if they fought, what would the reaction be? He envisioned craters, destruction and thousands of dead people. He felt his heart beat faster. Not now, don’t think about it. Of course he was envisioning Loki asking him to get married and he couldn’t say yes because he was afraid and then boom: craters again. Marriage, no marriage and him drinking himself blind drunk, trying to kill himself and taking out half the world. Not being able to live with Loki and not being able to live without him always followed by craters. Then he felt curiosity from Loki and remembered the link and slammed it shut, no way in hell was Loki going to know he suddenly had nervous thoughts about their relationship. He needed it too much, they both did.

“Anthony?” Loki nudged the inventor after a couple seconds when he didn’t reply.

Tony smiling just said. “Oh, yeah great, just great.” He managed to pull himself together hoping his answers fit the conversation, and they would ignore the quickly growing raging t-rex sized oxymoron that had just been born into his brain. ‘Ghaaa! Why brain, are you suddenly betraying me and forcing me to have these stupid ass reactions to the thought of commitment again? I like my commitment to Loki!’ Tony thought to himself.

Steve smiled softly now. “You are the God of Mischief, Loki.”

Tony arrived home and headed straight for his lab. Loki knew him well enough that sometimes he needed to be alone. After a several hours he started talking to Jarvis.

“Jarvis, I got problems.”

“That is nothing new, Sir.”

“Be nice. I could still donate you to a preschool.”

“And that would be different than here how? Sir.” Jarvis was clearly in feisty mood.

“Oh shut up. I have to figure out how to get over my fear of commitment.” Tony looked at the thin canisters he was putting into his newest suit.

“Sir, excuse me for my lack of understanding but I thought you had dealt with this issue some time ago. How can you be fearful of something that you are already easily doing?” Jarvis questioned.

“I don’t know. Loki was joking about Steve being married to Barnes and Steve said we were more married than them and suddenly I froze up. It hasn’t been that long that we’ve really been together.” Tony said this, only to realize Trouble had got into the lab and jumped into the suit part that he was trying to work on.

“I’m sure, you were not in here before. How did you get in?” Tony picked her up and set her on the
desk. “Jarvis, can you check the logs to see how she got in?”

“I…, am afraid, Sir, I did not realize you wanted to be alone. When you were welding earlier I opened the door for her. She tries so hard to play with me.” Jarvis almost sounded embarrassed.

“Jarvis! I can’t believe it. Run around by a cat! You’re really attached to her, aren’t you?” Tony laughed as he petted the purring cat.

“Yes, one might say I am committed to her. Sir.” Jarvis brought the subject back to Tony.

“HA…HA. Now I’m actually serious. And seriously still having problems. I seriously have no choice. I seriously did my best to get into this relationship, and I seriously have no idea what I’m doing. I’m also going to be in serious trouble if we have a serious fight because I can’t handle it, seriously. The worst, most serious things is; I would be seriously devastated, probably even seriously suicidal if he leaves me.” Tony put his face into Trouble’s fur.

“Is it because the enchantment you share gives you no choice?” Jarvis questioned.

“No, it was the marriage thing and looking at Captain America who nearly died. He nearly died and the first thing he thinks about is Bucky. Loki was teasing him.” Tony said.

“You are afraid of marriage, Sir? This is not new. I don’t believe Master Loki is about to ask you. Do you feel that you don’t think about Master Loki enough or that your first thoughts should be of him?” Javis asked.

“I think about that asshole plenty, nearly twenty-four by seven, he’s never far from my mind. No, it’s what happens when we fight? We wouldn’t even have to be married. What if it’s serious, it’ll end up like a bullet train hitting a bridge, or a nuclear bomb hitting a building. Boom! Nothing left we won’t survive it, IF we’re lucky. If not who knows what the final strike might do to everything around us. Just us and a large crater, no city, no friends, no you J, just death. Oh shit, that’s it. It’s the final strike thing that did it. It’s what brought out my fears again.” Tony stopped petting Trouble and looked up.

“Sir, perhaps if you talk about the final strike and your fear about it with Master Loki.” Jarvis suggested.

“That might work for part of it. But there’s still that damn marriage part now. The happy wall I built to keep commitment issues out got elementalized and I doubt it’ll be fixed with a conversation.” Tony said as Trouble started batting at a something on the table.

“Sir, I have read marriages are something you must work at. Didn’t you say, in your own words you think ‘He is the one’.”

Tony pulled Trouble close again, shoved his head down and just groaned into Trouble’s fur. She licked his arm but was looking at a discarded prosthetic finger that she had been playing with.

“Sir, you are sleeping together, eating together, working together, living together, you even have a pet that clearly thinks she is part of your family. I do not seem to understand what the difference is between that and marriage.” Jarvis said, as Trouble worked herself out of Tony’s clutches enough to touch the fake finger with a paw and knock it to the floor. “You are already committed to Loki. Perhaps you should just treat this situation like you are already married.”

“Think of it as a done deal?” Tony was scratching Trouble’s neck. “Might work.”

“Perhaps if you think of it as a project, Sir.”
“Right. I need to think of him as my husband then. Already permanent. Go about it backasswards.” Tony set Trouble on the floor and brought up a new screen and made a list while he paced. “1. Need rings; like yesterday. 2. say to self; I’m already married to Loki multiple times a day. 3. Get matching linens with monograms. 4. Remember he is my stuff, when I feel panicked. 5. Make a new Ironman suit with lovy dovey stuff about Loki on it. 6. Ask Loki to marry me because I’ll handle it better if I’m the one asking. 7. Insist on a quick wedding so I don’t have time to back out. 8. Get two marriage certificates, one for us and one for Steve and Bucky. 9. Plan a honeymoon for Steve and Bucky, the look on their faces when I tell them they’re getting married will be priceless. 10. Go on three honeymoons with Loki to try out all the positions of the Karma Sutra. Well maybe we’ve already done most of them. I know I’ll just give the book to Steve and Bucky in front of everyone else that’ll be better. And 11. Talk about my fears of us fighting and causing an explosion.”

“Sir, I believe number eleven should be first. I’m not sure all of these should be done without discussing it with Master Loki. And certainly number eight and nine require some input from Mr. Rogers and Mr. Barnes.”

“Fine eleven becomes one. I need to get started.” Tony said, and left to find Loki. He walked away talking to himself. “Loki is already my husband that should mean more sex. This is really going to work. Come to think of it I already consider him my stuff so three can be checked off.”

“Miss. Trouble, my friend, you are going to have to help me make sure Sir and Master Loki do not really make things go ‘boom’ over this plan.”

Trouble sat up and said, “Meow,” as if in agreement. Then picked up the finger that looked very real, in her mouth and followed Tony out of the lab.

Tony went up to talk to Loki about the final strike. Loki assured him that it would never go off because they were angry with each other. They did end up having some very great sex and then more fun when Tony pulled out their copy of the Karma Sutra. He never really got around to talking about anything else.

A few days later Loki made a quick trip to Asgard and brought back Steve.

“Holy Cow! Did we have another alien attack while I was gone? Please tell me we didn’t do this.” Were the first words out of Steve’s mouth upon returning to Earth.

“It was Dr. Doom who is responsible.” Loki said as they both looked out across the empty blocks where buildings once stood from the top of the tower.

“It’s gone. Just gone. What did he do? What kind of bomb does this? Was it one of those atomic bombs I saw pictures of?” Steve was stunned he had not even seen the damage from 9/11 having still been in ice.

Bucky and Natasha were coming out to greet him now.

“No, if one of your atomic bombs would have hit it would have been much worse and have been accompanied by deadly radiation.” Loki said.

Steve stood still for a moment the said. “Shoot, that’s why Tony had to put that bomb underwater. So what caused this one? It kind of reminds me of the way the damage the weapons that Hydra made from the Tesseract in the war did, only on a giant scale.”
Bucky had heard Steve’s comment. “Sure does, but it just wiped out everything. I’m so glad you’re back.” Bucky gave Steve a hug.

“I am not familiar with those weapons.” Loki said.

“It made things just disappear when they hit. Just go poof.” Steve provided and gave a bit more description.

Loki thought for a few minutes. “They were probably teleporting things off very far away. This is much different.”

Natasha looked out across the empty space that should be filled with buildings. “No, this one left elements.”

Steve glanced at Loki for a moment. “Like yours did? Did he figure out how to duplicate that attack that you used on the doombots?”

Loki gave Natasha a nasty look “No, he directly attacked Anthony with raw magic.”

“Raw magic? Is that a thing? Does it do that kind of damage?” Steve questioned still unable to take his eyes off the disaster before him.

“Doom made it so Tony’s final strike went off before anything else could be done.” Natasha said, even she was not unaffected by the loss of so much, so quickly.

Loki snapped. “Spider, it could have been much worse and you know it.” He was feeling anger; it wasn’t Anthony’s fault.

She nodded silently in agreement, but her comments had not been chosen with as much care as normal.

Steve chose to say. “It went off against Doom and those doombots. It wasn’t really Doom was it? It was Tony.”

Loki’s eyes glowed with anger as he watched emotions flash across several faces and was suddenly whispering angrily in Steve’s ear. “Do not dare try to blame this on Anthony, he is guilty enough. Do not make me regret saving you.” Loki had an evil haunting look in his eyes. Steve would pay if he sent Anthony back into the depths of depression.

Of course speak of the devil Tony showed up. “Steve, welcome back.” Tony said rather neutrally as if expecting to get a lecture. “We made quite a mess didn’t we? Better than it could have been. At least as a bonus we don’t have to ever worry about Doom again.” Tony didn’t have quite the snark he usually exhibited. He walked up and Loki grabbed him and pulled him in for a hug.

Steve looked between them and wisely paid attention to what Loki had said. “Uh yeah, glad to be back. Dooms dead? How you doing Tony?”

Bucky was still next to Steve and also whispered into Steve’s other ear. “Tony took it pretty hard, Loki’s just being protective. I’ll tell you all about it later.”

“Whispering about me behind my back again? Guys, I’m not made of glass. Just because I needed a couple days alone to think doesn’t mean you have to tiptoe around me.” Tony looked sternly at Loki then at Bucky and Natasha as they all walked back inside.

Natasha suddenly smirked. “I bet Jarvis can put together a video short starring you ‘thinking’.”
Tony started to say something when she added. “Call it payback for all the ones you’ve made of others.”

“Why Ms. Romanoff, I will start on it right away.” Jarvis added.

“You are making a fool of me. You do realize this.” Tony grumbled.

“Oh no dear. You do that by yourself without our help.” Loki smiled gliding Tony away from whatever discussion they were going to have about the crater that Tony did not need to hear.

***********

Then in mid-December the day came that Loki dreaded. A report came in of a Djofullin or devil being sighted in Brazil. A search was made but they came up empty.

Loki had noticed over the past few weeks that Steve had been looking crestfallen at his Anthony when he thought he wasn’t being watched. Bucky seemed to be aware of Steve’s behavior and looked crushed in response. Well there was going to be hell to pay if Steven thought that he was going to drop Bucky and start chasing his Anthony. So he did the logical thing and went to talk to Bucky rather than Steve.

He went down and knocked on their door. Bucky opened it up and ushered him in.

Loki was pretty sure Steve was on his daily run with Sam but asked. “Where is the good Captain?”

“He and Sam are out for a run. I can tell him you’re looking for him.” Bucky offered.

“No, no. It is you I wish to speak to.” Loki smiled a rather fake smile.

“Me, why?” Bucky twisted his hands then moved toward the kitchen watching Loki. “Can I get you a soft drink, or a coffee?”

“Why Mr. Barnes you look nervous. Why is that?” Loki was doing a great imitation of a vulture eyeing a piece of dead meat.

“Oh god, he’s done something hasn’t he.” Bucky stopped moving toward their kitchen and turned around.

“Perhaps. What do you think your man has done?” Loki’s glare was enough to make most men turn and run.

Barnes had nowhere to go. “I don’t know! He’s been so guilty, it’s eating him alive. I said he should just sit down and talk to Tony, but he said he couldn’t do it.”

“You don’t know? Really Mr. Barnes. Humor me, what exactly do you… think… he feels guilty for?” Loki really enjoyed people telling him things they thought he already knew.

“He looked at Tony’s medical records and everything he could get Jarvis to give him about his childhood. Tony had said some things and he really didn’t believe them. He couldn’t accept that Howard was capable of doing any of it. Now he’s blaming himself for Howard’s abuse.” Bucky was
Loki felt surprised. He expected a crush, longing for or even jealousy not this. His tone changed to questioning. “Guilt? Steven was told about it some time ago. He’s known even longer about the animosity between Anthony and his father. Why has he been showing it only recently?” He knew Steve had spent plenty of hours studying history.

Bucky looked up. “It’s complicated. It took a long time for him to actually look at those records. You know he and Howard Stark had a relationship. It was Howard that came onto him very early on. He had long since given up on me, thinking I was only into dames. I guess it got pretty intense after he thought I died. They kept it hidden from everyone including Peggy. It was really serious they even talked about adopting a child to raise if they could figure out how to make it work after the war was over. I guess they got very protective of each other for some reason. It’s hard for Steve to talk about it at all. Keeping it hidden and behind closed doors along with possessiveness was hard for them and I think it got pretty unhealthy at the end. Not like physically but mentally. Anyway, when he met Tony he found himself with fatherly feelings for him, imagining that Tony could be like their adopted son. He dreamed that he might find a small way to be a father figure to Tony. Now every time he looks at Tony he thinks about Howard and Tony’s abuse and wants to cry or beat something. He usually ends up going through a dozen or more punching bags. Then ends up feeling guilty because Tony’s paying for those punching bags.”

Loki’s face had changed. He’d been wrong about Steve. He was interested in Tony, but more like a worried father. “So how has it affected your relationship with Steve?” Loki was almost afraid to ask.

“Relationship?” Bucky laughed grimly. “At least Steve knows I’m alive. I know he doesn’t carry a torch for Howard anymore. He hugs me all the time, cuddles next to me in bed, but nothin else. I don’t know what to do, he stops me when I try to go any further.” Bucky sounded morose.

Loki was suddenly struck by how similar the situation was to his and Anthony’s before they got together. At least this man knew Steve liked him. “Have you asked him why?” Loki said.

“It’s hard. We didn’t grow up in a time where you talked about stuff. When we do talk serious it’s usually about how I’m dealing with my memory or about Howard or Tony. He changes the subject to how he’s dealing with Howard’s treatment of Tony when I try to talk about our relationship.” Bucky answered. “I’m jealous of Steve’s guilt. It gets more attention than me. That is just all kinds of screwed, and then I get into thinking I’m just not worth it because of other stuff.”

He could tell there was more Bucky wasn’t saying but he had got what he came for and it was their relationship, not his problem. So he got up to leave with, “Anthony is a big boy, he has lived with it all his life. Tell Steve to just…what is the term Anthony uses…Ah yes, ‘Grow Some Balls’ and go talk to him about it. Steven is currently tormenting himself over it and it is showing.” Loki added reconsidering. “I’ll even be there.”

Barnes, stood up and grabbed Loki. “Yes, maybe we could all be there, make it a double date. That’s a great idea Loki. Can you set it up for us? He can get it off his chest then.”

A double date? Loki thought. “I suppose so.” Loki said, leaving and feeling like the trickster had just been tricked.

Before Loki got around to setting up the date another devil sighting occurred in Amsterdam, this time with pictures. Once again there was no trail when the Avengers investigated.
Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤️
The Trouble with Ultron

Chapter Summary

Tony and Bruce have been working on a bot to protect the world..... Tony decides to show off and get Loki to help finish it. Loki has other ideas.

Chapter Notes

This is a short chapter so I am posting it as an extra.

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Ever since Tony had heard that Hydra and now the devils needed a sorcerer, he had been working with Bruce on a secret project. It was something he had originally thought about after the Chitauri attack. Now the blueprints were ready and he had most of the programing done. He wanted to add magic to it and brought Loki down to surprise him.

Tony took him down to the lab and brought up the plans for his ‘Ultron’.

Loki looked at it, then he asked to see more. He spent way more time than expected and was still looking at it.

“So am I a genius or am I a genius.” Tony laughed.

Loki smiled. “I see you have decided it is time to leave Midgard and travel the universe then.”

“What termite has gotten into your wooden brain, I’m talking about protecting earth not leaving it.”

“If you create this, I will be leaving and taking you with me, with or without your permission.” Loki crossed his arms.

“Yeah. No, that’s not going to work for me. Ultron could be my penultimate achievement in protecting the earth I want to bask in my glory not leave because we’re not needed.” Tony glared at Loki. Thinking his lover had gone crazy.

“Not needed. That is one way to look at it.” Loki laughed.

Tony growled. “What do you mean? This is going to make us obsolete, but it might need help if something bad really happens.”

Loki looked at him in a very serious fashion. “I am afraid not this time. I fail to see how this is going
to do anything but backfire on you. I have seen things like this tried before, they fail in the worst ways, the logic is wrong.”

“What do you mean! It looks great to me.” Tony was appalled.

“This is going to end up with the logical conclusion that humans are bad for earth.” Loki said flatly.

“I don’t believe it.” Tony announced. “How the hell did you come up with that?”

Loki spent the next ten minutes writing a flowchart. “Here is your proof Stark.”

Tony looked it over and tried to argue certain places.

“You keep assuming discernment, most AI’s do not have that. Jarvis is very unique and I suspect that much of it is due to his learning to balance between what you want and what is good for you. And it has taken years.” Loki informed him.

Tony still didn’t agree. “Jarvis, now! I want you to run the logical conclusions of what Ultron will decide. Ignore what Reindeer Games here has written, do it yourself from scratch.”

Loki smiled and leaned back against a table. “He will come up with the same answer.”

Tony smiled back with faith in his work, not believing Loki for a second. “We’ll see. Maybe we should bet on it. I win you sign my paperwork for the next month.”

Loki kept smiling. “Alright, I win you drink tea in the mornings for the next two months.”

“What that vile stuff you and Banner drink! No way in hell am I doing that.” Tony jumped to attention and stood in front of Loki.

Loki blinked at him knowingly. “Ah, so you admit defeat and will give up on this idea?”

“Fine I accept. Get your pen ready.” Tony said defiantly.

They waited a few minutes while Tony looked at the code himself some more. You know, just in case he might be able to tweek it into being better. Not at all because something in the back of his mind prodded him to wonder if Loki might possibly be right.

Jarvis finally spoke. “Sir, I have your answer. It appears that Master Loki is correct. When using pure logic on this, the only solution is to get rid of the humans.”

Tony had already written a fix while they had waiting. He showed it to Loki, and had Jarvis run it. “This may make things clearer.”

Loki sighed. “Not really.”

“Sir, I’m afraid it will just take longer but eventually the end result stays the same.”

Tony was not happy. “Why didn’t Jarvis just do this when I built him?”

“Jarvis what are your prime objectives?” Loki asked.

“Why to keep Sir alive, follow his orders and to be his companion. I must admit that following his orders and keeping him alive has indeed been a balancing act that I am proud to say my percentage of correctness has improved over the years.”
Tony laughed remembering. “When I first built him it was bad. I got lectures about there being no such thing as safe sex. Cars were death traps. Walking invited not just assault but dozens of types of accidents. The shower was even too dangerous as I might slip and fall. He would have kept me stuck in a room with just a bed, housed somewhere that didn’t have much weather, feeding me through a slot in the door.”

Loki smiled again. “See, his first objective was to just take care of you. It took time to learn that much, with your constant editing of his programs. Even with that I suspect that he has spontaneously developed a soul or access to something such as Yggdrasil or the Astra Sea. He has an amazing amount of personality, feelings and discernment. Those are things that do not exist in a machine.”

Jarvis graciously said. “I appreciate the recognition, Master Loki.”

Tony while frustrated wasn’t willing to give up. He proceeded to rewrite a section of the code. “Ok Jarvis, this isn’t complete but what happens when I put this not killing humans stuff in.”

While they waited for Jarvis to run the new possibilities on unfinished code Tony asked. “So what made you think it wouldn’t work. You said you’d seen it before?”

Loki smirked. “Yes, long ago there was something like this made, they called it ‘The Protector’. Over and over they tried to make a version work. Millions were killed in the process because they failed to understand that spells and machines are pure logic, they cannot discern or feel. It is a period of our history that we study in order to avoid making the same mistake. In the universe there exist several horrible abominations that were created with similar good intentions. Asgard’s final attempt was built with a safety; it is under the control of the throne. You know it as the Destroyer.”

Tony had read the files on the Destroyer. “So you doubted it from the start.”

“Yes, I was skeptical. I tried to keep an open mind. You do think outside the box and come up with brilliant solutions to things at times.” Loki put his arms around Tony.

“Sir, Master Loki. I have come up with some answers. There is a twenty percent chance that it will get caught into an unending loop, unable to perform. There is a twenty percent chance that it will catch all law breakers including jaywalkers, people who accidently take pens home from work and children who steal cookies from their pantry. There is nearly an eighty percent chance it will kill all aliens on sight regardless of their intent along with so many species of creature that will upset the balance of nature. There is over a sixty percent chance that it will start destroying weapons, forms of transportation and many other forms of technology resulting in a huge decrease in the population from starvation and sending us back to the Stone Age. There are countless other scenarios that might happen including the ones where it would try to put humans into storage, in some form of an attempt at stasis. There is virtually no chance it could deal with organizations like Hydra or extremist organizations effectively. I also took the liberty of trying a few things myself to resolve some of the problems and found no scenarios that worked.”

Tony tried a few more attempts, but nothing worked. He was disappointed when he told Bruce who had helped him and Phil Coulson. Both of them agreed they had likely averted a major disaster. They all decided to chalk it up to a learning experience. Except for Tony who was whining about learning to drink his tea.

Christmas came and went. Tony did not hold a New Year’s Eve party. Those who happened to be in the tower that night did get together to toast the New Year but it was mostly impromptu, definitely limited to the group and no mistletoe. New Year's day brought a afternoon tea tasting party
accompanied by football games and scones. Tony decided he was never going to bet about tea again. On the other hand some of the various iced teas and especially the Arnold Palmer (iced tea and lemonade) was pretty good especially with a shot of something like whiskey.

In the week that followed a devil was seen in Bangalore, India the same day pictures were taken in Boise, Idaho. The next day one was observed in Kano, Nigeria and in Singapore quickly followed by sightings in Toluca, Mexico, rural Kazakhstan and Roanoke, Virginia. Loki studied the pictures and announced that there were at least two and possibly three devils for sure on earth.

The internet was wild now with multiple pictures of what appeared to be an old Assyrian god on the loose. The double date that had been setup in January was rescheduled and they started looking for leads again.

But the leads didn’t last. Two weeks later there had been no more pictures. Mass hysteria had taken over, everyone was seeing them now. However, there were no new photos or filmstrips and nothing that could be verified. Jarvis was searching continuously to no avail.

What remained of SHIELD kept looking but the Avengers had no place left to search and they needed a break.

Loki had not told Anthony about Steve’s forthcoming apology but instead had said the two needed a bit of help moving beyond the snuggle bear phase.

Tony, tired of traveling and not wanting to leave his home, declared a break. He set up a night and catered dinner for four in the penthouse in the beginning of February.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this. In Avengers 2 - Ultron, Tony thought he could program the problems away. I'm still not sure if it was influence of the Mindstone or the problem of discernment that made Ultron a destroyer. In comics there are several entities that were created for good that end creating destruction. I've always thought that that was likely what the destroyer was originally built for.

The real debate still rages as to if AI's could be made to work properly without this sort of result. Learning programs, limited AI's have been around since the 90's. Perhaps someday we'll have an answer. Then again we may understand the human mind better too by then.

Friday I'll be posting the next chapter like usual.

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below.
I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
Double Trouble Dates

Chapter Summary

The double date goes down. Tony puts his plan into action.!

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Trouble saw the preparations and made it a dinner for five by pushing a plate in front of ‘her’ usual spot at the end of the table. The caterer, being so delighted at her actions, consulted with Tony and they put her stool that had been removed earlier, back and gave her a full place setting. From her stool she sat observing the kitchen and clearly directing the rest of the preparations.

Tony was more than glad to give things a push. He had a plan after all. It was time to act. He had a project list to complete and this was perfect.

He had talked to Loki about the final strike and felt much better there. He’d quickly made a couple of rings that he kept hidden away. Loki’d barely noticed the matching towels and linens. Of course Loki was already his, no problem there. He had crossed off decorating the suit for now, after making two attempts and repainting them. He just couldn’t bring himself to wear anything that was that sappy. He also hadn’t told anyone about his list.

“Remember our goal sweetheart. Don’t get flustered if unexpected things happen.” Tony reminded Loki.

“What have you got planned Anthony? You have been hinting about that all day. I would like to think I can trust you, but you are hiding something.” Loki looked up with a squint at Tony just after he swiped a fresh baked roll from the caterer. Actually Loki wondered if Tony had figured out Steve was going to apologize to him or give a tear-filled heartfelt confession.

Tony smiled. “Don’t worry your majesty, I have everything under control.”

“Famous last words.” Loki said, as the elevator door opened.

Bucky and Steve got out of the elevator on the penthouse level.

“Where is everyone else? Did we get the time wrong? Or are the others just late?” Steve asked.

“Nope, this is it, just for the four of us.” Tony grinned a bit too much. “Dinner is just about ready.
Here have some of this. We brought it back from Asgard.” Tony said handing them both large glasses of a strong Asgardian wine.

“Bucky, you didn’t tell him it was a date?” Loki scolded just as he went to the kitchen to receive the last instructions from the caterers.

Steve laughed. “Bucky, you scoundrel, you worded it to mislead me.” Then he sniffed the wine, wriggled his nose and took a sip.

Bucky smiled at Steve and didn’t hold back when he took a large swallow of the wine. “Wow, that’s smooth.”

Steve looked at Tony from behind Bucky with suspicion. “Perhaps we should just sip it slowly.” Already wondering what Stark had planned.

“With your metabolism? Do you really think it will affect either of you?” Tony said grabbing one more glass and raising it in toast. “To your health!” He took a swig from one.

They of course raised their glasses and took another drink.

“Dinner is ready. The caterers are leaving.” Loki came in and took the glass that Tony had in his hand.

Tony grabbed the fourth glass and went and grabbed a second large bottle and took it to the table where the first large bottle sat with wine still in it.

Dinner was waiting for them. There was a sweet and salty salad, followed by a spicy dish with vegetables and chicken, fresh garlic rolls and a dessert that was rich, thick, and sweet.

Steve sat down, took a deep breath, looked straight at Tony and said. “Tony, I’m sorry I caused your dad to be so hard on you.”

Tony nearly choked a bit but recovered quickly. “It’s not me you want to be hard for. I sure hope you’re not soft for Bucky.”

“Tony I’m trying to apologize. I feel like I have egg on my face because you were right about your dad and I didn’t listen. I don’t blame you for hating me for it.”

“Man you’re thinking too much about the poultry. You dumb cluck. I’ll admit Howard is a foul thing to talk about. But it’s not your fault, you’re not my mother hen even if you do act like it around here. Sure you rustle my feathers when you talk about him like he was near perfect and ruled the roost. Howard was just a chicken liver who spent all his time squawking about his favorite chick, that’s you, you turkey. You don’t have to feel like some rooster guarding the chicks. I’m way past that and I have myself an overprotective wolf who raided the hen house while you weren’t looking and took me away. I’d much rather crow about that!” Tony was laughing as everyone else was groaning by the time he finished. He noticed Steve’s face, it was still serious although he had clearly disrupted his friend’s train of thought. “Don’t worry about it. I don’t blame you. Just don’t talk about him and I’ll be fine.”

Steve wasn’t about to give up though. “Tony, I did what you said. I looked at your childhood medical history and other records about you. It was worse than you said. You can’t not blame me.”

Tony rolled his eyes thinking he was picking up habits from Loki. “Steve I chose who I blame, not you. It’s been dealt with and I decided you’re not Godzilla, Howard was. Tokyo will survive and so
will I."

"Tokyo? I think I missed something." Bucky said.

"Godzilla is one of those references I missed isn’t it." Steve still looked glum.

Loki tilted his head. “How did you miss the Godzilla marathon Clint and Bruce had with Jor over Christmas.” He couldn’t believe that Steve, who drove Jor crazy, had missed the two day long film fest with every giant Japanese movie monster they could find.

Tony had an agenda though. “Now is that’s over can we get back to this lovely meal I worked my bones off preparing.”

Loki blinked. “Tony, you catered it with one phone call. Trouble spent more time with the preparations than you and she just watched.”

“Supervised, she supervised and I delegated it to her.” Tony argued.

Trouble gave an appropriately timed ‘Meow’ as Loki put a few very small cutup pieces of chicken without any sauce on her plate.

Steve was not willing to give up yet. “Tony, I’ve spent time thinking about you as my son with Howard.”

Tony really did choked at that. “What! Thank god that didn’t happen I’d be even more screwed up.” Tony teased. “Steve I look older than you, maybe even old enough to be YOUR father. Well at least I used to. So stop, go to jail immediately! To not pass GO or collect two hundred dollars. I do not need or want a father figure in my life. Can we eat now?”

Steve smiled. “I think I know that reference. I played Monopoly before.”

They passed the platters around and chatted about games for a few minutes while they ate.

“Tony, there is more. You’re going to hate both of us for not telling you.” Bucky said solemnly.

“Guys this is supposed to be a fun ‘date’. Did I need to send you announcements? J how fast can you get them printed and sent up here?” Tony teased.

“Tony, this is not a joke.” Steve said.

“Fine, tell me so we can go back to having a good time.” Tony sounded exasperated.

Steve and Bucky looked at each other and at Tony then at each other again.

Loki sighed. “Friends sometimes it is best to just say it. I promise you I will not let Tony destroy anything right now. Unless of course you have done something to Trouble then I will at least grant you a quick and relatively painless death.”

Trouble was looking bored now. There was a serving platter sitting on the other side of the table with chicken on it and none on her plate anymore.

Bucky closed his eyes tight and said quickly. “The Winter Soldier killed Howard and Maria Stark.”

“Yeah I know.” Tony replied taking a bite out of his roll.

Steve gasped. “You knew? And you didn’t do anything? You weren’t angry?”
Tony swallowed. “Oh I was furious, really blew a gasket. Took days to get the lab back in shape. Lucky for you Loki helped me see Barnes was controlled at the time and not responsible for his actions. Never said anything because we figured you’d just BEAT YOURSELVES UP OVER IT. Like you’ve clearly been doing.” Tony grimaced at them and growled. “Any other surprises? I have plans for tonight and you’ve already messed with them enough.”

Both Steve and Bucky downed their glasses of wine. “No, sir.” They each said. They had expected Tony to blow up at them. Well he had but only because he thought they were being stupid.

Just then Trouble decided she had waited long enough and bounded across the table. She sunk her teeth into a large piece of chicken and hauled off down the hall toward the bedroom with it. Her footprints were clearly visible on the platter in the sauce and a trail of dripping sauce led down the hall.

They all laughed. “Fortunately the caterers made enough for all the Avengers and there is a second plate in the kitchen.” Loki got up, taking the one off the table and returning with a different platter. “We don’t have to tell Clint that he shared his meal with Trouble when he swipes the leftovers now do we?” He said as he returned.

Conversation turned to other things. Steve noticed that everything they ate, while very delicious seemed to require liquid to help wash it down. But as the wine was the only thing offered he was polite, relaxed even, things had gone well for him, Tony wasn’t angry.

After dinner they retired to the living room. Steve had noticed they had gone through multiple bottles of the wine at dinner.

Trouble had returned to join them in the living room and sat curled up on the coffee table half napping.

After filling everyone’s glasses from a new bottle, Tony raised his glass. “To the future.”

“To the future.” They replied.

“To health.” Tony said again. He had a couple more bottles already open.

Tony kept them coming “To health.” “To protecting earth.” “To memories.” “To helping each other.” “To finding those devils” “And stopping them.” “To Loki.” “To Steve.” “To Bucky.” “To luck.” “To courage.” They were all feeling the alcohol by now with Tony refilling the glasses after each toast, overfilling if they didn’t drink enough.

Finally Tony said. “To the right answer.” And dropped to his knee. “Loki, I love you. Fate has bound us together. Marry me.” His eyes raised looking at Loki, he added quickly. “Please say yes and don’t be mad.”

They all stared at Tony in complete shock and surprise. Tony was clearly so hopeful, but was barely keeping it together. One wondered if he was starting to have a panic attack despite having drunk plenty of false security.

Loki was also stunned long enough for everyone to see before he hid behind an emotionless face to think.

Steve had really expected Tony to push Bucky and himself about their relationship. He was prepared for teasing. Instead he found himself thinking and hoping for Tony’s sake that Loki would say yes.
And yes, he even felt a warmth in his own heart for Bucky.

Bucky looked at Steve. Anyone who saw would be able to tell that he wanted Steve right now so very bad.

Loki looked at Anthony. He had been taken completely unaware. It was clear from not only Anthony’s face but the emotional link that had suddenly been opened wide pouring such strong Love through that Anthony meant it with every fiber of his being.

Loki thought. ‘Ah, this is what my little inventor has been trying to hide since visiting Steve in Asgard. Working through his fear, for this.’ That explained the long looks in bed and hugs in hallways with mine or my stuff whispered under his breath. He had even dismissed overhearing Anthony once saying something in the mirror to himself about marriage as part of his ramblings.

He really did care for the drunken imbecile. Yes, he trusted him, liked having him around, worked well with him, worried about him, was able to relax with him and yes he loved him too.

The idiot had not even hinted earlier though, just done it in front of Steve and Bucky. Now there was a thought. Anthony clearly did this with a plan in place. Sneaky, devious, chaotic, warm, delightful, man. His Anthony! Oh yes, this would be fun, should he take over or see what his little hemorrhoid had planned? Perhaps he could do both.

After what seemed forever Loki said. “I think I will.” And tilted his head his face unreadable.

Tony smiled then stopped and asked for clarity. “Marry me or get mad?”

Loki finally smiled. “Marry you.” “I’m still thinking about the other.”

Tony got up and kissed Loki with so much love and happiness. He didn’t care if Loki got mad later, he had said yes.

Steve and Bucky glanced at each other both trying not to look at Tony and Loki, nor feel awkward with their own feelings slowly being swept up and swirling around.

Tony let go and turned to Steve and Bucky. “So now it’s your turn. I have some extra rings if you want to go that far but a declaration of love will suffice.”

“What?” Bucky exclaimed, realizing what was expected but not sure he dared react to it.

Steve glared at Tony. So this was a trap after all. But how could he really feel angry when the man had just forgiven him and had gone to such effort. Bucky said he had told Loki that he had wanted to apologize to Tony for that. The trickster hadn’t reacted to that but had clearly been surprised when Tony had popped the question. It had been a serious risk for Stark to ask in front of them. One just couldn’t trust Stark.

Bucky looked at Steve. He had wanted Steve for as long as he could remember, but people were hunted down for that sort of thing when they grew up. The military court-martialed men if they were homosexual. It was illegal. He had tried to ignore his love for his best friend who was so cute as to be irresistible by dating anything that was female and walked on two legs. It had backfired with Steve getting with Howard.

Now it was legal for men to be in love, even marry. But Steve wasn’t willing to make a move. He had hinted and even tried to talk about it only to be shut down. Now, everything rested with Steve.

Steve saw everyone looking at him. He looked at Bucky knowing Bucky waited on him. This was
Bucky. His best friend. The guy who never let him down. The person who had been his whole world growing up. The person who he had been afraid to rush too fast and had listened to his guilt concerning Tony. Bucky was also the person he loved. Tony had set this up to give them a push. All he could do was look at Bucky’s face which was clearly scared and as vulnerable as he had ever seen it. He had been putting his friend off, not wanting to make mistakes, now realizing that forcing them to wait while he wallowed in his guilt had been the mistake. Still Steve was raised a hundred years ago so he sat, not knowing how to react.

Loki looked at Bucky’s exposed and naked face, clearly wanting and feeling unworthy. Then at Steve, skittish, awkward and shy in this situation.

This would never do. Anthony’s plan was not as thought out as he hoped. So with a new plan in mind he walked with pose and purpose behind Steve. He bend over with grace that commanded everyone’s attention. He smiled, nodded and leaned down to whispered in the ear of Captain America. “Kiss him.”

Steve hesitated as Loki once again stood tall, waited a few moments, then rolled his eyes and waved a hand. Magic pushed them together.

Steve clumsily found Bucky’s mouth and gave what might be mistaken as a kiss. Before catching himself and pulling away to a standing position. “LOKI!” He exclaimed.

“Oh for fucks sake. This is how you kiss.” Tony stood, grabbed and pulled a stunned Bucky up from his chair and started to plant a serious kiss on him.

Pandemonium suddenly broke out. Trouble who had woken and had been watching contentedly seemed to get very disturbed by Tony’s actions toward Bucky. She jumped across the table and up on a chair arm and launched herself up and dug her claws into her cheating owner’s back. Tony shrieked and jumped back knocking Steve to the floor as Trouble’s claws ripped down his shirt leaving long deep painful welts on his back. Loki, who had been beside Steve, was fuming at Tony. He had growled and sidestepped Steve to grab Anthony’s arm so Trouble didn’t end up smashed between Anthony and Steve. Bucky, who didn’t want a kiss from Tony no matter how good he was at kissing, punched him in the eye, causing Tony’s arm to dislocate because of Loki’s steel grip on it. Loki realizing he had damaged his lover, let go of his arm and moved forward to grab him, finally knocking Trouble off Tony. The cat’s back claws had managed to tear his trousers and into his tush. Bucky pushed Loki more towards Tony on his way to get to Steve who was lying on the floor. The push caused an already moving Loki to bump into Tony and knock him over onto the glass coffee table that Trouble had been on earlier.

It didn’t quite break Tony’s leg but broke the glass top cut his chest and arms. Bucky tripped over Trouble who had been knocked off Tony as she wildly cut the inventor’s legs while scrambling from her drop. Bucky fell into Steve’s arms who was mostly shocked and not hurt but did get the wind knocked out of him from Bucky’s landing on his chest. Finally Trouble made a mad dash for the back rooms.

Steve, who had his arms around Bucky after catching him to break his fall, looked at his friend and the bedlam around them and laughed. Bucky soon joined in. Loki the only one who had managed to stay standing tried to look offended but he had couldn’t stop a snort from emerging.

Tony finally laughed too but then whined “It hurts to laugh.”

Steve hugged Bucky tighter, looked him in the eye, half smiling. “That really was a pathetic attempt
at a kiss. If you are okay with it, I would like to see if I can do better.”

Bucky’s smile got bigger. “I’d like that.”

Steve kissed again, not bothering to move off the floor.

Loki bent down next to Anthony and was assessing the damage. He stood up and reached out his hand. “You didn’t exactly follow your plan.”


“Of course my little hemorrhoid.” Loki smiled and put his arm around his lover and helped him to the sofa. Where they both noticed Bucky and Steve now kissing passionately on the floor.

Tony flinched as he gingerly sat on his poor punctured bottom leaned back only to flinch and lean forward leaving streaks of blood on the cushion, then sighed. “At least all the parts of my plan worked even if they didn’t follow the program.”

Loki now turned his attention to Anthony. “Goodness how did you end up quite so damaged. I think this sofa will have to be cleaned, maybe replaced along with the coffee table. We need to invest in a furniture company, we always seem to be replacing it.”

Tony inspected everyone else only to notice that only he had actually received any real Injuries. “How the hell did I end up being the only one who got hurt?” He protested.

“You just attracted Trouble, I guess.” Loki smirked and bend down and gave him a kiss.

Giggling was heard from the floor at the pun as the elevator door opened.

“For that you get to clip her claws this time.” Anthony said and kissed back.

Bruce walked in and after glimpsing the blood and broken table said. “Who beat up Tony?”

Followed by Clint. “And you didn’t invite me to watch?” He moved into the room and noticed the action on the floor and gave a wolf whistle. “Damn, Natasha always wins the bets.”

Nat just smirked and held out a hand.

Sam’s eyes were large globes. “Steve? Is that you?” He stuttered, then looked embarrassed, putting his hand over his eyes and laughed.

Clint walked into the kitchen after paying Natasha and promptly started eating from the platter Trouble had walked across. “This is pretty good.” His eyes sparkled with evil as he snitched another piece.

A quiet snicker was heard from Steve and Bucky on the floor as they heard Clint eating the chicken.

Phil had followed Clint into the kitchen. He grinned for a moment before doing something to Clint who had opened his mouth to say something rude about Steve and Bucky. Clint instead yelped at whatever Phil had done and Phil said. “I hate to disturb you all from your entertainment but we have a problem. Two monsters have attacked Beijing and a Djofullin or devil was seen when they appeared.”
I've spent the week removing old carpet and tiling my bathroom and it's still not done. I hope I caught anything my husband missed because my brain is in a state of mush. Thanks for being so patient with me.

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

If you like it, please press the Kudo's button below. I love hearing from you, feel free to comment.
The Devilish Attack

Chapter Summary

The Devils or Djofullin attack.

Chapter Notes

An extra chapter!

I noticed several things my beta missed, if you see anymore please let me know so I can correct them.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Two monsters had attacked Beijing. The Chinese military with help from a few noted civilians had killed them in hand to hand combat. They had been hard to kill, resistant to nearly everything. The pictures were of nothing anyone had ever seen before. One was a long yellow tubular creature a hundred feet long with pipe-cleaner-like arms. The other was equally large but more like a giant blue stress ball with long paddle like limbs. They had exploded completely when they finally did die, leaving nothing larger than baseball sized clumps. Unfortunately, China had not invited the Avengers to come and help yet and Phil was adamant that they not just go over and collect some of the stuff themselves uninvited.

An argument ensued, which Phil won. He would use diplomatic means to try to obtain some samples officially. In addition he agreed to call a loyal SHIELD operative in the area to try to get ahold of some of the stuff and as many facts as he could, in case diplomacy didn’t work. He ordered them all off to bed and Jarvis agreed to tattle if anyone tried to sneak out.

While they slept two more attacks occurred. One at a world trade conference that had been meeting in Dubai. There was plenty of security both public and private on hand to kill the monster that appeared there. They too found it difficult to kill it until a holy group joined the fight. Mumbai, India was the other lucky place to play host to a single difficult to kill monster which after some time also exploded into the small clumps of tissue.

The Avengers awoke with barely time to react when they got news that one more monster had shown up and been killed in San Paulo, Brazil. They were calling it a miracle because it had been killed by an old priest with a holy relic.

Phil had already arranged to get pictures and samples sent to them from each place. He hadn’t woken
them and didn’t want them to go far in case another attack occurred closer.

Around noon Mexico City became host to the newest monster. They headed there immediately arriving to find it already dead and exploded. After hearing the news from San Paulo every religious fanatic had come out to try to kill it. A museum had been broken into and ancient Mayan daggers had even been used, only to be left on the steps bloodied after the fight.

Loki looked at the debris. Something wasn’t right about this. The Mexican government was very accommodating and more than glad for the help. They let the Avengers take as many samples as they wanted.

Loki was allowed to examine the daggers that had at least helped injure the monster. They were in amazingly good shape for being so old and he recognized that they were magical right away. Their magic had been drained but it would slowly return over time. That sort of thing rarely happened to weapons unless someone was actively draining them. The creatures had required magic to be killed and absorbed the magic before they died. The million dollar question was why?

While they were taking samples Jarvis announced he had discovered that one plane had landed in or near every city where a monster had shown up. This particular plane was currently circling Los Angeles waiting to land.

Loki knew where Tony’s rebuilt home in Malibu was, enough to teleport there. A quick decision was made, Loki took Tony, Steve, Bucky and Bruce with him. Natasha, Sam and Clint were left behind to gather samples and try to keep any more people from being exposed to the stuff. Bruce had wanted to stay but Loki was willing to bet the Hulk could hit one of these creatures where Clint’s arrows would not.

After teleporting Tony flew straight to the airport and Loki waited and teleported to him with the others once Anthony got there. They arrived and found the private hanger just as the passengers were moving to cars. There was a devil with them holding an item Loki recognized as a greater magical storage device. It had been on Phil’s list as an item that was useful but required great skill to use.

“Be careful there is a Djofullin, or should I say devil? He has an item that may contain more of those monsters.” Loki said over the coms.

Shooting started as the car took off with only a driver and the devil inside.

“Tony go after that car, Bucky can you shoot out its tires? If not try to disarm the gunmen. I will go after the ones on the ground. Bruce be prepared if one of those creatures shows up. Loki, help Tony with the devil.”

“On it.” Bucky yelled and sent a blast that hit the tire causing a blowout. He turned and started shooting at the gunmen.

Tony took off after the car that was now swerving from the blowout. A window opened and a moment later a new monsters appeared just outside the car. This one was very much like a long brown cylinder with tentacle like arms that resembled plant roots. Maybe a smooth slimy rooted potato. “Hello big and ugly. You know I think your future as a beauty queen has been exaggerated.” Tony changed targets to start shooting at the monster as the car continued to slow down.

Loki did a weird sort of sprint and then an instant transport landing in front of the car.
stopped, the devil and the driver both got out, running in opposite directions. “They’re on foot, I am following the devil.” Loki announced.

Meanwhile one of the two shooters Bucky had targeted was running toward the plane. The other laid on the ground dazed and disarmed. Bucky, running to head him off, was forced to shoot into the plane to stop another shooter. The second one stopped and dropped his weapon. Steve had fought one and used his shield to knock down another that hadn’t been able to get in the car fast enough. Then he jumped feet first over a barricade knocking out the last visible shooter.

“I’m going after that driver.” Bucky announced after kicking the gun away from the one in front of him on his knees. Steve was close enough now to cuff him. “Be careful, I think I saw something moving inside the cockpit of that place.” Bucky took off at superspeed.

The Devil was running. He aimed his device into the air and shot. Another monster appeared half a mile in the air. Tony noticed and commented. “Ms. Potato head, Darling, don’t you know it’s not nice to bring uninvited guests to a sold out show.” He found himself having to fly to get out of the way of the fighting flailing monster on the ground. He had been battling it, doing nothing with his normal blasts. For some reason his fireballs didn’t do much good either.

Bruce and the Hulk on the other hand had joined the battle and were now beating the monster Tony left. It was showing signs that the Hulk was causing damage.

“Well you made it obvious that you found their first candidate unacceptable.” Loki had nearly caught up to the devil.

“Guess they wanted more contestants for the hell raising competition.” Bucky added as he ran shooting at the driver who was attempting to escape across an empty field.

The first monster was swelling and expanded looking green wherever the Hulk had hit it.

The second one was going to hit a terminal. Fortunately it was smaller, vaguely resembling a spider with a huge grey body and long multi-sectioned pinkish twisty legs. Ironman changed opponents and flew to ram the one in the air from the side, attempting to knock it off course onto a runway. “Oomph. Oh crap, someone should have told them beauty pageant contenders weigh less.” Tony declared when all his force barely moved the trajectory. “Hope they’ve been clearing out the terminal.” Tony grunted knowing he hadn’t moved it enough.

A moment later it broke through the ceiling of the terminal and appeared stunned.

Loki grabbed at the item the devil was carrying just as it shot off another of the monsters into the air. It appeared several miles away from the airport and was falling. The devil gave Loki an evil laughing grin, released the item, and waved goodbye as Loki blasted him. He watching it dematerialize back to Illitplass. He turned to the newest creature skydiving without a parachute. He needed to cast a spell before it hit the ground.

Loki screamed. “Stark, I’m incoming, get me as close to the new one as you can.” Then he teleported onto Tony’s back flying at the last creature.

Bucky had caught up to the driver and easily secured him. Super-strength did have its uses. He picked up the guy and ran back depositing him on the ground near the hanger before heading back out to fight the monsters.

Tony had Loki underneath the last one that was barreling towards them and the ground. “Did I ever tell you I have a fear of pancakes?”
Steve said. “But you love pancakes.”

“Not eating one, becoming one.” Ironman tried to hold steady as Loki cast his spell.

Then a hole opened up and the monster disappeared.

“I’ll remember next time we fight to magically turn you into a rug instead.” Loki joked as Tony flew back to the plane.

“No, I’d be your flying carpet Aladdin. Contestant number two is going to wake up soon and be angry that we’ve rigged the pageant.”

The one the Hulk was fighting had been swelling every time he hit it. It was now very large and mostly green with tender looking skin rather than brown and slimy. The Hulk continued to pummel it. Bucky was almost there when it suddenly blew up like a constipated balloon. Splatter was everywhere covering everything, planes, hangers, runways, it spread out for over a mile in each direction covering parking lots and nearby freeways too.

“Well that one isn’t going to be voted miss congeniality making a mess like that for everyone to clean up.” Tony teased carrying Loki who was already starting to cast a spell at the one in the terminal.

Loki cast spells into the one that was quickly coming around in the middle of the terminal while Tony tried to keep him steady, still holding him and looking for a place to land where they could fight the creature and hopefully not hurt anyone still in the terminal. “I’m feeling like your beast of burden, you’re supposed to be the reindeer pulling the sleigh not me.”

“Stark, shut up, I don’t have time to transport us.”

Bucky had moved onto the one on the terminal. He used a luggage cart, small plane and a gate arm to reach the terminal roof to jump up and was now blasting at the gray monster with pink legs. He wasn’t doing any damage but he had all the legs swinging at him rather than rooting around inside the terminal.

The Hulk was sitting on the runway looking exhausted covered in goo.

Ironman approached and circled the creature while still holding Loki. Loki sent a long beam directly into the creature. It lasted for about thirty seconds, before this creature too exploded into a truly ghastly mess.

Loki was really not happy. His last blast had been high in magical energy but low in damage. It was an experiment to see if the creature really was just absorbing the magic until it exploded. It had done more to the creature than his offensive spells that used less magic had done. Why would they do that? It made no sense.

The devil too, had seemed all too happy to be killed. He knew it would go back to Illitplass but found himself wondering just how long it would stay gone for. Surely it would take time to bring it back even with the portal item?

The monster glop had fallen on moving cars, in neighborhoods and there were even reports of a couple planes that had been circling getting splattered before being redirected to another airport. They themselves were covered in the stuff. They found a hose and took turns rinsing themselves off.

The terminal security had treated the arrival of the Avengers like a close tornado sighting and sent
everyone to safe areas and reinforced bathrooms or hunched against walls. It had been a smart move. There was massive physical damage to one terminal but no deaths. Dozens were injured though. Cleanup crews were on the runways almost immediately hosing the stuff into the sewers. In less than two hours some planes were already taking off and landing.

Steve had secured the plane and hanger area where they now gathered.

Bruce was exhausted and said that the Hulk was asleep. When asked, Bruce was sure they could have gone on but he’d never felt tired before from a fight quite like this. Loki was sure that the creature had absorbed magic from those blows like it had the knives in Mexico. When Bruce offered to let him look he found he had been correct. The Hulk was very magical and really hadn’t lost much percentage wise. It was just nothing he’d ever felt before, his magic had never been drained away like that.

Natasha, Sam and Clint arrived a short while later.

There had indeed been another person on board the Hydra plane. He was a scientific observer, one who wasn’t interested in dying and had been trying to keep an eye on the devil. Hydra did not fully trust the creatures it seemed. The man was frightened and had been refusing to say anything.

That was until Natasha showed up, who sent everyone away and in an amazingly short amount of time had him talking.

He didn’t know anything about the monsters other than they were there to spread fear and the devils had promised Hydra the world, literally, with Hydra in control.

He verified that there were three Djofullin, or devils on earth. He didn’t know where the Illitplass portal device was currently but knew that Loki’s staff and some other items were still in Sokovia where they had a young magic user and her brother held. Jarvis broke into the planes computers and grabbed everything he could find. Tony took any portable computers, tablets or phones they had.

They left LA stopping only to gas up and drop Phil and the prisoners off and headed to Sokovia. If they were lucky they might find answers there.

Loki wanted to know more about the Djofullin. Something didn’t add up. When it died it left no blood and didn’t even look wounded. Was there a point to the monsters other than fear? Why did they require magical energy to die? He understood taking magic to be killed but absorption usually healed creatures or powered up an attack. What was the purpose if not to power something?

They needed information on what was happening. No one believed that the devils were just ‘helping’ Hydra. There was another deeper plot. If there was a devil or Djofullin, they needed to capture it if at all possible.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve got the story basically finished and I want to get it all out there before August, so some weeks will see more than one chapter from now on. Lengths will vary unlike most
of my chapters before now. I hope this doesn't bother anyone.

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofulin are from. Djofulin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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When they arrived at the facility in Sokovia the place was in the process of being evacuated. Another
fire fight happened in which entirely too many ‘ants’ escaped the anthill.

There was one devil there. He fought valiantly to hang onto the mind staff, even controlling Bucky
before Steve got the Hulk to recalibrate him. The devil also injured Sam and Clint who both
remembered to keep their distance and not end up controlled. After losing the staff he all but
committed suicide turning to take as much damage as he could and avoided getting caught. He also
left no evidence of him being there. Loki now feared that they might be able to return very quickly.

Loki healed Sam and Clint enough to be functional while they searched.

They searched high and low. They crossed Loki’s mind controlling staff and a few other items off
Coulson’s list but no portal devise. They also found a cell containing a very angry young man
protecting his sister who was currently lying unconscious with the appearance of being on her
deathbed.

Pietro was the young man’s name and he refused to leave or let them look at or take his sister if Stark
was going to be with them. Tony and Loki volunteered to teleport home while the others took the
quinjet home, and questioned him trying to explain why they were the good guys.

Their success convincing Pietro they were the good guys was dubious, but Pietro did talk.

“So, how old are you son? And how old is the girl?” Steve asked?

“We are both seventeen and she is not just a girl she is my twin sister, not that it matters to you. Are
you really the Avengers?” Pietro asked with suspicion while guarding his sister.

“Yes, that’s what they call us.” Bruce responded trying to look at the girl but Pietro was doing a
good job keeping them away.

“You were pretty cool during the alien invasion I guess. Well except for Stark, I hate him.” Pietro
said, then spit with almost unreal passion aimed against Stark. But he finally let Bruce come closer to
his sister.
“Thanks, you don’t like Ironman? How come?” Steve looked at the kid.

“My parents were peace loving. They trusted the government to protect them. They even moved to a safer area when the war started. Then one day Wanda and I were out and an attack came. Our enemies were using Stark weapons. We had been promised that the enemy did not have weapons like that. Our parents were killed because Stark was selling to both sides. It is his fault they died, I hate him.” The kid was very angry and it showed that he had allowed his hatred to fester and grow.

“It’s not quite what you think. Tony was not the one selling them.” Steve began.

Pietro grabbed Bruce who was trying to look at his sister and interrupted Steve. “I will not listen to you defend the Merchant of Death. If you want to talk to us or help us, you are not going to mention him again.”

“Steve, I need to look at her. Could we agree for now?” Bruce looked toward Steve and at the hand holding him from the girl.

Natasha answered for them. “We agree. That issue is not important right now. How did you come to be involved with Hydra?”

“I don’t know who Hydra is. If you mean Strucker, he was looking for volunteers for research. After our parents died, having no place else to go, we joined him. He said that we would be able to get revenge on Stark for what he did. We agreed and they used that staff that you have up there and somehow made Wanda be able to use magic and me able to move very fast.” Pietro pointed at the staff that they had set on several other boxes they had gathered. He continued to volunteer. “They worked with her for a long time before those creatures showed up. She was getting better at her magic until then. They had hoped that once they had Loki, he would be able to teach her more.” He shook his head sadly.

Natasha asked. “You’re familiar with Loki? What did they tell you about him?”

“Loki is a great god who came to earth. A displaced prince who is looking to help. They said that he would make everything right if they could just talk to him and convince him of their cause. They tried several times to rescue him from the Merchant of Death. If they could just kill Stark they would release Loki from the magical oaths that that terrible man had bound him to. But all that changed about six months ago.” Pietro was clearly a fan of Loki.

“What happened to change it?” Natasha asked.

Pietro shook his head sadly. “They said Loki had been subverted or brainwashed into becoming part of the Avengers. They would not tell us why they felt the Avengers were bad. We suspected that Stark had spent time subverting all of you. They said they needed to look at other options.”

“What happened then?” Steve prodded.

“Well one day Dr. Strucker, he was in charge, hooked up a couple of things together and one of those creatures showed up. They stopped training either of us then. They did something with my sister and two more of the creatures showed up. They looked sort of like humans with dog faces, wings and a Mohawk shaped head. A few days later they put something in Wanda’s neck and hooked her up to something. She got weaker and weaker every day. I am afraid she is going to die.” Pietro said and looked at Bruce who was still examining his sister.

Natasha asked. “Do you know Dr. Strucker’s first name?”

“Yes, his name is Wolfgang von Strucker.” Pietro said.
“What do you know about the devils?” Natasha asked.

“Only that they are not from here but could speak our language if they wanted to. Three days ago Strucker and one of them packed up some items and left. It was the same day they took the item that had been hooked up to Wanda’s neck. Another one left to start some sort of fear project. The third one was there yesterday. I don’t know if he was even here when we heard those with the fear project had been attacked. The guards said they planned to leave us behind since my sister wasn’t good enough.” Pietro looked down. “They didn’t treat us very well, except for Dr. Strucker and he was gone.”

Bruce looked up. “She’s in bad shape, they just ripped something out of her neck. It was attached to her spinal column. I have no way of knowing what it did to her magically either.” He looked at Pietro. “We are going to Stark tower. When we get there Loki may be able to help her. Would you allow me to get him to look at her?”

“Stark tower? Can’t we go someplace else? We do not want to be in Stark tower.” Pietro looked very upset.

“If you don’t I think your sister may die. This is beyond what hospitals can handle. You will be safe there. We have a small medical facility and Loki will be there. I would really like Loki to look at her. He can do things with magical healing that might save her life. I don’t think Loki would feel comfortable leaving the tower right now.” Bruce looked hopeful. “We all live there too, you wouldn’t have to be alone.” Bruce explained trying to get the kid to see reason.

Pietro looked at his sister and at Bruce. Then one by one at the faces of the other in the plane, even Clint who was piloting. “Fine as long as the Merchant of Death does not come near us.”

“I think we can arrange that.” Bruce said but he didn’t smile. The girl was barely hanging on.

They called ahead and Loki met them and kept her stable while they look her down to medical and Bruce hooked her up to a calorie filled vitamin drip and some blood. Loki spent time looking at Wanda, Pietro’s twin sister. Her neck had been sliced open, wires had been connected to her spinal column. They had ripped it out without care and she had lost a lot of blood. Her magic was not strong enough to support the device that had been draining her. It left her weak in ways the others wouldn’t understand. If they had not brought her to Loki she would have been dead in less than an hour.

It was her magic they had used to open the portal for the two more devils and later store enough to either bring or create the monstrous beasts.

Once she did wake up she recognized Loki as the displaced Asgardian Prince and associated him with the new SI that didn’t make weapons anymore. Pepper’s campaign had in fact, had a positive effect for the company worldwide.

Wanda knew quite a bit more information on Hydra and Strucker than Pietro had known. Unfortunately most of her information they already knew especially since they had gotten the files off the plane and the Sokovian base. Loki was mildly intrigued how the staff had been used to awaken her dormant magic and create a magical ability on Pietro. It had been something he was unaware that it was capable of. He hid it away in a led lined case in his hidey hole. It needed to go to Asgard where it would be safer.

He warned the young man that in his case, the power could be overextended causing death. There
were no exhaustion controls built in. Much like a horse he could run until he dropped dead. There were things Loki could teach him depending on what he planned to do in the future.

Loki also told them about the dangers of untrained magic. Seeing the crater outside Stark tower as an example, they chose to stay and learn control. It did not however endear them anymore to Stark himself. But they quickly learned that complaining about the Merchant of Death was a touchy subject and angered Loki, so they just stopped talking about him when Loki was around.

Some of the Avengers hoped that maybe the two might be convinced to become new recruits. The destruction around the building as well as the fact Tony was an Avenger however made them apprehensive about joining. The twins both insisted on avoiding any association with Stark himself, understanding and finally accepting it was his place and they couldn’t avoid him completely. When they asked why the Stark building wasn’t decimated like the buildings around it, magic was the only answer they got.

Steve and Bucky spent time talking and visiting with the siblings. Between the two of them they were able to help the twins see that much of what they had been taught was propaganda. World War II had taught them more about propaganda than they ever wanted to know. The siblings were slowly coming around.

Trouble stayed with Tony as he watched from his lab. One more reason to hate Obadiah. Tony had been such a tool for so long. He laughed when he thought about Loki, who would assure him he was still a tool, but his tool nonetheless.

While Wanda knew they had been involved with Hydra she didn’t know much about the devils themselves.

Still they wanted to know everything she did know. Before the aliens had shown up she had overheard Dr. Strucker offhandedly comment that he was getting desperate but was hesitant to bring a creature from a different dimension.

Wanda had hated the aliens even before they had hooked her up. The energy they had taken to bring the other two had drained her to the point she fell over. Dr. Strucker had always seemed to care for her when something happened. The devils acted like she was a piece of toilet paper. They left her on the ground after she collapsed and talked in another language. One had even stepped on her hand another kicked her leg, barely caring she was on the ground, before exiting the room.

Later, after the devils had left, Dr. Strucker found her still on the floor. He had called someone about it and she overheard him talking with people she suspected were his superiors. It was clear to her that they didn’t want to trust these ‘new allies’ too much and were already afraid they had somehow opened Pandora’s Box by inviting them here.

After that first time, Dr. Strucker had insisted they have her strapped on a table when they drained her. Once they implanted the neck item, she had been kept drugged most of the time.

Pietro and Clint hit it off very quickly. They had similar styles of humor. Pietro had noticed Trouble. Clint very quickly sat him down for ‘the conversation’ about losing prank wars with the cat and that
it would only make people dislike him. She was evil incarnate that had everyone else fooled and it was best to just steer clear of her.

Loki agreed to teach Wanda some basics of magic, especially control. He had not seriously thought about making another apprentice link, just checking really, only to discover he could no longer create one. Anthony would indeed be the only magically linked apprentice he would ever have. He could still teach her how to keep from killing herself or others by accident, but he could not be the damper for her if she screwed up.

Nothing more was heard from the Devils for the time being. Loki explained as chaotic as they seemed, they did like to do something and then sit back and watch it happen, admiring their handiwork. They had successfully made people afraid, holding their breath for another ……monster to appear.

The computers they had taken had enough information to figure out where a few new Hydra bases were and talked about quite a few more that existed, failing to give locations. There was no information about the devils themselves or where they might hide, only notations that they were working with Hydra. Strucker had taken much of the really important stuff with him a couple days before they’d arrived when the devils had split up.

The most important thing was an e-mail that ordered them to evacuate immediately. It had mentioned that the devil from LA was already back on earth as Loki had feared.

On the other hand they found dozens of file cabinets filled with files of old paperwork. There were rooms of boxes containing more paperwork and other stuff dating back to WWII. Some were organized some weren’t. It would take years to sift through everything they found.

Valentine’s Day passed with barely a celebration. At least no public ones. Everyone noticed that Bucky and Steve both seemed to glow the next day. At least until Tony presented them with a copy of the Karma Sutra announcing that he and Loki had now accomplished every position listed and with a wink, challenging them to do the same.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter really just moves things along. I'm not very excited about it. I wonder if I should have left the twins out altogether but I didn't see how they didn't exist as the world hadn't changed that much yet.

I'm afraid I just couldn't find much humor here. There will be more next chapter. .

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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The Trouble with Wanda

Chapter Summary

Loki has been teaching magic to Wanda. She's been trying to Loki's attention while Tony watched.

Chapter Notes

Another short chapter extra chapter.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki had been teaching Wanda a couple hours a day for about ten days when he finally noticed she had a crush on him. Since the twins were avoiding Tony she hadn’t realize they were attached. Loki did not care for the plain rings Tony had made. There had been no thought put into them and he felt he deserved some flair and thus was not wearing one.

Loki did tell Tony about the crush and they had laughed in private. Loki had not been expecting it and had failed to notice what should have been apparent from day one. Even Pietro seemed to have had an initial man crush on the god.

Without Loki’s knowledge, Tony started keeping visual surveillance up when they were together, rather than just having Jarvis watch. It was obviously because he was worried about Loki’s safety not that he was jealous.

A few days later Loki was showing her some controls on her magic and they were talking.

“So do you like living on earth? You seem so at home. Is Asgard very similar?” Wanda asked him as her magic ran between her hands with her trying to restrict the amount while still retaining a smooth flow.

“I like it very much. It is very different than Asgard much more accepting of people’s differences. At least here in America.” He told her detecting at her magic.

“Before I volunteered for the program, I read about you in the papers. You must have many women throwing themselves at you, since you are so good looking.”

“Yes, fortunately I was invited to live here and am able to avoid most of that.” He said once again showing her how to restrict and even out her energy flow. He put his hands on hers and used his magic to lessen the flow. From what he saw he was convinced at times that Hydra had been trying to
turn her into a power source for them. He wondered what their original goal was, before using her for a power source for the devils. He settled on the idea it was a blind leading the blind, trial and error, type of learning.

“You are not like most of the Avengers though. Your magic sets you apart. You are different.” Wanda said trying to pull him away from his thoughts.

Loki really wasn’t interested in what she was saying, focusing on her magic and thinking about the devils. “Yes, I guess. Try closing the flow like I did. Steve tried so hard to find something in common with me at first. It was amusing… Before the devils, did they ever have you put energy into an item or grid to store?”

“They did, but I do not know what they did with the gray square. Magic fascinates you, you find me fascinating?” She started to close the flow. It was hard, like using an untrained muscle for the first time.

“I have always been interested in magic. Hydra’s use of you is a puzzle, I would like to figure it out. How often did they have you put the energy in the square?” He questioned as she continued to try to restrict the flow.

“Everyday they drained everything I had in the afternoons. What sorts of things do you like to eat?” Wanda said.

“Everyday huh? How long was it been going on for? I eat most things, why do you ask?” He stopped to look at her. He noticed she wore a low cut top that was form fitting, she was also dressed up, not in what one would call practice clothes. He had a feeling he knew what was coming. She had been getting bolder.

“It was going on for about the last three or four months. I thought it might be nice to cook something for you.” She smiled.

Loki smiled back. “That is not necessary. Can you constrict the flow more?”

She smiled and made a feeble attempt to constrict the flow some more. “Consider it a thank you for teaching me. I would like to get to know you better. Maybe tonight, do you have plans?”

Loki frowned. “Wanda, you really need to focus on your energy flow.”

“That was not an answer Loki. Perhaps I could come to your room. You could give me some… private lessons? I suspect there is much I could learn from you.” She was giving Loki smoldering looks, playing with the energy and no longer practicing.

“You know very little about me. I may appear tame. I assure you that there is a monster lurking inside.” Loki had a little smile and crossed his arms stepping away from her.

Back in the Lab Tony threw a wrench across the room. Why had Loki not shut her down yet? He sent packages of the greenest jealousy to Loki as he headed out the door. Jarvis noted each step pounded the floor much harder than normal.

“We all have monsters inside us. I would very much like to explore your wild side.” She had now focused her energy to move in a wavelike beckoning motion.

Loki had felt the jealousy. He really should stop. This was fun but Wanda was now playing with her energy in a rather stupid manner. She was showing off. “You know control is very important. Knowing what is going on with your magic at all times prevents someone else from using it.” With
that he raised his hand and drained her magic into his hand, squeezed and creating a dark smoky gem and held it up. “I have drained you, you cannot defend yourself. This could easily have been an explosion in your face. One strong enough to destroy a large area around you.” He handed her the crystal. He also felt his own brown haired, brown eyed human, who had unfurled a green monster flag, on his way moving quickly.

She gasped when he stole her energy, feeling drained again. Then she smiled as she took the crystal. “This is beautiful. I did not expect you to steal and drain my magic as the others did. You are very good. They needed items. I would really like you to teach me more magic. You still haven’t said if you are free.”

Loki felt Tony approach, this would probably be fun. They were in for a visit. He smiled and said. “I have agreed to teach you control over your magic. Do not misconstrue my behavior for more than what it is.”

A door slid open as she stepped forward and put her arms around Loki. “What if I want more? Are you really going to turn me down?” She said in a deep voice that sounded years older than she was.

“He is! Because if he doesn’t start, he’s gonna have to deal with an angry boyfriend.” Tony said as he marched in and put a possessive arm around Loki knocking Wanda off in the process.

Wanda backed up and tensed. “You are dating Stark? How can this be?” Wanda took a couple steps back looking quite confused and unhappy.

“Not just dating sugar pie, but engaged! And you’re too young to be jumping men. You’re young enough to be my daughter.” Tony shouted.

“Oh Anthony, you are young enough to be my son.” Loki sniggered.

“Cocky wise-ass. You’re still are my beef cake and as you say ‘I don’t share’.”

“I do not understand. You are an evil man, responsible for the death of my parents. He should not be with you.” She shrieked.

Tony was angry and spit out. “No sweetheart, the guy I looked up to as a father figure, the same guy who paid to have me killed, is the one responsible for their death. But if you don’t stop trying to put your lecherous hands on my lover I might be responsible for yours.”

Loki smiled and grabbed his possessive lover and pulled him tighter to his side. “He is really not the evil man you think he is. It is sweet that you find me attractive but I am afraid he is really quite perfect for me. Although I do enjoy ruffling his feathers just enough to test my little hemorrhoid every so often.”

Tony had both arms around Loki now with his body protecting him from the vicious teenager. “That was mean princess. You know I don’t like that name said in public.”

Wanda was taken aback. To stunned to talk as she watched them stare into each other’s eyes for a moments. Finally. “This makes no sense to me. You are both men. Stark has you bound by oaths. You have heard of Stockholm syndrome, yes?”

Stark smiled fondly at Loki that turned to a frown on Wanda as he looked back and forth between them. “We’re bound by a whole lot more than that stupid contract angel. We both know what Stockholm syndrome is and this is absolutely not it. You should have told her you were taken handsome. And what do you mean we’re both men?”
Wanda was clearly young, and from a region of the world where they didn’t talk about homosexuality much, only to say it was a horrible thing. She was also pretty clueless about it. “Why would two men choose to be together? There is no point, they can’t even have sex.”

Tony momentarily was shocked at her statement but recovered with a grin on his face. “Oh baby girl, you have lived a sheltered life. Trust me two guys can have sex just fine. You obviously need a teacher for sex education. J bring up some…better make it diagrams. Steve would kill me if I showed her something he considers porn. It is also not a choice for many. I’ll get to that later. But sex oh yeah, better than fine, you see we guys have something called a prostate…..” He spent the next twenty minutes enjoying her face vacillate between curiosity, horror, embarrassment and shock only to repeat again as he explained things in graphic detail.

Loki watched in amusement. He was one hundred percent sure Tony would get a very stern lecture from Steve about forcing sex education on Wanda. Tony’s diagrams were all too realistic too. He also began to think Wanda might enjoy reading fan fiction to relieve her budding sexual tensions rather than chase him. He should remember to introduce her to Darcy.

At the end Tony looked at Loki. “So what do you think of my teaching skills lover?”

“You enjoyed that way too much Anthony.” Loki laughed. “And I will reward you later. Wanda you and your brother need to come to dinner with the rest of the Avengers tonight and probably most nights. You need to get to know them all better. With Anthony’s permission we can also tell you more about why Anthony’s company has not made nor sold weapons for many years now.”

She looked at the floor more than a bit embarrassed. “I guess we can come. You are right we need to learn more about you all.” Wanda replied more out of shock than agreement.

As Loki left, with an arm around Anthony he turned and said with a smirk. “Oh and you probably want to tell Steve about what you learned today.”

Tony still felt watching Wanda’s face while he explained the facts of LGBT sex was worth every minute of the lecture from Steve that he only half listened to.

Five days later people started to get sick. All over the world people who had been exposed to the monster goo were getting sick.

Chapter End Notes

I’m determined to have this all released by the end of July. My husband still needs to beta about half though. I need to edit about 2 near the end. I need some humorous inspiration for a fight dialogue as I’m not happy with some of what I have right now.

Thanks for reading this!

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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Let's Talk to the Press.

Chapter Summary

People are starting to get sick. They decide that Loki will be the one to give the press conference.

Chapter Notes

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Bruce had been studying the monster goo, treating it as hazardous material as sometimes it would break apart and cells would float into the air. Samples from all the locations detected as having a magical component. They had not found out much about it other than it did seem to be able to become airborne especially when it dried.

Loki enchanted a pair of Bruce’s glasses because the magic part seemed to be able to hide otherwise. Without the magical glasses it could rarely be seen in a petri dish within the monster tissue. It was exponentially harder to find when mixed with anything else. It was not decomposing or changing either. Even cooking it barely had an effect. Only drying the tissue did anything at all and then it just made the magical parts light enough to be picked up by a breeze.

Three weeks later after he had started to play with the dead monster tissue. Jarvis alerted to Bruce to the fact that people exposed to the dead monsters were getting sick and directed him to the news. Speculation was running rampant. The Chinese had claimed that they saw no reason that it might be related to the monsters. Their scientists had not found anything in the samples they had.

He ran down to his lab and checked. The samples he had added to human tissue were starting to mutate, getting heavier. It wasn’t like anything he was familiar with, not bacterial perhaps a weird form of viral? The rest was decomposing at an accelerated rate.

He called Jor who came to the tower an hour later. Jor had also been given some samples but had not yet spent much time working with them. Most of the samples they had received were losing their magic and starting to deteriorate as standard tissue might. Only samples kept frozen at low temperatures had not degraded.

Jor and Bruce decided to take all the samples to the lab on Jor’s island. Jor had been studying diseases, even participating in on line chats with other scientists, working on vaccines and annual flu immunizations. Neither of them liked having the possibility of a disease floating around in the crowds of New York from their samples.
By nightfall the next day Natasha and Clint started to feel ill. Loki tried to heal them. He wasn’t able to kill it, only successfully sending it back into the incubation state where it gathered in their lungs. Magical diseases were not something he knew much about. He took them to the Island for Jor and Bruce to study.

By the next day it started to become epidemic everywhere that monsters had appeared.

There was speculation going on all over but no real evidence and of course officials were denying connections to the monsters not wanting to start a panic. But people needed to know so they would hopefully take steps. It was decided that Loki would be the one to make the announcement.

Loki went up to the podium to make the statement. Tony stood behind him for moral support. Tony had insisted on having a telepathy spell going, because “Earth reporters are always asking inane and confusing questions and I can interpret what they are really asking.”

“So if you get nervous just imagine they are all naked. Sometimes I put old fashioned mustaches and dunce caps on them too. The curlicue handle bar mustaches are my favorite.”

“Anthony, I have done my fair share of public speaking before. I am a prince remember.”

“Yes, I remember princess. Would it be alright if I imagined you naked though? It would definitely raise my mood.” Tony waggled his eyes as they walked toward the podium.

“I’m sure it would raise something besides your mood. I assume that is why you wore the dinner jacket?”

“Wouldn’t leave home without it. Hot Stuff. I’m imagining you naked already.”

“Stark, enough.” Loki turned and gave Anthony a quick angry glare before facing the camera and reporters.

“Spoilsport.” Tony exclaimed mentally and turned to stand just behind Loki.

“Hello, ladies and gentlemen, members of the press. My name is Loki and amongst other things I work with the Avengers. We have reason to believe that the Illness that appeared Tuesday morning in China was in fact caused by exposure to the dead monsters that attacked those cities. The samples that the Avengers obtained from the various creatures at each site all contained a very difficult to see magical component that started changing at the same time that this illness showed up. Those samples that were exposed to human tissues were the only ones that were growing instead of deteriorating.” Loki said.

“How did you come up with these evaluations? I didn’t think you were a scientist Mr. Odinson.”

Loki inwardly cringed a bit at Odinson. Even if he was, he still didn’t feel like it. “Not in human biology. But Dr. Banner and others that work with him started working with it as soon as they had the samples.”

“How do they know its magic in nature then? How do you know?”

Tony whispered to him mentally. “Don’t tell them you’re a sorcerer. They’ll think evil like Jarfar, or Maleficent from those Disney movies you saw. Say expert sounds better.”
It was a good thing he had Anthony there. Sorcerer was the correct term anywhere else in the nine realms. “I am an expert on magic and made a pair of glasses to allow him to see it.”

The crowd made noises at that statement. “Is it true you took part in the attack against the monsters in Los Angeles, using magic?”

“Yes, the monsters required magic to kill. I was able to provide what it took.” This had been the first place he had been seen using offensive magic, since his presence was publicly known, Loki remembered.

“Why didn’t the other monsters require magic?”

“In Mexico City and San Paulo the creatures were attacked with ancient magical relics that provided the magic to kill them. I do not have all the details as of yet. It is my belief that all of the previous monsters were also killed by magical relics.” Loki had seen the relics in Mexico City and Brazil there were no question there. The descriptions of ancient items used in India along with a conversation with a holy man involved there had him sure they too had magical weapons. In Dubai the group that killed the creature had disappeared into the woodwork so nothing could be verified. China had issued a statement they were sticking to crediting the army, it was different from what SHIELD operatives had discovered so once again answers were not forthcoming.

“You think that this magical component is making people sick?”

“Yes, two of our own have shown symptoms and I was able to cause it to go dormant again.”

“You say dormant. Does that mean you did not cure it?”

“Unfortunately not.” Loki replied sadly.

“Do you need magic to be able to see this pathogen?”

“Basically yes. From what I have been told it can very occasionally be seen alone by itself. Unfortunately otherwise the magic makes it undetectable.”

“So it can be seen without magic? What percentage of the time do you think it can be seen without the use of magic?”

“Hardly at all, less than five percent and that was only when taken directly from the monster flesh. I have not studied it myself enough to be able to tell you the specifics.” He knew they looked for some hope and this was not very reassuring to them.

“So you can cast magic like Dr. Doom did?”

“Dr. Doom was a child playing with energies he did not understand. I assure you that I am an expert and understand exactly how it works.”

“Oh, crap. Don’t answer any more questions about Doom Lokes.” Tony’s mind knew the blame game would start about the New York explosion and he didn’t want that can of worms opened up again.

“You have been around many times when magical based disasters hit New York? Why did you not stop them?”

Tony jumped to the mic. “We are here to talk about the illness that is currently affecting good people, if you could keep your questions on topic.”
Murmurs where heard around the room as the next question was asked. “What do you expect will be the pattern of this illness to be?”

“He really wants to know if it might kill people and we don’t have a clue.” Tony said.

“Honestly, I can’t really answer that. I can only hope for the best.” Loki

“So what do most magical diseases and illnesses do? How do they work?”

Loki smirked just a bit. “That is like me asking what pattern most illnesses and diseases do on Earth. Magical ones tend to be much less common but just as varied.”

“You said you made it dormant in the Avengers who had it and weren’t able to cure it. What does that mean?”

“Where I have skills in healing magic, I am not an expert on magical illnesses and could not remove it from their bodies. I do not even know how long it will remain dormant for. It does not mean that it cannot be cured.”

“Where did the monsters come from? Dr. Doom is dead. That must mean there is another magic user we need to worry about, correct?”

“Damn, I really hoped they wouldn’t ask that… Stop it, I can feel you calling me an idiot suffering from only half a brain. You are naked, you are naked, you are naked and horny and I’m not listening to your mental insults but looking at your wicked hot naked tush.” Tony chanted mentally.

Loki had thought Idiot, and glanced at Tony who was not breaking his stoic face. “Well I see you have been practicing illusions.” Loki added through the telepathy spell. “This is an excellent question. The monsters were brought here from another place we believed at first. Now we believe they were created with this purpose in mind. Unfortunately the perpetrators have not yet been caught. The Avengers and SHIELD have both been searching for them.”

“So you know who let this loose on us? If they were created it must be another magic user. Can you give us a description?”

“Oh shit Dasher. We don’t want the blame for mass panic. Tell them you can’t tell them or don’t know, make up some shit that calms them down.”

“Anthony you do not trust your own people with the truth? Are humans so stupid, you must make up stories for them?”

“Most people could take it, I think, now that they know aliens exist. But once a few people start acting really stupid and panic, it seems to spread. Really I don’t know, I’ve never been stupid.”

“That is rather idiotic. You should not treat adults as children.”

“Then tell them and see what happens.” Tony said in frustration.

“Yes, I know. I have been advised not to tell you about them to avoid panic. I am choosing not to treat you like children though. They are from another dimension and were invited in by an organization call Hydra.”

There were murmurs of not more aliens and even among the reporters one could see fear.

“Do they look like us too? Like you and Thor do?”
"Oh crap Rhodey is coming and signaling we need to stop. I can see him getting an earful from his superiors. Knew he shouldn’t have had the earphone in."

"No they do not. I believe there were pictures of them on the internet a few months ago. I am sorry but I am afraid that time is up, thank you for listening." Loki said as Tony dragged him away from the mic.

Rhodey, Pepper, Steve and Phil were all waiting for him in the wings.

"Man, you do realize that we are going to have worldwide mass panic now. Don’t you?" Rhodey exclaimed.

"Surely people are intelligent enough to handle the truth." Loki

Pepper in a calm voice said. "I really wish that were true. Humans react very defensive and often chaotic when they feel threatened."

"But I did not threaten them myself. There is no reason for them to feel jealous." Loki couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

"Jealous? What the fuck do you mean?" Tony was confused. By the looks of it he wasn’t the only one.

Loki explained. "In Asgard, the only reason Æsir would be defensive or unpredictable was if they thought their pride was being offended. Or they had been out done by someone who cheated, such as a sorcerer."

"Human’s aren’t like that honeybunch. They don’t care that you have magic. They’re afraid that someone out there is out to get them.” Tony explained.

“But I didn’t tell them that.” Loki was a bit confused.

“Not directly. You just told them that aliens from another dimension have come to threaten their lives through an illness that we can’t even see. The press likes to stir things up to keep stories going. I assure you they are already imagining all sorts of things that will cause an uproar.” Coulson explained.

“Plus there is the mass-hysteria phenomenon.” Tony added.

Good old Steve was the only one to come to Loki’s defense. “Don’t the people have a right to know the facts? They used to tell people the facts.”

“Oh Stevie. The people didn’t know the facts in World War II. They just didn’t know that they didn’t know them. Now we have news people making sure we’re all aware that we don’t know stuff. In fact they even try to tell us there are things to know when there isn’t anything.” Tony patted Steve on the shoulder.

“What is the mass-hysteria phenomenon?” Loki asked. He had not heard of that one.

“It’s when a group of people become afraid of something and that fear spreads through the population causing panic like a wildfire. People stop using their brains, the threats don’t even have to be real or make sense. They’ll do something as a group because one person does it.” Tony explained.

“It sounds similar to the Æsir berserker rage, only less useful.” Loki said thinking aloud.
“Shit Tony. I was just ordered to bring Loki and the Avengers to Washington to meet with the President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Security Council.” Rhodey announced.

“Fuck.” Tony exclaimed out loud.

Through the telepathic link he added. “And I spent most the time imagining you hard and naked too, pushing in and out. Want to hide out? You could try some elevator magic and see if we could hole up, get stuck together, hard and fast before we cum back down. I’d call the second round cock magic because we could…”

Loki swatted Tony’s head.

“Thanks Loki. I hate it when he uses that word too.” Steve said.

The meeting went about as expected. Lots of unanswered questions. Bruce and Steve gave a few facts. Natasha and Clint talked about the symptoms. Loki gave a few simplified details about magic. Tony and Loki both answered stupid questions with jokes. And Steve apologized for rude teammates.

The only real thing they accomplished was a negotiation to allow several disease specialists to help Bruce and Jorge Munger. They got to choose from a group of over a dozen people to help them. These scientists came from all over the world. When interviewed the Avengers used the Tumbler of Oaths to verify they were legit and not Hydra.

Chapter End Notes

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger’s will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu

Thank you for reading. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤
Trouble in the Tower

Chapter Summary

Bruce and Jor test everyone for the disease. Loki has to go back to Asgard to retrieve a list of things for Jor. Trouble doesn't like it and causes....Trouble.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Two weeks later Clint and Natasha were sick again and a few of the first people to show symptoms were getting fevers. This time Jor tried to heal them with magic and noticed that using magic on the disease didn’t really make it dormant, it boosted it and made it active and contagious again. When Jor added magic to some of the heavier older non-contagious and thought inactive or dead pathogen, it expanded and burst back to life virulent as ever. Jor called Loki and they talked about it with Bruce and Tony. They finally had an answer as to why the creatures needed to absorb magic; it was what had activated the disease.

The public named it Loki’s disease because he had first announced it. Loki hated it. The last thing he wanted was to be blamed for a new disease. Loki felt like he should prepare to be blamed for everything. It hurt. Tony and Pepper told him that it would be fine. People knew he didn’t create it. He was just the spokesman, it would be fine.

Jor spent a lot of time casting spells so others could find it through a microscope. Once again he found himself with too many people around. At least this time there was a purpose.

Bruce also insisted that he get blood samples from the rest of the Avengers.

Sam Wilson and Phil Coulson had somehow managed to escape it and showed no evidence in their lungs when checked. Loki was convinced that the alien blood they exposed Phil to was his reason. Sam had spent most of the last few weeks on assignment in a remote area searching for a rumored hidden Hydra base.

Both Steve and Bucky showed signs that their enhanced blood had successfully been removing it from their bodies.

Bruce appeared completely immune, probably somehow due to the Hulk.

Wanda had been hiding her still low fever, but her system was successfully fighting it off. That earned her a stiff talking to from Steve. Pietro was infected too but he had not shown symptoms, apparently it could mutate and remain in a dormant stage or early stage for longer than they had
originally thought. They both got shipped off to the island to be watched. Loki agreed to visit every couple of days to continue her lessons.

Tony and Loki were clean, their magically enchanted blood killed the stuff on contact. Sadly, it also killed everything else that was introduced including formerly compatible blood. In fact Bruce and Jor decided after running a few more tests that if something bit them and swallowed a mouthful of their blood it would probably die from toxic poisoning. They certainly couldn’t use it to find a vaccine.

Pepper proved that her small magic protection connections did work as Loki was able to see the airborne cells get magically zapped. Loki spent some times watching and figured out how to kill the cells, it was not only tricky but time consuming. He was able to reproduce it enough to zap one organism/cell at a time. All the easy attempts to make it kill more at once ended up energizing it instead. This was not a solution but at least data points to work with.

Happy hadn’t been around anyone but Pepper so he was clean. Likewise Rhodey didn’t seem to have caught it.

Jor, of course, was a dragon and it was not designed to attack anything that was not a humanoid in their base form.

Jor, Bruce and the six scientist who had been added to the research group were joined by Loki to talk about the results. None of those who were able to combat the disease had blood that was useful to work with in attempting to make a vaccine or cure.

About a week later people started to die. Loki made a second broadcast this one was just facts and didn’t let the press ask questions.

“We now understand that this disease has a twenty two day incubation period where it is airborne and contagious. It then mutates becoming heavier and may start causing symptoms or appear to go dormant. We do not yet know how long it may remain dormant before symptoms appear but it is no longer contagious at this point. We have identified the symptoms once they start to appear.

It always starts out with a chest ache that can range from a simple feeling of tightness or easily winded to very painful. This is often accompanied by minor headaches. The next symptom which follows is a light nausea. Those last for at least two weeks.

At some point after two weeks a fever appears that will climb above dangerous levels. A few days after the fever appears it spikes very high after which the body temperature starts dropping. So far those who have died have died from hypothermia which sets in when the body temperature reaches 95.0 °F or 35.0°C or below.”

It was also spreading.

Bruce and Jor now with a better idea of what they were working with. By studying Clint and Natasha they determined that it was contagious from first exposure right up until symptoms showed. It circulated in the lungs where it multiplied and traveled throughout the body and into cells as easily as it was breathed out and passed to others. Once it mutated it became too heavy to remain airborne and seemed to settle wherever it was, dying if not already in human tissue. If it went dormant it was also past the contagion state. When they tried to filter it out of them with magic had reactivated everything that was in the lungs sending it back to a contagious state but successfully filtered out the
rest. Pietro’s had gone dormant as had one of the researchers who had discovered he had it. Neither would have guessed they had it.

Bruce and Jor both ran a few tests on the deeply frozen monster tissue samples. The monsters were basically disease traps. Unkillable by normal means, magic activated their cells, made them lighter, expanding, needing more space, eventually exploding from within to become airborne and contagious. Loki was sure that they were created monsters. The makers only gave them different shapes to confuse things.

Loki continued to hate being the one to give the messages. Not only did everyone recognize him now, they also dreaded what he might say. He was being associated with the disease. Some were blaming him for the disease based on the fact it had his name.

Loki once again felt the weight of being a monster and they hadn’t even seen his blue skin. No one who lived on Midgard had. Not even Anthony. His thoughts kept spiraling down. He was useless, a monster who had brought the plague, failed to stop it, enhanced it even. The people now associated aliens that didn’t look human as being evil. They didn’t know what frost giants were but he was convinced they would be repulsed as much as any Æsir if they saw him.

In fact now that they knew magic had activated the disease he could directly tie himself to one of the monsters who had exploded. At one time he had begun to feel like Midgard or Earth was going to accept him. That he would start anew and finally be accepted even with the eventual knowledge that he was a frost giant, but now with each report of new outbreaks he felt his hopes crushed by the humans he had once compared to insects.

Anthony would catch him sometimes just staring or feel that Loki was having the blues when his god had forgotten to shut down that part of the link. Loki would brush him off by telling him he was just thinking about how bad the illness was.

Just over three weeks, a twenty two day incubation period was a long time for people to move about being contagious. Then many who were infected only felt kind of bad for another two weeks. It had been mostly ignored, other than the initial panic that didn’t last four days, before people moved on because symptoms didn’t seem that bad. No one died until nearly six weeks after being exposed.

What was worse you couldn’t even find it without magic. So no one knew who might have it in a dormant state until symptoms appeared.

Jor knew he needed several things from Asgard, including a common item that allowed Æsir healers to see magical diseases. He needed as many as he could get.

Loki hated to go but he had no choice, people were now dying. He had not talked to Asgard since his last visit. The enchantment readily blocked his mother’s dream visits and circles took time and required her to notice, time he hadn’t found recently. He decided to just go. He did spend the few hours required to tell everyone and make sure he had a full list of things Jor wanted or might need.

Trouble became very agitated the minute she realized he was leaving. This of course gave Anthony the willies. She may be just a cat but she had every sixth sense ever attributed to animals. No bookie alive was as accurate. Loki just laughed it off and gave Anthony a kiss and Trouble a neck rub
before he left promising to return as soon as he could.

Tony needed something to occupy his mind. Biology was not his thing despite his attempt to learn some of it when he was trying to transform frogs. Loki had eliminated the Extremis from Pepper, not him. Jarvis was more than capable of keeping track of and correlating the data on the disease. He found himself with nothing pressing and he had spent way too much time the past several months hunting down Hydra to look at files that were decades old.

He finally decided he had never been happy with his original rings. Loki had said he didn’t need an engagement ring anyway, knowing was all that mattered. Even Anthony had to admit that he had cranked them out just to have them. Steve and Bucky hadn’t even wanted the ones he made for them. Well of course they were moving slowly and didn’t need them yet. Must have been Howard who pushed Steve in the forties. Damn now he was thinking about Howard. Time to focus on making rings to suit their needs.

Tony tried several designs for rings. But he knew Loki was picky he hadn’t put much thought about magic into the equation when he made them before. Anything magical had to be accepted by their enchantment. Finally he remembered the small cube of Uru Loki had given him. There wasn’t much but maybe enough for two rings. It had taken forever to figure out how to work with the stuff. Now he bonded it with gold, added green diamonds, and begin work on blue micro arc reactors.

He envisioned them enchanted with the capability to hide under the skin during battle or if they were in danger. It needed to hide itself from magical detection under the great shadow of magic that their own enchantment cast.

He was good with transmogrification and started practicing and experimenting to see what he might be able to do to have the rings blend into the top layers of skin. He might need Loki to help him finalize any enchantment done to them but he was adamant on showing Loki that he could do most of it himself.

Tony had kept sending and receiving bursts of affection from Loki. He was not surprised when he got the message that Loki would be gone more than one day. He could feel some agitation but that could be explained from the delay.

He had lost track of time when Pepper stormed in.

“Anthony Stark I need you to come and get your cat.” She growled.

Pepper didn’t normally growl. This meant trouble, in this case really Trouble. Then again he was in a mood too so he snarked back. “Trouble causing trouble? Be still my heart she would never do something troublesome. Don’t tell me you can’t handle a little Trouble?” Uh oh, Tony saw Pepper counting that was bad. “Where is she?”

“I’m not sure. Ask your traitorous AI. He has been assisting her.” Pepper’s eyes narrowed at Tony.

Tony couldn’t help it. He knew Jarvis adored the small cat. He laughed out loud. “Pep, she has Jarvis pussy-whipped. I think he’s beginning to speak cat.”

“I really don’t care right now. Tony you need to get her. Jarvis where is she?” Pepper was still angry.
“What’s she done anyway? I have no idea how one small cat could make you so angry.” Tony smiled.

“She is now in the twenty-sixth floor men’s room, Miss Potts.” Jarvis announced.

They got into the elevator. “What’s she doing in the men’s room J?” Tony asked.

Jarvis hesitate and then said. “She is measuring how long the paper rolls are on each floor. Did you know the female researchers who stand most of the day use less toilet paper than the female programmers who sit?”

“Jarvis, you know very well she is just playing. Taking one end and pulling it as far as they will go down halls as you hold the doors open for her. There are no Women’s Bathrooms with any toilet paper left. The halls of every floor are covered in toilet paper. The cleaning staff took one look and quit. The spare boxes she got into last night and emptied each roll across the auditorium which we didn’t discover until recently when I had to go looking for some.” She glared at Tony who was cracking up.

“Oh Pep that’s rich. J I want pictures. What else have you found?” Tony gasped laughing.

“It’s not funny Tony. She went to every floor and did the women’s toilets this morning. There WAS toilet paper in the men’s rooms earlier. You know how many angry women there are in this building right now?”

Tony was holding his stomach. “Think we’ll have a flooding problem? Maybe I need to send out for drinks for everyone.”

“You could probably use some of the stuff on the floor.” Tony snorted.

“Or we could just pee on your bed. Tony I swear if you keep laughing.” Pepper was really angry.

He snorted and tried to control himself. “Sorry. Trouble just wanted to help us go paperless.” And there he went again holding his stomach. “Her litterbox is clean you could use it. I’m sure she’d share.”

The elevator door opened. It reminded him of his parties. Paper was everywhere. J directed them to where she was pulling the end of one that Jarvis was indeed still holding the door open for.

“Jarvis, I thought you stopped helping her?” Pepper said in disbelief.

Jarvis answered. “You didn’t actually ask me to stop Miss. Potts. She really is having a good time and we now know the brand we use can vary in roll size up to seven feet.”

Tony was still giggling. “Jarvis, I think you need to stop helping Trouble with the toilet paper.” Then he laughed. “She doesn’t use it anyway, just licks her butt. Maybe the women could…” He took one look at Pepper’s face and knew he didn’t want to finish that sentence. “Look there’s my girl.” Trouble had noticed him and had run up to put her front legs against him ignoring the paper now. Wanting to be picked up. Tony did so.

“Did the cleaning service really quit?” Tony said scratching Trouble’s head and neck.

Pepper looked away and smirked just a little. “No, but they told me they needed to get some help and couldn’t get here before four this afternoon. I had to cancel three appointments. Happy is currently on his second run looking for toilet paper. You have no idea how many people there are in a building this size and all of them use bathrooms. I let every pregnant woman have the day off. It was just too
cruel to try to keep them here.”

“You are into mischief just as much as your daddy is aren’t you?” He cooed at Trouble who rubbed his nose. “Oh, Pep, She’s worried. Loki had to go to Asgard and she couldn’t go. He was also upset about something last time I felt him and learned he was spending the night. That’s why my little bundle of Trouble was so much Trouble.” He looked at the mess. “Maybe we should send everyone home for a holiday and call it a white litter day.”

Pepper just groaned and followed that suggestion.

He made sure Trouble stayed with him while he worked after that. Jarvis finally took the time to teach Dum-e how to take cat food out of a can and put it on a dish.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

I should also give LuciferTheRising some credit because they unknowingly helped inspire the scene with Trouble.

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Does Prayer Have Lag Time?

Chapter Summary

Loki had to go back to Asgard thinking it would be a quick trip. He communicated with Tony that it would be longer but now he's hiding the emotions they share. Tony's not happy and so he decides to lecture him through prayer as punishment.

Chapter Notes

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Short chapter today. Next week we have longer ones.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next day there were more bursts of affection. The agitation was gone to be replaced by nothing at all. Damn Loki was not sharing and Loki was staying longer and not making any attempt to say why.

Tony tried to keep himself busy with rings, suits, practicing magic and a new tech project for SI, even a new cat tree for Trouble. It worked for another day because Loki continued to exchange affection with him.

On day four he was sick of Loki not responding to their shared signals. He decided to use prayer knowing that Loki would at least hear his frustration. Besides if he was going to have to suffer and be shut out, Loki was going to suffer with hearing him.

Tony prayed. “Hi, Loki. Uh, dear god Loki. Hey asshole who thinks he is my god. Well you are my god but I’m not sharing you that way. I’m sick of you not telling me what is going on up there in fairytale land. What the fuck is Thor doing to keep you there? Uh, sorry if it is something like your mom is sick. Otherwise you jerk, you need to at least try to let me know what’s happening?

If those so-called friends of Thor’s are harassing you, I’ll find a way to come up and beat the crap out of them. Fandral should at least still be in the clink. If some of the other AssSeir are giving you a hard time I’ll come up and water-board them using horse piss that I think Slepnir will gladly donate because he like me. Or better yet angry women pee. You have to return before I tell you about that though. Trouble was in so much trouble. Anyway if those AssSeir are giving you a ‘hard’ time, then I’m going to be ready to destroy your home and never let you go anywhere alone again, you’ll have to wear a collar. That is my job and I miss it, beside that’d be cheating on me, yeah I don’t really think you’d do that. I’m serious I want you home, yesterday wouldn’t be too soon.

Where the hell are you? Do you know how much my mind wanders when I’m worried? It’s not something I do often. Thank god, and I’m not thanking you this time because you are a jackass who
is hiding things from me. You should considered yourself privileged because I care. I do you idiot, I’m not just saying or rather praying that to you.”

Can you at least try to help me understand why you haven’t returned yet? How long are you going to be gone? I know it takes time to get all that crab but Jesus, it’s been four days. I know wrong god. I’m willing to do the twenty questions with me pretending you are mute and can only answer yes or no while I pray to you? Damn, I don’t know how long it takes for a prayer to get to you? I knew we needed to work on this shit. But noooo some stuff like it and your Jotun powers are mostly off-limits.

Haha I can talk all about your Jotun powers and you have to hear because you can’t complain. Tell you what I’ll make a deal. You have to try to contact me, say in the next hour, or I will once an hour give you a detailed description of something I know about your Jotun powers that you don’t. That’s not a threat it is a fact. I’ll be waiting beautiful. AMEN or is that not what one says to a Norse god. I’ll have J look it up later. I still care about you even if you are being a silent dork. Talk to you soon. Oh and you are welcome to just come home instead. Bye.”

One hour later. “Oh great and powerful Loki, ruler over fire and mischief, I beseech you. Oh shit I don’t think I can do this. I said there should be lots of praise and supplication and shit like that but I know you’re great and you know I’m great so the hell with it. No offence to your daughter Hel because it’s spelled different just said the same way. Since you are still being a major jerk I’m keeping my promise and sending you lesson one on powers of the blue people. That’s you just in case you didn’t want me to say the ‘J’ word or ‘J’ realm. Anyway listen and suffer, my god, like your humble…’giggles heard’…..humble worshiper is…….” Anthony spent the next two minutes talking about a power.

Two hours later. “I love you, Loki, my dear god, but you have not responded yet so here is lesson number two……”

Three hours later. “Okay look here princess. I’m getting concerned you haven’t even sent me a love packet since I started this. Don’t be mad. I know I can be a real pain…..remember hemorrhoid right? Well this pain in your ass is not going to stop until I hear from you. So lesson number three…..”

Four hours later. “Thanks for the love babe. But that’s all you sent me? I want answers. Oh and love doesn’t count enough to stop the lessons. I remember how you made me wait to tell me about Agent’s stuff. So here’s the next lesson…..”

Five hours later. “I talked to Jor. He wants to know what’s taking so long too. Unfortunately he isn’t a god so he doesn’t know how long prayer takes to reach you. He said I needed to ask you more about the incident with Thor’s goats getting into the palace laundry? Something about Thor being very holy because of it. Sounds like it might have been a little to revealing when he came to court the next day. Still you haven’t responded to me yet so lesson number five I think, no wait I’m going to give you both five and six because Jor said you should get me a book on prayer from a god’s point of view and a book on basic biology of blue people. Anyway here goes lesson number five and six because you are just so special…..”

Six and a half hours later. “You know I’m desperate when I call Jane and end up talking to Darcy for over an hour. She is really a little shit, you know. You don’t want to know what she thinks of Slepnir when he brings Thor to visit. You see they don’t have much of a yard and your son isn’t used to having to hold it. Let’s just say the last time shit hit the fan! ROFL. That means, oh I know you know what it means. Anyway Jane didn’t even know that she could pray to Thor. But I remembered he didn’t listen anyway and told her not to bother. She sends her love by the way. To him that is, not you. You’re mine, well I guess she can love you like family. Anyway she was no help whatsoever, so here goes lesson number… what am I up to J? Lesson number seven. I may have to start doing
more research I’ve only got one more to go, since someone yells at me when I get caught borrowing and studying their blue powers…..”

Nearly eight hours later. “I’m getting desperate Lokes. Look I’m actually on my knees in our bedroom beside the bed. That’s what they show pictures of kids doing. I know, wrong religion but tough. You should see Trouble I think she’s laughing at me. Pepper has made me keep her with me since the incident that you will laugh your head off when you find out about. Anyway I know I’m late for my next hourly thing. I’m Sorry I actually started working on something and well I haven’t been sleeping much and I burned myself. After Dum-e put the fire out and Trouble spent probably twenty minutes growling at me, the fire and the mess, J had Steve come and drag me out of the lab. He locked it down until I sleep and eat. Ratfinks, both of them. I stole something that didn’t have any mold on it from the frig and ate it. This is the last lesson I have prepared tomorrow I’m gonna try to borrow a power again, see if I can make it work at this distance. You can’t stop me and aren’t even trying to answer me. I haven’t even had some love for nearly five hours. I know you’re probably mad. After I give you the lessons I’m going to imagine doing nasty things with you and jerk off. Wonder if I could do it while praying. Probably not, I’d have to pay too much attention.”

A short time later Tony was just getting into the shower when he felt love again. Then anger and a blue stop sign. A flashing upside down arrow that started and stopped. Looked like Loki was going to be gone for a few more days and didn’t like the Jotun lessons. There was something big going on. Fighting maybe? Whatever it was, it was complicated. Involved family, enemies. Loki didn’t want Anthony to worry. He was fine. More love and another angry blue stop sign.

An hour later Tony had not quite fallen asleep when he got another angry blue stop sign and a black heart. Oops black hearts meant Loki was really angry. Tony really hoped that there wasn’t a delay on prayer between Earth and Asgard of say, about eight hours.

Turned out it was. Tony was woken up with more and more anger for the next few hours. He decided that he should probably be good the next couple days.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
Loki comes back from Asgard and tells everyone why he was delayed for so long. Loki is having a hard time dealing with Loki's disease and it ends up causing a fight.

Tony worried but Loki didn’t block him from his emotions anymore, they mostly showed he was busy and frustrated. He relayed the information that he would be another few days because of Asgard stuff.

On the evening of day eight Slepnir appeared for only a moment and quickly dropped off a exhausted, beaten, bruised and passed out blue Loki, then disappeared after alerting Jarvis. Jarvis was calling Tony before Loki hit the ground or perhaps bench might be better.

Tony didn’t know he could run that fast. He’d missed Slepnir, but found Loki. He grabbed him and headed for the infirmary. He’d never seen Loki blue before and he was worried. Loki would kill him if the others saw him this way. “Jarvis take pictures, remove the blue and those darker lines. I need to see them now.” Trouble was curious but otherwise undisturbed by Loki’s blue color. Trouble or more likely Jarvis managed to have the elevator open when Tony got to it.

Tony looked at the pictures and put an illusion over Loki. Keeping the pictures handy while looking for injuries making the illusion reflect bruises and scrapes. He even opened one of Loki’s red eyes and shown a light into it and had Jarvis doctor it. Hell he didn’t really know what he was looking for but it was something Bruce always checked. Then had Jarvis alert Bruce and Jor.

Jor teleported with Bruce a short time later.

“Don’t touch him. Just look, Okay.” Tony said as Bruce came in from another room. Tony brought up the eye scan on a screen.

“Why?” Bruce asked.

“Because he’ll kill me if I let you see him without that illusion.” Tony said with himself between Bruce and Loki.
“How am I supposed to look at him if I can’t touch him?” Bruce objected.

Jor entered about that time having gone to grab something before entering. Getting another “Don’t touch him.” From Tony. Who was actually thinking about what Bruce said. Loki would be angry about others seeing him blue. But how would they be able to check.

“You can’t break the illusion. Sorry I like living. I like you guys too much to see you die. Maybe you could just look him over? His damage is the same.” Tony said maybe if they took time and he would do something and describe the results?

“I can examine him without breaking an illusion.” Jor said.

“It’s not a good one. I put it on.” Tony said sitting down next to Loki. He might survive this yet. There was a reason Jor was his favorite.

“You did it? You’re really getting into this magic stuff Tony.” Bruce smiled in surprise.

Jor walked over to his father and looked him over. “He’s going to be fine. The Illusion is better than I expected. Good job.”

“Thanks, he looks so terrible.” Tony worried aloud from his seat next to Loki.

Trouble was sitting with her tail curling around her legs next to Loki on the examining table. She didn’t seem to affect the illusion, Tony noted. Was she next to Loki when he put the illusion on? She must have been.

Jor pointed to a burn. “That one is from a very high temperature magical burn. You should recognize that sort of thing. I would hazard to guess he has been fighting perhaps in a battle, I wonder if they are at war? To be honest I think he’s just in forced sleep from overusing his powers.”

Fighting, Asgard, yes that was something Loki had tried to convey. Tony remembered the dark elves and got ticked off. Loki had assured him he was going to be fine. This didn’t count as fine. He really hoped that that book on prayer was remembered. Maybe it would give him some info that would help him talk to Loki through the damn enchantment. A vocabulary of less than a hundred nouns created using shapes and emotions was not enough. A one way eight hour lag time wasn’t ideal either.

His thoughts were disrupted by abrupt gasp as Loki opened his eyes. Then quickly grabbed Tony’s hand. There were a series of flashes where Loki may have looked blue for a moment but no one said anything.

“You alright princess? You had me worried, you said you’d be fine. What’s happening up there?” Tony put his other hand over Loki’s so now both his hand surrounded his lover’s hand.

Loki took a deep breath. “Yes, now that I am back.” He had barely caught the blue in time. Anthony must have put an illusion on him that broke when their hands touched. Good thing his automatic defenses came up when he did to change his skin color back. He felt wave of disgust and shame at the thought that Anthony had seen him blue. He had shown himself as a Jotnar.

Tony and patience just didn’t coexist. “So talk to me. I’m dying here.”

Loki opened his bleary eyes wide for a moment. “Oh I do believe that I am much closer to dying than you my dear hemorrhoid.” Then he did something very rude. He shared his pain with Anthony.

Tony gasped. “Fuck, shit, damn, Christ, crap, argh, ouch, hell that’s painful!” Several minutes later,
after nearly passing out and needing to lean his head against Loki’s bed to avoid it, the pain slowly started to recede as Loki lessened the amount he shared.

The link was open, Loki was healing himself drawing on Anthony’s magic. “Magical damage like this hurts a bit more.” Loki slowly wheezed out.

Tony roared from against the sheets. “A bit? That’s like saying a blue whale is a bit larger than a mosquito. God, that hurts. How do you stand it?”

“Practice,” was the only response.

Loki was mostly healed by the time he finished draining Tony’s magic. Trouble had gotten bored and started out playing with Bruce’s stethoscope, until Bruce distracted her by giving a large roll of cotton bandaging to unroll.

When Loki sat up Bruce smiled and said. “Perhaps we can move upstairs for the explanation so your cat doesn’t wreck the place.”

She had managed to get the gauze wound around Tony’s chair and legs, Bruce’s legs, the bed’s feet and somehow the door knob. She also had knocked over several bottles which Bruce had caught and several boxes which Bruce had not.

They left the room after untangling enough so they didn’t trip. There was no magic left to clean up right now. Tony made a cryptic comment about unrolling things and told Loki he’d explain later.

Bruce and Jor made them some tea, while Loki and Tony got comfortable on the sofa. Steve, and Bucky, showed up. Clint, Natasha, Sam and Phil all appeared on screens to listen in. Even Pietro and Wanda announced they were listening as well as Darcy, who claimed she was representing Jane, who was in the room with her, working.

In addition to the stuff Jor had requested including two books for Tony. He had brought back some books that held Asgard’s limited knowledge on the devils and their universe. Everything Jor had requested was provided, including several unexpected plants that Frigga and Eir had sent along with notes and suggestions.

With hot tea in his hands, Tony next to him and Trouble in his lap, Loki started to talk.

“**Asgard is indeed at war.** Since my prior visit, Asgard had gone to war with Muspelheim and the fire giants.”

After the required number of jokes about heat, hotness, hot fire giants, flames, fire balls, men’s balls and how the jokes sucked great balls of fire.

Loki continued. “*We will not be getting help from Asgard as far as manpower goes. In fact Jane will not be seeing Thor or his balls for the foreseeable future. The stupid giants thought with Thor on the throne and the Bifrost gone they could do what they wanted. How they could forget about Thor’s love for battle is beyond me. He, of course, jumped at the chance to show off his fighting prowess.*

*Then Odin had the audacity to wake up. He is no longer insane, though very angry at Muspelheim and Thor. Apparently they had a very loud contest that seemed to only prove who had or more likely was the biggest dick, until mother intervened. Odin has agreed to share the throne with Thor who was not willing to just lie down and give it back. There was more arguing over the changes and decrees Thor made before Odin finally agreed to keep them, including keeping the statue of Bestla*
and my pardon.

When I showed up Odin started the blame game. Mother got very angry, intervening and gave him a long and very painful lecture about hiding important information about her sons from her. She has clearly proven that you don’t need balls to have the biggest ones.”

Clint looked at Natasha and said “Amen” when he heard this, earning him a slap in the head from Natasha.

“Anyway,” Loki said. “After that I was allowed to yell and scream at him for a long time until I exhausted my allotment of anger for the day. Odin is still a cunning bastard but I no longer feel the need to bend over to gain his approval.

He wanted me to rebuild the Bifrost since I was pardoned despite the fact it is coming along fine now. Then I told him the Djofullin from Illitplass had a foothold on Midgard. The look on his face was priceless. The fool has not been paying any attention to Midgard at all. He did work to arrange for Eir and mother to make notes and send additional plants and things for Jor and Bruce to work with.”

“Did he say anything about our enchantment this time?” Tony said from beside Loki.

“Yes, he did remember it. At least he didn’t want to remove it, just understand it. Odin has always had a fascination with powerful enchantments. He started to negotiate for information and I told him he didn’t have anything I wanted. He said we’d be getting credit for rebuilding the Bifrost and would give Anthony and I a full Asgardian wedding with Anthony being recognized as the official royal consort of the second prince of Asgard. I said I didn’t care. He said he would give me all my holdings back, all the perks that come with being a prince without any duties on Asgard, only asking that I watch over Midgard. I could come and go as I pleased as could Anthony.

I was going to refuse him again when my memory noticed his pattern. This was Odin trying to gain forgiveness from Frigga without appearing too weak to me. Odin will never ‘beg forgiveness’ he ‘deals at a loss’ instead. I accepted for Frigga’s sake.

“I will never forgive or trust him but I may have managed to start building bridges, not that I cared but figured it would make Anthony’s life easier. I gave Odin the information that Mother already knows about our enchantment. She would most likely have told him eventually but will happily listen to him tell her what he found out acting like she didn’t already know.”

“What’d that old creeper say about Jane?” Darcy asked.

Loki laughed. “Odin ordered Thor to never see Jane again. Thor laughed in his face, apparently he grew some balls while ruling.”

Darcy wondered aloud. “Think Jane’ll be able to tell they’re bigger?” Which got a laugh from everyone.

“So what took you so long?” Jor asked.

“Thor was on Muspelheim and I wanted to give Slepnir a break so I took Odin and some troops heading back. He is tired but enjoying being recognized as important.”

“Definitely your kid.” Tony laughed.

Loki looked at Anthony. “That is more your trait my small attention whore. In any event once I was there Tyr, our top general, asked me to look at the strategic plans. That led to me going out into the
battlefield with Thor for two days. Which led to me leading a reconnaissance mission with a small
group to gather information. I had to disable small sections of force fields and slip us past spells
without removing them or setting them off amongst other things.”

“Why were you so exhausted when you got back?” Bruce asked.

Loki looked down he didn’t really want to tell this. “On our return we were already exhausted and
injured. I was running extremely low on magic when we were ambushed. I feared that if they got
ahold of me I might run the risk of a final strike. We were close to camp, Slepnir and Thor were
there, Odin had returned to Asgard and we had vital information. I dared not take the risk.”

He looked at Anthony. “Your stupid blue people lessons were fresh on my mind. I resorted to using
Jotun abilities. They kept us alive until Thor could reach us. I overextended myself. We stopped by
Asgard to gather Jor’s supplies and Anthony’s books, storing them using magic again. I passed out
on Slepnir on the way back.”

“I’m so proud. You used my lessons.” Tony grinned. “Now aren’t you glad I borrowed them to learn
for you. I think you need to thank me…. I am a genius after all.”

Loki just stared at him raising his eyebrows.

So Stark continued. “I knew they would be useful. And to think that you were angry at me for giving
you ‘Blue lessons’. Do you think maybe I should start giving you lessons more often? I’m sure I
could figure out more about them if you didn’t fight me when I borrowed them.” Tony went on and
on.

Everyone else was looking away or shaking their heads as Tony nearly broke his arm patting himself
on the back.

Finally Loki got fed up. He turned Tony into a small puppy who started jumping up on Loki and
yipping. “if you’re going to be barking about your accomplishments you might as well be a dog.”

Loki picked him up and rubbed his belly. “I do appreciate it. But that was too much.” Then Loki
noticed Tony start to rub against him, well, obscenely. “If I did that you would call me a horn dog.
Yes, I missed you too. I’ll thank you properly later. Now I need a shower and if you’re good I’ll turn
you back to join me.”

Tony immediately shut up and gave Loki real puppy dog eyes begging for forgiveness.

As they left Loki continued to rub Tony’s belly. Loki decided that he should never turn Tony into a
dog again. Those cute brown eyes could be a serious weapon if used against him.

Tony even got Loki to show him his ‘Blue People’ Jotun form that night as part of the reward lasting
all of ten seconds before he couldn’t stand it. Jarvis of course was able to record all angles that Tony
would undoubtedly study later.

Loki had officially been named the spokesperson for Loki’s disease while he was gone. The news he
 Worldwide the death toll was raising. A fortunate few seemed to recover, some seemed to be able to stabilize at low grade chest cold with nausea symptoms, while others passed away quickly. Fever reducing medicines were not working to reduce the fever very well, often not at all. There was some success with keeping people’s temperatures down in tepid baths. The main point was: if your fever spiked you died from hypothermia soon after.

Loki’s mind was a mess. He kept thinking. ‘Loki’s disease, I caused the disease, I should have prevented the disease. I couldn’t heal the disease. I never studied magical diseases and I should have. I am a monster. I feel like I am the disease, I failed. I am becoming the bringer of Armageddon or Ragnarok which isn’t even an Æsir prophesy just some Norse legend. Is this what the Norns have planned for me? Why am I even here?’ These were what the voices in his head were telling him.

Even Anthony had seen him as a blue monster. Loki had appreciated the illusion and knew Tony had put it there so he didn’t have to see the horrible beast he was forever tied to. He had humored the inventor in a weak moment to get a second look, ‘for science’ was the term Anthony used and he had felt like he was under a microscope. Loki did his best to hide his feelings from Tony. It was bad enough the inventor had to be stuck with him, he shouldn’t have to feel his suffering too.

The trip to Asgard had not done much to break Loki out of his misery, only distract him. He didn’t even join Tony in the lab after he got back. He spent his time hiding away in his rooms attempting to work on spells, going up to the penthouse only when Tony was there.

Tony came in a few days later to talk. “I’ve got something for you handsome. I was waiting until you came down to the lab but you didn’t so I came to you.” He had a smile and was hoping that Loki might get excited.

Loki saw him come in and put on a false smile. “I’m sorry. I’ve been so busy I hadn’t noticed.”

Tony brought out the new improved rings. “Look, they’re not quite finished I want you to help me attune them to our enchantment. I’ve got them so they can hide too. I want them to go under the skin in battle but I promised not to work with anything that required living transmutation without your permission.” Tony showed them off and how they disappeared with his command.

Loki smiled a sad smile. “You really should not have.” Loki had to tell Anthony that he couldn’t marry him. He wasn’t about to force this wonderful man into something more. Maybe they would have better luck not sleeping together now. He wanted Anthony to be happy and there was no way the man could want a monster like himself. Maybe his brilliant inventor could work things out with Miss Potts again. “Perhaps we should wait. I am willing to try to sleep by myself again. If we can do that, it might not be necessary.”

Tony felt his gut drop. Did Loki just tell him he didn’t need him? Or want him? He knew Loki had been hiding stuff since he came back. His lover had been sad in Asgard but he had attributed it to all the crap that came with his family and damn Æsir. “You don’t want to marry me anymore?” Tony’s voice shook when he spoke. He dropped the rings on a table so he wouldn’t throw them.

Loki didn’t look at Tony. “It is for the best. Being together all the time would probably drive us both mad or madder than we already are. I’ll sleep in my own bed tonight.” Loki’s eyes were starting to water. He didn’t want to let Anthony go but Anthony deserved something better, not a failed monster like him.

“What about all that crap about being a prince consort and having a royal wedding and stuff?” Tony
yelled. This was supposed to be a happy time. An excited look what I did for us. It was turning into a something worse than any nightmare he could have. His inside churned with hurt and anger.

“I do not know. I agreed to it for my mother. I do not want to discuss this right now.” Loki clenched his teeth and turned away from Tony.

“Your bed is upstairs, you share it with me. But if you want to sleep by yourself tonight go ahead I won’t stop you.” Tony growled and pounded up the stairs to the penthouse. This was clearly Asgard’s fault. Something had happened up there. Tony didn’t trust them one bit. He was going to get their attention if it took all night.

He called Jane, talked to Jarvis and gathered everything he could on how Loki contacted Frigga using a magic circle. He went outside drew all the symbols got everything together. It didn’t work. There was no carrier wave or whatever there should have been. So he started screaming to the sky. He screamed for Heimdall, Frigga, Thor, even Odin. Then he remembered prayer and the book Frigga had sent. He prayed to her first.

“Hey your Majesty, Queen and goddess Frigga. What the fuck did you do to Loki up there? Sorry about the language. He doesn’t want to marry me anymore. Did Odin threaten him or something? I don’t wanna lose him, and I don’t know what’s wrong. I need to know what happened. I’m gonna fry someone’s ass so help me if they screwed with my Princess. That’s Loki in case you haven’t heard me use that name before. God, I hope you can hear me. It took about eight hours for Loki to hear me last time. Maybe Slepnir, see I can get his name right, so there Bambi. Anyway at least send Slepnir if you can to tell me why.”

Tony left and retrieved the book on how to deal with prayer from a god’s perspective and read. He tried a few more things to get Frigga’s attention. He tried to borrow godhood from Loki, more than once, ending up exhausted with no results. He was frustrated, angry, drained and tired. Then he went inside again, chugged a bottle of scotch and crashed.

Chapter End Notes

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Frigga is Amazing!

Chapter Summary

Frigga comes and straightens things out.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Loki spent the two hours after Anthony left just staring at the rings. The first ones had been made quickly without thought. These were perfect. These were made for someone who deserved a genius, not a failure like him. He, who should have been killed, because he was half frost giant and only conceived so Odin could use him as an entrance into his enemy’s palace. If only Odin had left him Laufey would have killed him.

Then he would have never disappointed Thor’s friends or the Æsir. He would never have sent the destroyer after his own brother. What kind of a monster does that to someone you care about? He would never have destroyed the Bifrost, never been taken by the Mad Titan or the Other to be tortured, only to lead an army to hurt Midgard. There would not be a nuclear waste dump off Long Island making the land mostly uninhabitable.

Tony would have figured a way to remove Extremis without the complications of magic. He would have probably been able to keep his relationship with Pepper going. Tony wouldn’t have suffered the guilt of destroying the blocks around most of the tower if he’d not been tied to Loki. The Djofullin would probably have never come if he hadn’t been there. Now he couldn’t even commit suicide because there would be a crater that Anthony would never forgive him for. Even if he did figure out how to avoid that, it might harm Anthony now.

He finally picked up the rings and felt a twinge of pride that Tony had done so well. He should probably focus on training Anthony so the man wouldn’t be forced to stay with him because of the apprentice bond. Maybe that was what was keeping them together. He was unable to concentrate enough to puzzle out if that was part of the problem.

He put the rings down and walked over to a cabinet and pulled out a bottle of something Tony had left here and poured himself a drink. Something he had picked up from Tony he guessed.

Trouble suddenly showed up. Loki went to pick her up but she wouldn’t have any of it. She wanted him to go up the stairs to the penthouse. He told her. “No Trouble. I’m staying here tonight.”

If a cat could glare, she did. Then she howled a meow. It was very loud. She repeated that haunting sound over and over.
Loki tried to close her out but the pathways that Tony had built made it impossible especially when Jarvis refused to help saying. “Master Loki, it is clear that you need to go and talk this out with Sir.”

Loki finally retreated to the off-plane room, the hidey hole he had built to hide in. One he never expected to use it to get away from his own cat.

Steve and Bucky were reminiscing about how much easier it was to quarantine people in their day. Influenza was a killer, but there were common knowledge procedures for keeping disease from spreading, unlike now. Those methods hadn’t been great but they worked better than nothing.

Currently the world was spoilt. People would have a low grade fever, pop an over the counter drug and get on a flight for a business trip, confident if it got worse, a trip to the doctor and some antibiotics would cure them. Antibiotics didn’t affect Loki’s disease.

People traveled for business and pleasure for the first six weeks as companies and governments discussed strategies on dealing with Loki’s disease. Now countries were finally trying to implement month long quarantines on trade goods. Travel was suspended for all but the most urgent reasons.

Jarvis announced. “Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Barnes I am in need of your help. If you could please visit the penthouse I would be most appreciative.”

They ran upstairs. Tony was talking to himself and practically squeezing the life out of Trouble. He was in bed wearing black pajamas. Steve said. “It’s okay Tony. Talk to me. Where is Loki?”

“He’s not here.” Tony cried out taking a deep gasping breath afterwards.

Trouble meowed again as Tony squeezed her.

Steve sat next him on the bed and tried to put his arms around Tony attempting to sound soft, like a comforting parent. “What happened? Let me help you Tony. Where did Loki go?”

“You’re not my god damn father. I don’t need your help.” Tony growled, he was practically panting.

“Tony, we’re just trying to help. Jarvis called us. Please just tell us what happened?” Bucky asked.

“Asgard happened. They did something shitty to him again.” Tony continued to growl and pant.

“What do you think they did?” Steve had backed off but was still sitting on the bed, he didn’t like the fact Tony looked like he had just run a marathon.

“Hell if I know.” Tony said and buried his face in fur and took several deep breaths.

“Jarvis, what happened?” Bucky asked.

“Sir had been trying to contact Asgard all evening. Then he went to sleep and I think he tried to go to Loki or get Loki to come to him because of a nightmare. It didn’t work. I also think he may be experiencing some sort of magical backlash.” Jarvis answered.

“Do you know what Asgard did?” Steve questioned.

“Mr. Rogers and Mr. Barnes, I do not. I am sadly unable to give you any details I do know because it is outside of what I am programed to be able to give you without having the authorized permission
of Sir or Master Loki.”

“Meaning it’s private.” Steve muttered.

“Meaning they probably had a fight.” Bucky replied.

Tony just huffed and looked at the clock. He continued to gasp for breath. He was waiting for something and refused to talk to them.

“You don’t think he’s getting sick is he?” Steve asked looking at Bucky.

“No, Mr. Rogers, this is something different. Something that I do not understand.” Jarvis volunteered.

Then they heard a noise coming from the patio.

They went out to find a horse with eight legs. The rider was a beautiful middle aged woman in an old fashioned gown with long reddish hair.

“Well, looks like he got ahold of Asgard.” Bucky said.

Steve open the door and went out to help the lady down from the horse. “Hello, ma’am. I’m Steve Rogers. Please allow me help you.”

She smiled. “Yes, I remember you from when you were asleep. We had to regrow your legs. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Queen Frigga from Asgard. I have come at the request of Anthony Stark. Is it possible for you to show me where I might find him?”

“This way your highness.” Steve and Bucky led her to Tony’s room.

He looked up as she entered and looked like he was trying to catch his breath. “Hi, guess you heard me.” He still clutched Trouble as though his life depended on it.

“Your cat really likes you. I see no scratches nor any attempt to escape. I am still repairing the ancient tapestries from the Throne room that they used in an attempt to remove her from Hlidskjalf. Fortunately no one experienced any lasting wounds, not even Thor.” She laughed a bit as she said that and sat down on the edge of the bed near Tony.

“If you will pardon my question but what is a Hlidskjalf?” Steve asked.

“It is the all-seeing Throne of Asgard. It can see nearly anywhere in the cosmos.” She answered.

“And she wouldn’t get off it?” Bucky said. He’d heard many stories about Trouble.

“Not until Tony and Loki walked in. She lovingly went to them without a fuss. They had no idea how many things had been tried to remove her that morning. Nor the number of claw slashes Thor and the guards received from her when they tried.” Frigga laughed as she said it.

“Hey don’t malign my baby.” Tony finally said and gasping for breath.

Frigga looked at Tony concern now showing on her face. “You are suffering from failure backlash of some sort. How long were you trying to get our attention?”

“Most of last night.” Tony gasped out.

Frigga put her hand on him and he suddenly felt like he could breathe again.
“Thanks. I’m glad you’re here. Steve, Bucky, I’m sorry I was sort of rude earlier but I’m gonna be rude again. I need you to leave us alone.” Tony said, at least he sounded a bit more apologetic this time.

“Sure let us know if you need anything. Nice to meet you your Majesty.” Steve said.

“Nice to meet you also, your Majesty.” Bucky echoed politely as they left.

Frigga nodded and when they were gone said. “Now if you do not mind. I would very much like to know what has happened.”

“Loki doesn’t want to marry me anymore and I think someone did something or threatened him in Asgard when he was there.” Tony confessed finally releasing Trouble.

“Where is my son now?” Frigga looked at Tony.

“Jarvis said he’s in our hidey hole. It’s off plane in Yggdrasil.” Tony told her.

She stood up. “I believe you should be able to get into it. I need you to show me where it is.”

Tony stood and took her down the back way that went from his and Loki’s bedroom to the spare bedroom in their attached suite. He refused to allow himself to think of it as Loki’s room.

They went up to the wall where the entrance was and Tony used his magic to open it.

Frigga poked her head in and said gently. “Loki I need you to come here. There is an urgent matter that we need to discuss.”

Tony was sure that years of training were at work when not three seconds later Loki stepped out.

“Mother, what are you doing on Midgard?” Loki was surprised, shocked and concerned.

“Let us all sit down. Is this a good place?” Frigga asked motioning to his sitting area.

Tony immediately snapped out. “Nope, the penthouse is better.” He wanted to have this talk someplace neutral and this felt too much like Loki’s territory.

Once they were settled upstairs. Frigga and Loki on ends of a sofa and Tony in a chair. Trouble, sitting on the coffee table, was clearly giving them all the evil eye as they had disturbed her routine or perhaps worse yet, her morning nap.

“Now can you tell me what this is all about?” Frigga asked.

Tony responded first. “You guys did something to him up in Asgardland. He came back and claimed he didn’t want to marry me. I want to know what you did to him.” He couldn’t feel Loki’s emotions at all and hadn’t since the fight.

Loki looked like he had spent the night crying. “They didn’t do anything to me Anthony. I didn’t say I didn’t want to marry you. I said you didn’t have to marry me and shouldn’t marry me.” Loki sat up straight he looked like a kid who had been sent to the principal’s office and was trying to look like he wasn’t guilty. It didn’t work because his eyes were swollen, and anyone who looked would guess tears were threatening to start again at any moment.

“What do you mean my child? Has Anthony said something that indicated that he no longer wanted to be with you?” Frigga reached out and put her hand on his arm.
“He didn’t have to. I know what I am. He even saw and put an illusion on me to hide my shame.” He was no longer making eye contact with his mother and had drooped his body, shoulders rolling forward, head hanging.

“I knew you didn’t want other people to see you like that. I was trying to protect you, you twit. I’ve been wanting to see you in that form forever but you refused. But since you were hurt, I didn’t take the time to look. I even asked to see you again later as part of a reward. Blue is cool and I don’t give a flying fuck what you look like handsome.” Tony exclaimed. Well he did but Jotun Loki was just as handsome to him and he really didn’t like it when he looked so miserable.

“You have not even shown Anthony your true form Loki?” Frigga seemed surprised.

“How could I show him that monster? And now that I’ve screwed up again, and we have this plague, I can see that he deserves someone who is so much better than I could ever hope to be. I’ve forced him into a situation where he already has to suffer being tied to me. How could I force him to…to have to live with me forever too?” Loki leaned down and put his head in his hands, ashamed of who and what he was, feeling helpless and worthless.

“Oh my child, you lie so very well. I thought you were more healed than you are.” She moved closer and put her arms around Loki.

Tony got up and knelt down in front of his lover and grabbed at his hands, trying to take them in his and pull them to him and away from his face. “Lokes, I love you so much. How could you think I don’t deserve you? You are the best thing that has ever happened to me.”

“Even if you look beyond the monster, I am a screw up. A failure. I could never do anything right,” Loki refused to look at Tony but did hold onto his hands.

“No, you’re not.” Tony put his head against Loki’s.

“My child. You are far from a failure. We were so wrong with you. Not telling you was a mistake that I will forever regret. I should have kept a closer eye on you, and ensured that the stories they told included your accomplishments. You know as well as I do Thor and his friends would all be dead several times over had you not been there to save their lives. There were many battles that your magic turned the tides under Tyr; I can name three without thinking. Tyr doesn’t like to admit it but you are a better strategist than him. You changed Tyr’s mind many times.” Frigga told him continuing to hold him from the side.

“Did Tyr say that? Did he actually give me credit? He has never approved of me.” Loki said in a weak challenge.

Frigga sounded strong and proud of Loki as she talked. “Yes, several times in private. Then when you fell, the next feast found him drunk and telling tales of how you made him look good. You are missed sorely in the current war. I understand Tyr asked you to look at the plans while there. Asgard is filled with warriors who do not think enough. You think circles around those who are thinkers. You are mischief and chaos and find unique and unexpected ways to do old things. That group you took out in Muspelheim are all in awe of how capable you were, not to mention the information you gathered is going to help us win the war. No one could have done it but you my son.”

“And what of Odin? What does he say about me? His monster child.” Loki said in a weak challenge.

“Your father is a fool. He is my fool but he is still a fool and a hypocrite. He is half frost giant himself and a sorcerer. He favors Thor because that is what he sees as ideal. He was monstrous to you as a child. He makes a much better ruler than a father, I assure you. You do not need his
approval Loki, you have mine and your brother’s. You also have the Man of Iron here, with whom
the Norns have carefully woven together a future. Do not insult them by thinking you two do not
belong together.” Frigga insisted.

Loki squeezed Anthony’s hands and finally looked up. “The people of earth would see a monster if
they saw me as a frost giant. They have named a disease after me, one that is killing them. I feel
responsible and cannot do a thing.”

“Lokes, you’re just the spokesperson. Most people would be honored to have anything named after
them. And you are doing a lot. We would be in serious trouble without you and your son. That item
has been sitting around for a long time waiting to be used. It was only a matter of time before
someone did. If you weren’t here those creatures would have us over a barrel, we’d be clueless. Loki
the information you have given us alone gives us a fighting chance. You do not have to be on the
front lines to be a hero.” Tony said then added thoughtfully. “Or a god.”

Loki picked up Tony’s voice change immediately. “You are thinking something and making plans.
What is it?”

“Not sure yet. Are you feeling better though? Can I have my fiancé back? I need you, you know.
We both need to learn to talk about stuff better.” Tony replied. It was the truth.

“Yes, a bit. For now I’ll try to remember to talk to you.” Loki gave Tony a weak smile.

Frigga smiled too. “Talking and working through things together is what makes a marriage strong.
Now Anthony, last night you were trying to do things from the godhood instruction book that you
should not have. Your body didn’t handle you trying to be a god very well at all. It is clear you do
have the strength to be a high priest, but you are not a god and you endangered yourself.” She pulled
out a much smaller book. This book talks about what one’s high priest can do. Please do not try
things from the godhood book.”

“So how do I get ahold of you if I need to again?” Tony asked.

“You can either learn to complete that circle correctly or pray. I can tell when an important prayer
comes.” Frigga gave Loki one last hug, stood and reached for Loki. “I need to return now. Walk me
to where Slepnir waits dear.”

They all went to say goodbye to Frigga and Loki got to spend a few minutes with his son before they
left.

Chapter End Notes

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Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-
Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
The death toll was rising. The spread was disastrous.

People who were initially exposed and had actually touched the stuff were at greatest risk. Most of them had caught it. When it spread between people the contagion rate didn’t seem as high. Unfortunately the more exposure one had the more likely one would catch it. Worse, no one was forming antibodies. Not everyone caught it, but if you did you didn’t recover. Some found that their disease stabilized for now in early stages. A few people successfully fought the fever and continued to as long as it didn’t spike.

The worst part was no one had any idea how many people had a dormant version and how long it would stay dormant for.

Bruce and Jor gathered medical researchers from all over and sent them out with detection items in order to gather data. Inside the lab they tried to find something that might prove to be a cure.

The disease being magical in nature had made Jor’s lab the only one capable of doing real research on the pathogen.

Jor, not wanting to have even more people around, set up a lab in Great Britain where there was already a great deal of medical research being done. Once again using the Tumbler of Oaths they took a couple days to interview researchers and seeded the new facility with some of those who had been invited to the Island. Tony provided security and the hardware for virtual screens that could stay open for constant communication between the two places.

Loki continued to be depressed. He was talking to Anthony at least, but he couldn’t seem to shake his unhappy feelings.

Anthony had spent hours poring over the two books from Frigga. He finally had a plan, the question was how would Loki take it? He walked into the living room where Loki was sitting looking at a screen. Trouble was sitting on the newest coffee table bathing herself.
“I have it Lokes I know how to cheer you up and help with this disease.” Tony was excited. He stood in front of his sorcerer.

“What pray tell has that pinball that shoots through your mind found?” Loki drawled looking up from studying the data collected on the disease.

“That’s it, pray, prayer. We’re gonna make you a GOD!” Tony spread his arms out wide as if waiting for applause.

Loki looked back and raised his eyebrows. “I know it may have missed your notice in that pea sized nodule that you attempt to call a brain, but I am already a god.”

Tony grinned. “No a real god. One that people acknowledge.” Tony waved his hands as he talked.

Loki rolled his eyes. “Earth has had Norse mythology for a thousand years Anthony. People already know I am a god. Do you even have a point to make? Or are you just trying a new attempt a seduction. If you are, I shall inform you now; it is failing.”

Tony laughed with his hands on his hips. “Seduction sounds good but I have a point lover. I’ve been reading this book on being a god. Did you know that when someone prays to you, you gain power? That there is a pool that forms that you can dole out?”

“Yes, I am aware. It requires that people are actually praying to me.” Loki crossed his arms seeing this going nowhere.

Tony brought up a virtual screen and showed a table he had made with lots of approximate numbers and question marks. “The power is also amplified if you use it in conjunction with what you are the god of. You can even set it up so you don’t have to handle it yourself. If you have it set up right and enough people are praying some of the people who pray will receive. And if they pray for say fire, to the God of Fire, there is enough amplification for that person to usually receive fire. Meaning it doesn’t take ten people to get enough power to answer one if it is your specialty. There are lots of multipliers used based on how many people are praying to you.”

Loki looked at it and shook his head. “I see that you are thinking of using me to help bring temperatures down. But how am I going to get worshipers. Are there not plenty of people who already pray to current religions? Besides we’re talking about praying to the God of Mischief, Anthony.”

“Well I’m not really a fan of religion. And you are also the God of Fire. But that doesn’t matter. Sure some people won’t like it but we’re not going to sell it as a replacement for their current religions. No, we’re going to sell it as a way to access the power to ‘bring your temperature down’ or ‘keep a fever from starting’. We’ll sell it as advanced science.” Tony smiled and pointed to all the numbers.

“I am hurt, you do not worship me?” Loki snarked standing up gliding his hands up and down his body to show it off ending in a seductive pout. This would never work, might as well distract Anthony.

“Oh baby, I’ll show you how much I worship you.” Tony grinned, kissed Loki and nearly let himself get distracted. “But later. We need to set some things up first.”

“Restraint Anthony? Really? This will never work, no one will worship me. Even you do not really worship me that way.” Loki crossed his arms again and sat back down.

“Hey I pray to you. You hear it too. This stuff is real even if they don’t have ‘why the science works’ really figured out. Besides I’m gonna be your high priest.” Tony declared. It was going to
work. With any luck it would help Loki’s mental state. Maybe his too. He still felt bad about the nearby grassy fields that new buildings were finally starting to go up in.

“If everyone is praying to me how will I hear you then?” Loki asked leaning back.

“High Priest has its advantages.” Tony grinned and winked.

“Why do you think this will work? You are a self-declared atheist Anthony and you know gods, Hel and Valhalla exist. Yet you seem to think you can be my High Priest?” Loki rolled his eyes.

“Okay, I understand where you’re coming from. But I also know prayer works, just because it’s too advanced for even Æsir to figure out. I can believe in it because it’s science. More importantly I believe in you. You are real and I know you can do it. A high priest is supposed to support his god too, not just ask for stuff or be an intermediary according to this book.” Tony tried to persuade.

“All I need is to have people start doing it only to find it fail.” Loki was sure this was a recipe for even more disaster.

“Well, you see your High Priest did some playing and set some of this up for you already. Wanda has been fighting the fever and we experimented with her. We made it disappear for twelve hours the first time. After that she tried harder and it’s still working. Natasha and Clint are trying it to see if keeping it cool will make it go dormant or at least not contagious. Jor thinks it might keep it dormant, if it already is.” Tony smiled sheepishly. He really hoped Loki wouldn’t be too angry for him like he had with the Blue People powers.

Loki wasn’t sure whether to be angry or not. He stood up and scowled and stepped over to the spreadsheet Tony had made. “You did this without asking me, and appointed yourself High Priest Anthony?” He thought about the book that he had read ages ago. It might work.

“Well you were already a god and I’m the only one who’s been praying so I figured I deserved it. Besides I’m the only one who read the books.” Tony said trying to figure out if he was in trouble or not. He went and picked up Trouble just in case. Loki would surely be nicer to him if he was holding her, wouldn’t he? She purred at the attention.

Loki thought, ‘what will people think? What will mother think? What will Thor think? What will Odin think? What WILL Odin think?’ Loki smirked, then he grinned then he grinned evilly. “And you call me arrogant. Yes, I think this just might work. We need to make sure it does not feed the pathogen first.”

“I already checked. It’s doesn’t. I know it’s not very tested but people’s lives are at stake. We can announce it as a test, sort of an experimental thing. There is enough historical precedence that it doesn’t have any backlash. I have no idea about side effects though.” Tony told him.

“They can always stop if they don’t like it. I think I need to work up a statement. This might just be fun.” Loki was happy. Odin would not be because he was not going to be in the spotlight and Loki was, a serious plus. Frigga would be proud and Thor, well he probably would not care, it wasn’t about combat or glory.

Trouble meowed as Tony set her down and they headed off to the bedroom to discuss things. Tony thought ‘Guess this did work as a seduction technique. Time for the high priest to offer himself to his god’.

It took a couple hours before Loki got around to preparing a statement with Anthony.
Most people knew he was the Norse God of Mischief and had supposedly been worshiped at one point in time. So they started from there.

Loki announced to the people he was also the Norse God of Fire and they could look it up if they wanted. That there existed a magical science or technology that was available to him that might help combat the disease. Tony explained how it worked and finally that it was in fact praying. This was a different sort of prayer though. It had to be specific, asking for cold to combat Loki’s disease or the fever. Asking for other stuff wouldn’t work. Loki had areas and temperature related things was one of them. And yes general praying to help people who needed to combat the disease did have a measurable positive effect.

Tony was nearly killed later when he posted the God of Fire and Ice. He showed a picture of Loki in his Jotun form. He only survived by the huge number of positive comments and reactions from the picture. People wanted cold right now and blue was associated with cold.

Other responses were immediate. The religious extremist called him a false and evil god. There were those who called Loki a fascist, trying to once again take over the Earth and claiming he was responsible for the disease. They warned people not to pray to him.

Those who were sick and tried it found blessed relief. Many who weren’t religious prayed to help others. Scientists, doctors and other researchers found it unbelievable when it worked. It even brought temperatures down from children and adults who suffered other things. Loki was ‘cool’.

Loki too, felt different. He felt more confident. Fortunately, he had Anthony to rudely remind him that he was still a jerk. More importantly he felt like he was doing something for the people of this world. The monster that he was, was proving that it was not quite a monster.

People still died but there was hope. Those who were diligent about their prayers did not get a fever or lost it as long as it hadn’t peaked. Those with the dormant version, if diligent, kept it dormant too.

Chapter End Notes

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Who Broke Clint?

Chapter Summary

A short chapter featuring Clint.

Chapter Notes

This is a very short chapter today. This chapter and the next are both a bit of fun before the last push.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Around four months after the initial attack Jarvis announced. “Sir, Master Loki. Bruce and Jor would like to inform you that Mr. Barton is having a problem and are hoping the two of you and if at all possible Mr. Coulson could come see him.”

Loki and Tony popped into Phil’s office after giving him time to grab a few things and teleported to the Island where they were taken to Clint’s room.

Bruce was explaining as they walked into the room. “He was in the gym with Natasha when she gave him a black eye and broke his nose. He came back showered and sat down and hasn’t moved since. When I made sure his nose was in alignment but he didn’t even wince. That’s when I called you guys. I don’t see any reason for him to be like this.”

They walked into the room and saw Clint sitting on a sofa staring into space. Phil held back for the moment to observe.

Tony of course walked right up and poked him in the side. Clint didn’t jump, grab his bow or even twitch. “You broke him. How the hell did you break Clint?”

Jor answered him. “He has been getting testy recently and I believe he said something to Natasha and she got mad.”

“J, what did he say to her?” Tony asked while waving his hands in front of Clint’s eyes.

Jarvis responded. “Sir, I enjoy a rather pleasant relationship with Ms. Romanoff. I do not want to jeopardize it by repeating something that bears no significance to the situation. You may assume it was extremely rude and Mr. Barton deserved it.”

“J, you know I can override you. Just tell me what she said.” Tony had sat next to Barton and was now holding his bow incorrectly and playing with the string while waving it in the air. Clint remained unmoving.
“Opps. I believe I may have just experienced an unauthorized hack, Sir. The information you desired to know has been suddenly deleted from my memory banks. I would not bother yourself to worry about the hacker as the breach has been dealt with. Sir.” Jarvis responded.

Tony’s mouth opened and closed then opened again. “Jarvis, you little shit. I don’t believe you just did that. Remind me to donate you to the High-rise, Manhattan Pony Club when we get home.”

“I shall put it on your calendar, Sir.” Jarvis replied dryly.

“Manhattan has a high rise horse club?” Jor looked confused.

Phil who had been silently watching started moving towards Clint. “Yes, Ponies of a sort. They advertise saddles that fit from a women’s size 0 to a man’s five XL.” He bent over and inserted himself between Tony and Clint.

Jor looked even more confused. But noticed that Barton’s eyes had caught sight of Coulson and had followed him.

Tony exclaimed. “You know about the pony kink club? How do you know?” He got up hanging onto the bow.

“How do you know about it?” Loki glared at Stark.

“I had a girl try to get me to go there once. I thought she was joking until I looked it up later.” Tony admitted bashfully and reached out for Loki.

Phil was staring into Clint’s eyes and said. “I had an operative get sick at the last moment, who was on a surveillance mission. I had to go instead.” He leaned in and gave Clint a long kiss.

Everyone watched as Clint started moving. Then the kiss ended. “Stark, if you don’t put my bow down I will put a saddle on you and tie you to the top of a taxi for the next week.” Then he reached out and grabbed Phil to pull him back for another round of kisses.

Tony, using his brain, wisely put the bow down on the coffee table in front of Clint. “And the kiss to awaken Sleeping Beauty works. Want to tell us what you said to Natasha?”

Before the bow had settled on the table Clint had it and had shot an arrow through Tony’s hair leaving a shaved swath across the top of his head.

“I believe that the answer is no, my dear Anthony.” Loki smiled. “Oh and I wouldn’t recommend asking Ms. Romanoff either. I might decide to leave you to your pain.” Loki smirked, but grabbed his man and ruffled the hair on the top of his head making the anti-Mohawk more of a mess.

Clint had been angry from the forced confinement. Adding to his problems was his lack of being able to be near Phil. He had become a serious jerk. Natasha had warned him several times to cool it. Then he had said something really mean, crass and personal to Natasha who had laid into him being tired of his bullshit.

He had just gone to his room and given up. He really hadn’t been comatose. So being more of an ass he played it for all it was worth. It had worked, Phil was here now. He knew Nat would forgive him… eventually.

Clint was now in for and received a serious but controlled, tongue lashing from Coulson. Serious enough that the rest of the group left not wanting to hear it.
They received some disturbing new data too. People who had magic potential seemed to give the pathogen a boost without even knowing it. Not a lot of people had potential but enough to keep it going. There were a lot of one in ten thousands out there. Dormancy wasn’t always forever either.

Prayer worked wonders as long as the fever wasn’t very high, but it was unable to stop it once it got to be serious. Friends who prayed added power to the pool but you couldn’t force it onto someone, they had to want it. And a few people still died anyway, those already sick or vulnerable for one reason or another.

Of course there were lots of people who refused to bring themselves to pray for help, or waited until the fever was already high to try it. A person had to pray themselves to receive the cooling, friends’ prayers just made it more effective.

During one question and answers session about Loki’s disease, someone asked if there was any way to help with the problem of dead bodies. Mass graves were something the people were up in arms about and funeral homes couldn’t keep up with cremations. Cold storage facilities were all full. A day later they announced that crematoriums and a few community leaders could submit applications to a new website for approval to call on power from the God of Fire to cremate a body. Anthony had to upgrade Jarvis’s output capacity to deal with the applications. Some very open and forward minded religious leaders discovered they could add the aide of Loki to their funeral ceremonies bringing comfort to families that feared mass graves. It also encouraged some who had previously been unwilling to pray for help to ask for aide, since he was being incorporated into their worship.

Chapter End Notes

I may post another chapter later this weekend - not sure though. Mostly because this is so short and I want to get another one up to keep with my time table. I hope you enjoy it.

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Trouble has What?

Chapter Summary

Darcy makes a find. Tony and Loki go for a weekend, Trouble is too busy to go with. What does she have????

Chapter Notes

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Even with the ‘cool prayer’ there was still panic because there was no guarantee how long the fever could be delayed causing stress and worry. Jarvis did his best to help by providing daily reports of results to all the researchers to see and discuss as they worked round the clock looking for a cure.

Tony and Loki were in the penthouse having just finished breakfast when Darcy called appearing on a holoscreen.

“Hey Power Ranger wantabe. I found some data you guys might find interesting.” Darcy spoke.

Tony looked aghast. “I am not a power ranger want to be. I’m an original and don’t you forget it you little minx.”

“Nope, Red Power Ranger had to be your fav.” Darcy grinned.

Loki interrupted. “What is it that you have discovered?”

“I was dragging through power ranger energy stuff that’s normally hundo p worthless cuz there’s never any spikes. Then there was. I said damn Darcy but that looks like it started when folks went dead. Since I’m a Loki stan I been watching and I checked. I made those statistics pop. Real numbers match. It’s happenen OMG when they die. I’m the goat for figuring it out!” Darcy said popping her gum.

Tony looked blankly. “What?”
Tony looked from Loki to Darcy. “You can do math and statistics?”

“OMG. That’s what you ask? Cold, like I’m no genius, but everyone trashes Jane thinken she hired a stupid assistant. I get A’s and B’s in math. I aced the stat class.”

Tony sputtered a “Sorry, you don’t…”

Then Loki poked him mentally and said aloud. “If you could send us the data and how you detected it?”

“Sure, Jane okayed me sending it. Made it herself, totally rad. S’hooked up worldwide to weather satellites. And thanks, I live for praise from you Loki you’re the dope.” She practically bounced when she said that.

“Hey remember he’s mine. I’m beginning to think you’re creepy the way you look at my fiancé.” Tony rebuffed her.

“Don’t get your panties in a bunch. I totally ship you two. Since you posted that frosty blue pic and you are his High Priest some people are calling your prayer thing FrostIron.”

“What?” Loki was looking at Stark and Darcy with horror.

“Yea, like have you done your Frostiron today? Try some Frostiron it helps. Oh and don’t forget fanfic called Frostiron, have you read it today? Well gotta go bye.” And Darcy broke the connection.

“You posted another picture of me blue?” Loki was trembling with rage.

“Hold on before you blow a gasket. I did it back when we were trying to push the prayer thing for cold.” Tony said thinking ‘I just made it look better recently.’

It took six months to come up with a cure. By the time Jor and Bruce found the vaccine, Loki’s disease was at pandemic even at apocalyptic levels. With as much as four percent of the world population was infected and wheezing. And an unknown number had it in their systems kept dormant though prayer. Nearly one percent of humanity had died, which meant millions of corpses.

Now that they had something that worked the problem of reproducing it began. Asgard provided four dozen pots of the magical herb that was the main component, but it was rare and had very challenging growing requirements including exposure to low levels of magic. At least it grew rapidly once the conditions were met, much faster than normal plants.

Loki and Tony helped create a few enchantments that gave off the needed levels of magic and the antiserum reproduction started. Virtually every living soul would need to be vaccinated, it would take months if not years to make enough.

Much of the world still had stopped unnecessary travel but supplies still had to move. Smaller cities
that had avoided the disease were closed off, not allowing anyone to enter or leave. That created places where supplies would sit for three and a half weeks before they were brought in. People were growing gardens everywhere, building small greenhouses. Food was being grown inside and outside, there wasn’t enough. People were starving because of fear of exposure to a killer disease. Even Tony had plant beds and greenhouses built into the balconies of his building and created new bots to tend them.

The block across from Stark tower was still empty and had no construction planned so Tony bought it. Temporary greenhouse walls and ceilings were constructed and mountains of rich soil was brought in. Pepper found someone to manage it. For very small amounts of cash and agreements to keep it tended, groups could rent sections out to keep fresh vegetables grown in the city when winter came. It was rented out almost overnight.

In September, the antiserum was finally being able to be distributed bringing a new round of problems as people tried to get it. Tony was an engineer but he’d never thought he’d end up engineering something like a quick way to package stuff in single doses for distribution and inoculation. Then again no one had ever had to package something in volume that contained small amounts of magic either.

In the beginning the Avengers spent their time helping set up distribution chains. They were famous enough that walking into a country enabled them to get to the people they needed to see faster. So often countries had practically closed their borders but could be convinced to allow one of the Avengers or Loki in. They trusted the Avenger because they knew they had the cure. It was an exhausting endeavor. They felt like they never got to stop and they were always eating on the run. In many countries, they had to visit individual states, regions, districts, and sometimes even cities. They went in pairs taking turns piloting and sleeping.

All this didn’t imply that everyone liked the Avengers. In front of the tower there were often anti-Avenger protests. One protest got particularly nasty over praying to Loki and his ‘high priest’ Stark. They had some horrible slogan about human sacrifices and had somehow managed to get ahold of some dead animals and even some human body parts, most likely from bodies donated to medical schools. They threw them out front of the building with at least one protestor managing to get a large group of human parts inside the front doors via backpack. It was a grisly mess that ended up scattered everywhere.

It was the day after that that the Avengers finally got a few days to relax. Steve, Bucky, Sam, Clint and Natasha stayed in the tower while Tony and Loki headed to Malibu for some alone time. They couldn’t catch Trouble before they left and Natasha had promised to feed her.

Steve was sitting in the shared living room when he noticed Trouble playing with something and pointed it out to Sam and Clint who were with him relaxing.

“What does that look like to you guys?” Steve said pointing, a look of horror had ran across his face.

Sam sat up and looked at it. “It looks like a finger.”

“Sure does. Wonder whose it is?” Clint whistled.
They all ran towards where Trouble was playing. Being a small cat, seeing three big guys running toward her, she grabbed the finger and ran. Trouble swiftly climbed up the nearest cat tree and leapt over to the overhead cat run before looking back with a firm grip on the finger.

Natasha walked in to witness the other three standing under Trouble looking at her.

“Here girl, come on back down.” Sam was coaxing.

“Little bitch, little bitch, just be a good girl and drop the finger.” Clint added. “Hey she’s female.”

Steve hissed, “Clint! watch your language, she’s not a female dog so don’t give me that excuse.” Then he said softly. ‘Trouble, please let your dads’ friends see what you are playing with.”

Natasha walked over. “Is that a finger she has in her mouth?” Then added something gently in Russian.

Well, this was all too much. Trouble turned and ran into the tunnel that went between floors, taking her finger with her.

“Must have been from that march yesterday. She doesn’t go outside but I’ve seen her in the lobby.” Sam said with his hands on his hips.

“Oh God, it’s going to start smelling soon. And she’ll probably put it in my bed. We need to get it first.” Clint exclaimed. “I’ll go get a ladder.”

“I agree, we need to get it back. Jarvis can you ask Bucky to come here?” Steve was moving the cat tree so they could put a ladder up to look into her tunnel.

“Mr. Rogers, Mr. Barnes is on his way.” Jarvis replied.

Natasha bent down to move a wall table making sure there was room for Steve to move the overly large cat tree.

“Jarvis, did that look like a finger to you?” Clint asked as he headed out to get a ladder.

Jarvis answered exactly the question he was asked. “Yes, very much so, Mr. Barton.”

Sam left as Bucky came in.

“What’s going on guys?” Bucky asked.

“Trouble got ahold of a finger from that protest yesterday and we need to get it back.” Steve explained.

“Yuk, that can’t be good for her. Is there anything I can do?” Bucky answered.

“Not yet. Clint’s getting the ladder. I just wanted you here.” Steve smiled as Bucky gave him a hug.

Soon enough Clint was back and had the ladder set up.

Clint climbed up the ladder. “I see some stuff but it’s too far down for me to reach it.”

About that time Sam showed up with a narrow four-pronged rake. “Here, I saw this by a plant bed and thought it might be useful.” And handed it up to Clint.

The first things he dragged out was a small stuffed reindeer no more than three inches long.
“Aw, it’s cute. Tony even put some of his red paint on the nose. Must have been a joke gift for Loki.” Sam said as he took it from Clint.

The next thing was an old sock that Steve grabbed. “Hey this looks like one of mine. There’s something in it.” He pulled out a pair of earrings.

Natasha swore and said. “That’s were my pearl earrings went.”

“What was Natasha’s earring doing in your socks? That looks like they were placed there not accidently mixed in.” Bucky looked at Steve.

“Hey, I have no idea.” Steve said defensively with complete innocence. Everyone else laughed.

Clint exclaimed. “Oh God, it’s a condom, half unrolled and crusty.” He dropped it in a waste basket that was rushed to him.

He continued to retrieve things. There were tissues, a couple of score sheets from board games, a rubber gasket, a dried piece of chicken, a soft rubber ball, a sheet of Ironman stickers, a piece of a large crayon with teeth marks and someone’s toothbrush all pulled out of the tunnel.

“Hey that’s where it went.” Bucky said grabbing the toothbrush. “I can wash it, I bet it’s still good, that’s what my mom used to do when they fell on the floor.”

Natasha gently grabbed it from him. “Bucky, Tony can afford to buy you a new one. They’re not that expensive.”

Bucky laughed sadly. “Yeah, sometimes I forget that. They were sort of a luxury in the depression.”

“There’s one more thing I think I can reach.” Clint said. A few minutes later he pulled it out something black and examined it. “Oh shit.”

“Is that what I think it is?” Steve exclaimed. As Clint nodded. The others moved forward to look.

A moment of shock passed over her face before Natasha smirked and shook her head. “And I thought I was a good thief.”

“No, she couldn’t have gotten that.” Sam had moved closer to get a good look.

“I told you all she isn’t a real cat. That she is a demon, this should prove it. Nobody could ever steal this. There was a running pool and you don’t want to know how much money was in it, going to anyone who could swipe it.” Clint told the others.

“I tried but failed.” Natasha said. Even she sounded in awe.

“Maybe Stark had Loki steal it with magic?” Steve asked.

“No way. If Stark had this he couldn’t have helped but brag about it.” Clint held the item up higher.

Sam said. “Loki would have said something too. No, Trouble is the one who got it. But how?”

Bucky looked at it. “I don’t see what the fuss is. It’s just an old eyepatch. Does anyone still even wear those?”

They all looked at Bucky with their mouths open.

Clint was the first to speak. “See the initials and SHIELD symbol on the inside. This belongs to
Nickolas J. Fury. He was the commander of SHIELD before Phil.” He got down and took a picture of the eyepatch and sent it to Coulson.

Jarvis brought up a screen almost immediately as Phil had called.

Phil looked calm. “So, who had it? Director Fury only ever lost one, it was just after Loki showed up. I just texted him to let him know you found it.”

Steve cleared his throat. “Would you believe the cat had it?”

Phil tilted his head ever so slowly as in thought. “Yes, I can. When are the enchanted pair returning? I would like to be there when they find out someone stole it and who had it.”

“Tomorrow night sir.” Steve provided the answer.

“Fine, tell them to show up for dinner. I’ll be there.” Phil smiled and hung up.

“Well that’s all I can reach from this side. We need to go to another room to reach some more.” Clint said.

“Not that this isn’t fun but doesn’t Jarvis have some small bots who might be able to retrieve it? Who knows where Trouble has taken it.” Bucky said.

“Yeah, I remember I think they’re called B&C Zappers. Anyone know what the B&C stands for?” Sam asked.

Natasha watched Clint’s face darken and smirked, looking at her found earrings. “Bug and Clint Zappers.”

Trouble was guarding her finger. It had been a fun day for her as Jarvis would stop the small bots for her naps. The rest of the time they played hide and seek.

Tony and Loki arrived back just as dinner was starting. The finger had not yet been retrieved. They sat down to the meal with Phil.

“We believe Trouble got a finger from the protests the other day. We haven’t been able to get it yet but we did find something interesting in her tunnels.” Steve said as Clint, who was once again in possession of the eye patch, pulled it out.

Tony’s eyes got big. “Is that really old Stone face’s?” He said.

“Looks real to me.” Natasha said as Phil nodded.

Loki took it and examined it. “Yes, I’m quite sure it is. You said Trouble found it and a finger? I suppose we should get the finger away from her.”

“It’s a human finger, of course we need to get it before it starts to really smell. I don’t know why she hasn’t put it someplace disgusting yet.” Clint said.

Trouble was looking out from her tunnel. She had gotten tired of the chase game. Besides her dads were back now and she hadn’t greeted them yet. Now she noticed some very large meatballs on a platter. She jumped down and raced across the floor, jumped up on the table deposited the finger by the pasta as she passed and snatched a meatball off the platter in exchange. Then she sat down between Tony and Loki and gave a look that dared anyone to try to take it from her.
Bucky grabbed the finger and started laughing. “We’ve been chasing her for two days.” He held up the middle finger from a hand.

Steve soon joined in followed by the rest of them.

Tony said. “I wondered where that went. It was one from a hand I rejected for Bucky’s arm. Looked real enough but the texture was too soft. It broke off when I overused it by continuously sticking it up at Loki.”

“Jarvis didn’t you say it was a real finger.” Sam asked.

“No Mr. Wilson. I was asked if it looked like a finger to which I replied. Yes, very much.” Jarvis sounded a bit snarky.

The Avengers continued to help with the distribution as some places were reluctant to let just anyone deliver it. Loki used teleportation to deliver serum to some of the more persnickety drop off points. By January the number of new cases were falling instead of increasing.

Tony was finally finding time to look at Jane and Darcy’s data. It was spot on when comparing disease deaths to energy surges. Normal deaths didn’t do anything to the readings. This was another clue but where did it fit in the puzzle?

Prayer to Loki was being treated much like exercise. Something you did to help you stay healthy, except there was a being that you were grateful to for it.

Then on February first, Loki, teleported to deliver more of the cure. Tony was in his lab when he felt Loki’s fear and then no emotion. He knew Loki had passed out from something.

Chapter End Notes

hundo p - one hundred percent
stan - cross between stalker and fan
goat- greatest of all time.
dope - awesome
ship - fictional couple. (I'm really worried if you are on AO3 and don't know what it is)

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
The Hunt is On

Chapter Summary

Loki disappeared the end of last chapter. We find out more. Tony starts searching

Chapter Notes

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Jarvis searched and discovered that Loki had been taken by men in a black van. Unfortunately there weren’t many security cameras in that part of the world and it was quickly lost.

Tony alerted the others and left to start searching for Loki. He knew if he got within twenty five miles he could find him. After scouring the local area for four days he had to admit Loki was no longer in the area he was taken from. He headed home deciding it was time to start a research expedition into the rooms filled with mountains of files found at Hydra bases. He kept feeling Loki was partially awake and tried to contact him, failing every time.

Two weeks later a portal opened in Southern Europe. It stayed open for a few hours allowing a few hundred very tough creatures through that scattered. Unlike the earlier monsters these could be killed with normal weapons. Many were also very large and could damage buildings and destroy homes. Armies, which were weakened from illness and deaths due to the disease, were sent to fight them.

Steve, Bucky and Sam left immediately to help fight the monsters. Another portal opened the next day near Washington D. C. that had more of the Avengers group joining in the fight. It was followed the day after by a portal in China. Each day a new portal opened someplace in the world allowing threatening creatures to come in, kill, and wreak havoc.

Everyone joined in the fight but Tony and Bruce. Tony was working with Jarvis to try to find Loki. Bruce stayed to work with Jor overseeing the cure.

The first of March Tony asked for help finding Loki. Coulson was aware that Loki was probably powering the portal that brought the monsters. He brought help in the form of some trusted SHIELD people to sort through the files. They included and were to be led by one Nick Fury.

Nick Fury spent much of the first day trying to figure out Trouble. She had, after all, managed to steal his eyepatch. He finally announced that she was one motherfucker of a black spy and so was he, so he had to appreciate her. She meowed in agreement and happily helped them start sorting through old Hydra files. Well, at least she attempted to sort or rather scatter papers.
SHIELD under Phil Coulson’s leadership was remarkable and effective as a smaller spying organization. Unfortunately they found countless more problems than they were able to deal with. They had continued to focus on Hydra, the missing items and tracking the devils. Now the priority changed slightly focusing on possible places where Loki could be hidden. Tony switched his tactics too, now able to spend most his time searching places that the new SHIELD and Fury’s group discovered, no longer searching paper files himself.

Fury hadn’t been interested in taking the reins of SHIELD again but was interested in taking out the Djofullin. He immediately moved into Stark tower much to Tony’s frustration. Here he and his group searched the files. In addition he started another very small group that focused on studying facts and movements of the Djofullin, the portals, monsters and any new Hydra information that could possibly relate.

As Tony continued to search, every so often he would notice Loki starting to wake for real through their link, only to have him shut down again as he was sedated. He continued to monitor the prayer pool or ‘cool pool’ as he like to refer it. It was not suffering from Loki’s capture.

The end of April he felt Loki wake for real. He prayed to Loki. They had learned that Loki could hear him in seconds from anywhere on earth. Loki managed to communicate he was going to shut down his magic and thus the portals. He had no idea where he was. Then Tony felt the connection stop, Loki wasn’t dead but even Tony’s magic was mostly blocked. He remembered the large cat creature Loki had once shown him in Asgard. Loki had gone to ground as a large anti-magic cat. It was the galdcat from whatever realm that it came from. Tony couldn’t remember.

The portals stopped appearing and the armies finally had a chance to start catching up. Those fighting felt new motivation to kill the monsters. Unfortunately there were already so many, and the last three weeks had seen a new wave of what appeared to be un-killable monsters. Some creatures seemed to regenerate rapidly, even from what appeared to be death. Others didn’t seem to take damage from anything. People were reluctant to try magic, which was very rare, to kill them, afraid these new un-killable monsters might contain another new deadly disease.

Still, the monsters armies started dwindling as human troops aided by super-humans killed any that they could. Those monsters that seemed unable to be killed were chased away from populations. They didn’t stay away for long though, either turning around and returning or roaming to another population area to cause more damage and mayhem. They developed methods to herd instead of kill as people begged for answers about them.

Some berry grower in California had discovered that the beasts avoided his strawberry fields. Several other related plants were quickly discovered to have similar effects such as raspberry, quince, almond, loquat and some rose bushes. Kiwi also had a similar property. It was in the smell. Artificial reproductions didn’t seem to have the same effect, missing something.

Fortunately the cool pool continued to work. Tony set up a circle to communicate with Frigga the day after Loki shut down his magic. Loki had always been paranoid of Asgard and had been protected from them seeing him. Now Tony was told that they could not see him even if his protections were down. Those cats couldn’t be found by Heimdall or the Throne. Frigga was able to assure him that the prayer pool would work for a long time still and gave Tony a few suggestions on how he might maintain it.
Ten days after the portals closed, the beginning of May, Hydra agents started dropping dead. Their energy was sucked out of them leaving human husks.

In Europe a man showed up at an American Embassy and turned himself in. He nervously demanded to see the Avengers, begging to trade information for protection. He was a high level Hydra operative who didn’t have the tattoo because he was severely allergic to tattoo inks.

Fury was in fine form once again doing an interrogation.

The man explained; when Loki had forced the portals closed the Djofullin or devils had experienced a sudden drop of inflow of life force energy. He told them the Djofullin were sucking the life from everyone who had a Hydra tattoo on Earth. They no longer seemed to feel the need to keep anyone in Hydra alive. They had previously in some way fed or used the energy of any who had died from the illness or at the hands of their monsters. He didn’t know why they hadn’t needed energy at first and now required massive amounts of it either. The monsters were from the Illitplass universe and were supposed to eventually help Hydra control earth.

The Djofullin had been lying to Hydra all along. He told them everything he knew. They clearly had a plan of their own but no one a clue what it was. He didn’t know where they kept Loki just that one of the Djofullin and Strucker was with him. The other two Djofullin had become very upset the day after the portals closed. One of the Devils had gone off and not returned.

The single Djofullin he knew location of had moved on by the time anyone was able to get there.

With the new information Fury noted that many of the portals had opened to mess with the distribution system for the vaccines. That system was finally functioning properly without creatures trying to disrupt it.

They Avengers found themselves spread out around the globe herding monsters away from populated areas. They occasionally figured out a way to kill one. Wanda’s magic didn’t seem to do much more than anything else to them. They never talked to Bruce and Jor anymore who continued to work on the serum.

By June, the several un-killable Illitplass monsters New York City had, became Tony’s responsibility. In his opinion he spent too much time herding them and not enough time searching for Loki. The tower that had been a place to protest, now became a symbol of what they had lost. It stood perfect, having taken no damage. Most buildings displayed damage from monsters. It didn’t take long for the sidewalks and streets surrounding it to be filled with graffiti. They called Stark and the Avengers ‘evil freaks’, ‘monster lovers’ and things much worse.

People still continued to pray to Loki. Somehow, he alone remained a savior in this time of disaster.

Meanwhile Tony continued to search. When there were no new facilities to search, monsters to chase off, or berry plants to order to be distributed, he traveled a grid area hoping to find signs of Loki. Unfortunately the anti-magic cat also suppressed his ability to detect Loki nearby. He feared it might take years having no idea even what continent Loki was on. Tony had a one track mind, forging on, never knowing if the next day might lead him to his quarry. He began to wonder if this was what Howard had felt like as he searched for Captain America. At least Tony knew Loki was alive; it was more than his father had known. He was perhaps beginning to see how Howard might have been driven crazy. It wasn’t an excuse for his behavior or forgiveness though. No, just a taste of walking in the man’s shoes.
From here on out I will be posting every three days. The story if finished. I know you don't know what's coming but if you think of any loose ends you want to make sure I cover, please let me know. I think everything will be revealed but if there is something out there you haven't seen let me know. - Thanks

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

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Chapter Summary

Tony finds Loki.

Chapter Notes

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This chapter did weird things when I transferred it over to AO3. Please let me know if you see typos I missed because my brain was going crazy.

Trouble had taken to sitting on top of one of the file cabinets that had been retrieved from Sakovia occasionally meowing while the others did a systematic search of what had been rooms of files. Fury finally noticed she would come in and always sit on the same one. He had heard all the Trouble stories and went to that file cabinet. She seemed to get excited by the third drawer. He opened it and turned up an abandoned research facility in northern Canada that had somehow managed to disappear off the radar.

Tony had been running himself ragged. He hadn’t slept but a few hours in days. All of his suits were in need of repair but upon hearing how Fury found this new lead i.e. with Trouble’s help, he left immediately. He ignored Trouble’s meows and Jarvis’s warnings that he needed to sleep. “At least let the bots repair your suit, Sir.” Tony snarked some comment about “they’d just make it worse” and took off.

He arrived to find the place a frozen mess. There were dozens of dead bodies in uniforms frozen in the snow. Several very ugly monsters roamed the area and part of a wall was missing from the main building. He went in fighting. His goal was to check out the building. These monsters were still killable and he killed them with enthusiasm. Allowing frustration and tension to guide his anger, he perhaps overextended himself.

“Sir, your suit is down to twelve percent power. You have no backup. You need to either find a safe place to let it regenerate or return while you still have the power to do it.” Jarvis announced.

Tony had seen enough to know this was a Hydra base. He saw only two living blips on his screen that could only detect outside the building. “Not yet J. This is the first real Hydra base I’ve found in weeks. If there’s anyone alive I’m not giving them time to relocate. Only two monsters left. I’ll have to make it count.” The place looked dead, he really didn’t expect to find anyone alive inside but if he was lucky he might find something that led him to Loki; a computer, table or even a hand scratched
He took his time to find a vital area on one and struck true, killing it on impact.

Unfortunately, the second monster turned out to be one of the un-killable kind. It had surprised him by jumping between him and the building opening. Tony briefly thought about trying to sneak around it until it swung a limb like a telescoping bat. It managed to smash into him and his already damaged suit sending it flying across an open area and into a tree where it powered down, broken.

Tony managed to sit up against the tree. The suit was heavy and even though he was enhanced, without any energy it was hard to move. It didn’t help that he was tired and knew he had broken a leg, probably an arm, and definitely a couple ribs in the crash. He felt dizzy and was close to passing out. He would heal eventually if left alone.

Regrettably, the large beast who was purple and house sized was coming towards him. He laughed and said out loud to no one. “Loki, I sure wish you were here. Well, at least there isn’t anything around to destroy when you take a bite of me Barney. Maybe I’ll poison you first before I blow up. Don’t think Bruce’s tested our blood against an un-killable thing like you.”

Then he heard a hiss… and a growl. He turned his head but the suit wouldn’t turn enough for him to see what new creature had joined the fight to take a bite out of the infamous Tony Stark extraordinaire who was currently a freezing lump of flesh in a tin can.

It had drawn the monster’s attention away from Tony. He almost felt sorry for what was most likely a local wild animal that had stumbled upon the place. It had probably seen the dead bodies and thought it could have a free meal. “Run away, mister animal. Barney here isn’t very friendly. If you know what’s good for you you’ll go as fast and as far as you can.” He called out.

The hiss got louder and he couldn’t see what was going on. Only that the Barney beast that had been moving closer was turning to face the new challenger. Tony found himself using his precious little strength to adjust himself to see what was going on. He wanted to know what kind of animal would challenge something that big. He’d taken out all the other monsters. It didn’t seem reasonable that the animal would challenge the monster so it could feast on himself, since there were plenty of frozen bodies around not encased in metal. Well unless the animal liked their food warm and from earth.

He had obviously hit his head because there was a slow trickle of blood that flowed into his eyes messing with his vision as he moved. “Damn, just when there is something to see. I just don’t seem to have any luck.” He grimaced as pain shot through him from moving.

What he did see was amazing. There was a dark possible blackish creature, wolf maybe? Hissing? Mountain lion then? It swung a paw with long claws and scratched Barney leaving deep visible groves where a bluish brown liquid started to flow. “What the fuck. How did you do that kitty?” If he made it out alive he was going to take his rescuer home with him. No one had been able to break the skin of those creatures.

The creature backed up and the cat growled again and stalked forward. Tony watched as his addled brain suddenly started to work through the daze, his head wound had stopped bleeding and his vision was clearing. Tony’s eyes popped wide and he whispered. “Loki.”

He suddenly had a thousand emotions of his own running through him, happiness, love, fear, anger, protectiveness, possessiveness, and more. That was his god in anti-magic galdcat form. Worry raised its ugly head even higher as he watched Loki lunge to take another swing after dodging Barney’s swing.
This one too cut into the beast. Two to nothing, unfortunately he didn’t know how many swings Loki could take from a house sized creature. Loki was nimble though and jumped upon the creature’s arm or front leg or whatever it was.

The next time the creature swatted at Loki he ran forward up its appendage thing and directly to the eyes. He made short work of blinding the creature before bounding off it to safety. The beast started to back up, unable to see the small quick attacker who had switched to very effective in and out attacks, guessing and finding vital areas, if the blood gushing out was anything to go by.

Tony watched Barney slow down and eventually stop. The blood ceased flowing out of the now many wounds. Tony was having a hard time keeping his eyes open, the Barney monster was dead and Loki was found. The relief he felt had brought on a wave of exhaustion, of course it might be a concussion. That would also explain his fight to keep awake and that he hadn’t thought it might be Loki first thing. Yup, he was going to blame it on a head wound.

Then the cat was in front of him and prodded him with his paw. “Hey, watch it. My leg is broken, probably along with my left arm and I’m sure I have a couple of cracked ribs. The suit and Jarvis aren’t working. The connection between the reactor and the suit has be severed.” He could have sworn that the cat in front of him rolled his eyes.

Then the cat held up one paw and stuck out an eight inch claw. “Hey did you borrow that from Wolverine? He might get upset when he notices it missing.” The claw was now hovering above his groin area as green eyes glared at him.

“No, nice kitty, Lokitty, Loki! I don’t know how much you remember right now, but you like me. You especially like that part of me and will probably be very angry later if you damage it. Please remember who I am. I just saved your life and came to rescue you.” Tony said, then thought about it as the cat’s growl seemed to increase in volume. “Wait, I mean you saved me. I did come to rescue you but you saved me. Shit, Loki, Please you’ve got to help me here. It’s freezing and I’m not in good shape. Did I mention I may have a concussion too?” Tony wished his face plate were open and the cat could see him. He really had no idea what Loki might remember.

“Hey handsome, it’s me Anthony, your…. Little hemorrhoid.” He winced when he said that. “I love you, miss you.” He looked at the claw still out. “I haven’t even thought about cheating on you. My every waking moment has been filled with you. That’s the absolute truth.” Tony was so tired. “Damn it Loki I’m serious. I think I need help.” Tony sighed angrily and pointed to where the suit’s mechanical release was.

And the claw was moving. Tony experienced a minor heart attack because he couldn’t move his hands quick enough to cover his groin. The claw instead found its way to the manual release mechanism. Tony felt the cold air bite into him as Loki pulled the damaged chest piece off. Tony saw the break in the power wiring and took his right hand and reached over to push it back together, finding he needed to hold it to keep it connected.

“Sir, are you there?” Jarvis’s voice came out of the speaker.

“Yea J. I am and I found Loki but my suit is wrecked and I’m kinda messed up at the moment. He’s still in the anti-magic cat form I told you about so he’s lacking opposing thumbs and I’m not really able to communicate with him. I’m eighty three percent sure he understand language though.” Loki gave Tony a very human-like look of disgust at that. “Perhaps higher.”

“Sir I have already sent two older suits to rescue you. They should be there within three hours. If you had repaired them they would be traveling faster. Will you be able to survive until then? Perhaps Master Loki will choose to protect you.”
"Damn it don’t give me a hard time right now J. I’ll be fine, Loki will protect me. He fights really well in this cat form. I wouldn’t want to go up against him. You should see the mess he made of the Barney style monster we thought was un-killable.” Tony said.

Loki made a sound in the air that was a cross between a growl roar and high pitched scream and then pushed his head against Tony. “I think he knows who I am at least. This connection isn’t going to last since I have to hold it in place J. I’ll talk to you when you get here.”

While Tony waited he looked at Loki. Around his neck was an item he didn’t recognize: a collar. There was also wires and a plate under it at his backbone. Those wires ran under his skin and probably down his spinal column from the collar. This was the item they’d had attached to Wanda to drain her magic.

By the time the two suits arrived, yes don’t remind him, all his suits needed maintenance, Tony’s leg had healed enough to put weight on it. Any concussion was history and his arm was usable again. He’d followed Loki into the facility and found everyone inside, mostly Hydra agents, dead too. Loki led him to a partially decomposed skull that could only belong to a Djofullin or devil. Then Loki showed him where they had kept him sedated and hooked up to the Illitplass portal item that was remarkably still there. Loki had buried it in a corner. Tony collected it and Loki, while ordering Jarvis to gather up his broken suit and a few other things he had piled together.

Trouble turned her head to watch as Tony landed on the landing pad in a battered Ironman suit carrying the seventy-five pound black house cat with green eyes. Tony looked more battered than his suit because he’d spent so much time looking for Loki.

“Honey, I’m home and I brought your other daddy.” He said as he sat Loki down. Trouble ran out to nuzzle the other cat as Tony’s armor was removed. She nuzzled Loki then she backed away curiously from him and went to Tony.

The three of them walked inside and Tony said. “Jarvis bring up an interactive screen.” Then looked at the larger cat and said. “I don’t understand why this feels different than before. It’s even quieter than that time in your room. Shouldn’t I be getting something at this distance now?”

The cat pawed at the screen and typed. “The collar at my neck is preventing it you imbecile. You must remove it.” The collar had spikes that poked into his neck, there was blood on it both older and dried and fresh from earlier today. The collar was helping hold another item with wiring in that was sticking into the Loki’s spine.

Tony looked nervous, he licked his lips. “How? I don’t want to hurt you.”

The large cat growled and typed. “It is a magical lock. The first thing you learned to do. Now take it off!”

Tony took a deep breath, reached out with his hands, and with his magic unlocked the collar. He slowly removed it noticing Loki start to bleed from where the spikes dug into his neck. The other item didn’t move; embedded in his spine. “I think I need Bruce to take that out.” At least Tony could feel the flow between them, just a bit. No magic though just a flow of some sort.

Loki typed again. “We don’t have time. They will notice the collar is off. We need to get it out now you idiot.”

“Well can we at least go down to the Medical floor?” Tony’s voice was shaking as he started walking toward the elevator.
Trouble and Loki followed. Once down there Loki jumped up on a bed and another holo-screen was brought up and Loki typed “Pull it straight out along the line of my backbone. It stretches along it several inches.”

Tony shuddered and shook his head with a look of horror in his eyes. “But you might die. Or be paralyzed. I’m not sure I can do it.”

Loki growled and typed again. “I will not die from it. Do you want to save your world or not. Do not make me feel the need to throw you out the window. This shape does not hinder me that much. But the devils have been watching me long ranged. They can home in on both the collar and item. I fear they have a trapped the item. If they notice I have moved they may set it off.”

“Perhaps I need a drink first.” Tony had never had to deal with anyone else’s medical conditions more than putting pressure on something when told to or to fetch things. He could fix his bots all day. He could even look and not feel ill but he wasn’t even sure he’d even put a bandage on someone else. Now Loki, the most important person in his life had asked him to pull, no yank, wires out from along his spine. He knew spinal injuries were debilitating and permanent in humans. They may not be exactly human anymore but he couldn’t seem to find any comfort because he really didn’t know.

Loki looked at Anthony in frustration, the man was being a wimp. “I would rather you not. Are you telling me; Ironman cannot find the courage to pull two wires out of me? Perhaps I need to get U or Dum-e in here I am sure they can handle it. Jarvis could you ask U to come to us please.” He typed, thankful for Jarvis providing possible words to go with letters as he typed.

“Cancel that order J. I’ll do it.” Tony snapped. Like hell he was going to have one of his bots do this because he didn’t have the nerve. He grabbed a pair of what looked to him like sterile plyers.

Loki type once more before he nodded and lied down and flattened his back while exposing his neck. “Expect me to pass out. I do not know for how long. Put the item you remove and the collar in my room off plane. They will not be able to be traced there.”

Tony gritted his teeth. The item was in three parts. He removed the square outside part that had been connected to and held the wires in place. He imagined it was where the magic it drew from Loki was collected. It tore open the back of Loki’s neck when it came off. Now Tony had to get the wires as blood flowed from the wound. The first wire came out fairly smoothly although the bleeding increased. The second wire seemed stuck. He wasn’t sure Loki was even still conscious at this point.

Trouble meowed as Tony hesitated. “Yes, yes, I know just give me a second.”

Another meow came and Tony glared at the cat. “Sometimes I think you have part of Loki’s consciousness in you. I’m telling everyone you made me hurry if I screw up. Hell, they’ll really think I’m bonkers for blaming a cat.” At least she was enough of a distraction that he felt he was up to giving a really big yank.

The second wire come out. It had bits of flesh attached to it that splattered all over Tony, who groaned and made a disgusted face while looking at the wire he now was holding. “Yuck, how the hell did they get this in? Gives a whole new meaning to wired though. I bet you’d have rather been high.”

He bandaged Loki up and figured he did it at least as good as most six year olds could manage. Maybe someday he’d decide he actually needed to learn to do basic first aid on someone else. He had more time now, who knows he might get bored with physics, computers and electronics someday. Then he reconsidered, probably not.
He grabbed a gurney and carefully moved Loki onto it. He cleaned up the area a bit, gathered the bloody item parts, and washed his hands. Then they rolled toward the elevator.

Trouble followed the gurney and meowed while looking at Tony. She wasn’t very close to Loki either but kept an eye on him.

Tony walked toward the elevator saying, “I hate Hydra. If those Devils hadn’t already killed them, I’d do it again, only slower and more painfully.”

Tony muttered one more phrase this time to the larger black cat on the gurney. “You better live fleabag. Or I’ll kill you.” Trouble meowed again as if in agreement.

“Sir, I believe that it is impossible to kill someone who is already dead.” Jarvis snarked politely, pointing out the contradiction in that statement.

“Surrounded by smartasses.” Tony mumbled looking annoyed.

He remembered to get the collar and the spinal item into the storage area in the off plane rooms attached to Loki’s suite. He found himself thinking that he wished he could just lock himself and Loki in here for a few weeks. He took one more look before he left and smiled remembering that Loki had actually added a water recycling shower in the area just because Tony asked. Then continued on to his bedroom where he pulled the sheets back and gently placed the large black cat on one side and nestled it in pillows.

Upstairs Tony walked into the kitchen and felt his stomach growl, he was hungry. He’d really not been taking care of himself the last few months and hadn’t eaten since he left to search the place he’d found Loki. He found a container of yogurt and a couple of energy bars and ate them because he was too tired to wait for takeout. He took a shower that was just barely long enough to get any splattered blood off him and crawled into bed next the his big wonderful, currently anti-magic cat, lover, who was finally home, and fell asleep.

Trouble looked at them, hopped on the bed and walked over them and smelled Loki. She tilted her head and smelled him again. She went to his butt and sniffed one last time. Neither of them woke up so she went to the closet which Tony hadn’t closed tight enough to latch. She pawed it open. Inside she found a large unopened bag of cat food that just needed to be opened.

Jarvis watched as she batted around the dry food until it was inside every shoe, tossed up on shelves and basically covered the whole floor before she decided to start eating it. They would be finding dry food in suit pockets for months to follow.

Chapter End Notes

We are finally back to where the story begins. Next chapter Is titled - NO! Never to Tired For Sex.

I know you don't know what's coming but if you think of any loose ends you want to make sure I cover, please let me know. I think everything will be revealed but if there is something out there you haven't seen let me know. - Thanks
Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

Illitlass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
NO! Never to Tired For Sex

Chapter Summary

Tony wants sex. Loki says he's too tired. Who do you think will win?

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta grammar help. Even if he has a hard time with MM pairing sex. Not prejudice-just can't get him mind around the behind closed door details. I forgive him.

For this chapter a sweet gal I know, Fanficsmything, did some of the beta work. She is a great personal friend! Thank you for helping and being you!

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony was dreaming of sex with Loki when he awoke to find himself snuggled against and humping a large body of fur. He stilled immediately and prayed he hadn’t done any damage. He rolled over and looked up to see Trouble sitting centered on the foot of the bed staring at him.

“Oh, stop that. I was dreaming. I’m gonna check him now.” Tony did, and found that he had loosened the bandaging while sleeping with his arms wrapped around the large cat. His dreams hadn’t done any harm. “He’s fine see.” Trouble of course was still staring at him.

“You know, if you keep looking at me like that I’m going to start getting self-conscious.” He sat up and saw that he was covered in a fair amount of black fur. “Hey Lokes you shed.”

He looked at Trouble again. She was still, like a statue, staring at him and Loki. “Hey, you’re making me feel like I should be guilty about bestiality or something. I’m not interested in it, not even thinking about bestiality. Definitely not. Well I am now. Only because you made me think about it. But I’m not really thinking about doing it, just thinking bestially as a concept. So I’m not actually thinking about it…. Shit you have no idea what I’m saying.” He rubbed his hands against his face and looked at her through his fingers. “Why are you looking at us like that?”

It was then that Jarvis spoke up. “Sir, if I may. My sensors indicate that it is possible that Master Loki does not quite smell like himself. Cats have a very well-developed sense of smell.”

“Isn’t that dogs J?” Tony said now entering a staring contest with Trouble.

“Sir, you are correct that there are dogs that can easily out ‘smell’ any cat. Your average cat’s sense of smell though is greater than your average dogs, Sir.” Jarvis informed him.

“So Loki doesn’t smell the same in his anti-magic cat form. Well in that case I can understand where
you’d be confused little girl. Trouble come here, come to papa.” Tony reached out to Trouble.

She finally moved walking around the bed at the end and on the other side of Loki, staying just out of Tony’s reach until the last moment when he was sure she would jump off the bed. Then she seemed to change her mind and went close enough where he grabbed her and pulled her into his arm.

“Gotcha! Now who’s a good kitty? Who loves her daddy?” He said while stroking her neck and scratching her ears. He failed to notice the large black cat open his eyes. Trouble purred loudly enjoying the attention.

Loki’s head hurt. He took stock and remembered Tony had removed the item that drained his magic. He rolled over and shifted.

Trouble was momentarily startled and Tony found himself with eighteen new holes in his skin, many adorned with deep red matching slashes. Trouble needless to say was no longer in his lap.

“You look like you are preparing for war with your war paint Anthony.” Loki smirked sitting up.

“Preparing for. You’ve clearly been out of the loop. We’re at war. God, I’m glad you’re back.” Tony grabbed Loki and hugged him so tight Loki felt bruises forming.

“If you don’t mind, I do actually enjoy breathing. Have you been taking lessons from Thor perhaps?” Loki drawled in fun, but you could see the weariness still in his eyes. Trouble was suddenly all over them trying to get in between them.

Tony eased his grip. “Oh, sorry. Tell me what happened? Do you have any idea how long you’ve been gone? Five months! Loki it’s July ninth! I was afraid they’d taken you off planet or something and I’d never find you.” Tony exclaimed and banged his forehead against Loki’s shoulder still not releasing his arms from around his lover. Trouble was marking Loki with her face very glad to have him back.

Loki smiled just a bit and took a breath, “Would it be possible to get something to eat? I’d like to eat real food. You do not want to know what I’ve been eating the last few months.”

Tony thought about it for a moment, about the icy compound. “You’re right, I don’t want to know. Oh, coffee, J, please tell me the coffee is ready?” Tony kissed Loki and ran to the kitchen holding one finger up. Good thing it wasn’t far. He’d slept like a baby with Loki back, even if he had been in cat form, but now, he needed some go juice.

“I started it when you woke up, Sir. I believe it is ready. There is also some tea for Master Loki.” Jarvis said as Tony ran.

Tony came back with a tray that held a couple of protein bars, a bag of beef jerky, a bottle of water and a cup of tea and, of course, his beloved coffee. “I’m back. Here this’ll help for now. I don’t have much food and it’s still early. J can you get us some pizza when they open. I think there is one place that will still deliver here in exchange for some strawberries.” Tony smiled.

Loki looked confused. “Is there only one pizza place left nearby? And you have to exchange strawberries? I believe you have a story to tell too Anthony. Do you still have hot water or is that too much to ask for? I am sorely in need of a shower.”

“There, we both got stories. I think you might need some help washing your back though.” Tony
Tony got into the shower with Loki and started washing his back using lots of soap. Tony’s temperature had run a little high ever since he’d had the arc reactor put in, extremis only made it worse. The enchantment hadn’t changed that and Loki had remained cool to the touch. He craved that coolness that seemed to perfectly pull the heat away from his body. He yearned for the touch he had failed to have the last five months. He needed to keep Loki as close as possible for now and he wanted sex.

Loki was exhausted and decided to just stand. He enjoyed having Anthony pamper him. It felt like he had spent an eternity in that cat form and every minute of it he had missed his Anthony. Those warm hands, always the right temperature, were soaping him up. His Anthony was happily cleaning months of dirt, grime and filth away. He felt lucky. After years of what seemed like one thing after another he had finally found happiness. Home and happiness were Anthony.

Tony left the best for last, humming as he washed. He took his time cleaning Loki, and made his interest known when he got to Loki’s genitals which seemed unwilling to respond.

“Oh Anthony. I would love that too but I’m so exhausted. My magic is slowly returning and I do not think I am capable of doing anything. Perhaps we can just lie down and cuddle?” Loki turned off the water, took Anthony’s hand and stepped out of the shower pulling Anthony with him.

Tony was disappointed of course and maybe he understood. “Sure, I guess, naked though. Can I at least touch or something?” He said as they towelled themselves off.

Loki led Tony back to the bed where a bot had just changed the sheets. They lied down on the fresh sheets and Tony’s hard cock abutted up against Loki.

“Why are you so tired? You’ve just been wandering around that complex for the last couple months. I’ve got enough energy and I’ve been running on overdrive trying to find you.” Tony asked Loki.

Loki smiled. “I have been without my seiðr for many months. That is uncomfortable to say the least. My body does not like to be separated from magic and Yggdrasil. At present, it is like the connections were frozen solid and are now slowly melting, allowing Yggdrasil to flow back into me. It will take a few days for everything to get back to normal. Plus, you may not have remembered but I have effectively just had spinal surgery. The surgeon, while a genius, has little knowledge of biology and had to be talked out of doing it whilst drunk.”

“I only wanted one drink…. Anyway, you know, sex would make you sleepy…. I’m sorry, I know I’m selfish but I just need to feel you that way. I want to be physically connected.” Tony murmured in an attempt to explain.

Loki thought about it and had an idea. He’d never tried this but it might work. “How about a compromise then. I let you inside me and you just rest there, go to sleep that way. It will not exactly be sex but the physical closeness will be there.”

Tony smiled, it was a compromise, much better than nothing and he was willing to try. “Sure, handsome.” He said rolling over grabbing the lube.

Loki took the lube from him. “No, I’ll use a little of my returning magic to apply it and make myself ready.” It would take a bit of magical effort but right now, the thought of being prodded by fingers seemed much worse.
Tony got to play big spoon and entered Loki from behind. Then he laid there with one arm around Loki and the other one resting under his own head stretching above Loki’s.

That worked well for the first five minutes. Well, sort of well. Tony really did his best not to move. It took effort. He’d never done this before with anyone either and didn’t think it’d be that much work. Really, normally when sex was over if no one moved they’d stayed together until the inserted cock went flaccid.

This was different though. They hadn’t had sex yet. In fact, Tony hadn’t hardly had any ‘me’ time over the last few months. Usually when he tried he found himself missing Loki and that would be it. Now he was inside Loki and his lower brain was screaming obscenities at him about his lack of movement. He felt a tingling sensation like spider webs crawling through him. Tony shut down their emotional link not wanting Loki to realize what was happening to him.

He finally gave in having lasted a full five minutes and allowed just a bit of movement. Mind you it was only enough to shut his stupid noisy lower brain up. Yes, oh, it felt so good right up until he finished the movement.

Loki had liked Anthony inside him. They didn’t do this very often as Loki liked to Top. He found himself feeling full, filled, but not sure he could fall asleep this way. It felt very good right now though. There was something to be said for having this physical connection. Then Anthony moved and his traitorous cock twitched in response.

Tony genuinely tried to stay still. He’d given in and allowed a movement, only now he wanted more. It had felt so good when he’d moved now it wasn’t quite like holding his breath but close. He lasted maybe a minute before he faked a stretch and moved some more. He felt immediate pleasure that stopped without satisfying anything.

Loki noticed Anthony move again, probably just adjusting his position. He could do that too, couldn’t he? It wouldn’t mean he was ready for sex, just enough to adjust his, starting to awaken, member. It wasn’t much but he had really needed just a bit of adjustment. He made the mistake of enjoying it.

Loki had moved! Tony knew Loki had moved. Was that permission or was Loki showing interest? Then Loki stopped moving again. Damn, this was so hard, no, he was so hard. Why had he agreed to this again? Wait, it was because it felt good, but it was torture too. He counted to sixty, passing the seconds…Okay maybe he counted really, really fast. Now he could adjust again right. It was only in response to Loki moving. He decided to fake another adjustment, maybe exaggerate it a bit. A lovely shiver passed between his two brains, his lower doing its best to convince the upper to give it more, lots more, movement.

Loki was enjoying thinking about his last movement and trying to tell himself he should make an attempt to fall asleep when Anthony moved again. It had an extra push to it and he involuntarily pushed back as he trembled from the arousal his body was starting to feel. Damn, this might be bad. Loki stilled again, not wanting to give Anthony too much hope.

To Tony that movement had felt so very good and Loki had moved with him at the end. His libido was getting pumped. There was at least a bit of interest. He was afraid if he accelerated things to fast Loki might end this game. Nope, that was not going to happen. He would wait and do that again. Distract himself for another minute. He made it maybe twenty seconds. This adjustment, that Tony made, included a small amount of real friction and a push.

Loki felt it and moved with it. Maybe he should pull Anthony out and stop it. He really needed sleep. It felt very good though and he was feeling more than desire. Then his rebellious body moved on its
own, shoving back into Anthony, sucking his lover in deeper and it was heavenly.

Yes, he was winning. Loki had not only moved with him increasing the small amount of friction but not ten seconds later had pushed back and was now arching his back just a little. He waited, this time a whole five seconds. Counting properly this time, he had at least that much patience, before responding with a more serious push. It also included adjusting of his hand that swept over Loki’s nipples. Tony was rewarded by a small explosion of pleasure that sent a single vibration to his mind saying: more please.

What was Anthony doing? This was fast becoming torture. It had been his idea not to move. Loki was sure he hadn’t wanted sex, right? Now he wasn’t so sure. Anthony felt so good inside him and he no longer had a wilted piece of flesh between his legs. He rubbed his chest against Anthony’s hands and gave a solid push causing enough friction to titillate the area around his prostate. Loki worked to control his breathing as not to give in to his newly eager state.

That was better, oh he had enjoyed that feeling of sharing an in and out. Tony could tell Loki was getting interested when he had rubbed his chest into Tony’s hands. Still, Tony didn’t want to incite a mood change, moving quickly might get a negative reaction. So instead Tony responded by making four or five little quivering movements in a row then stopping for a couple seconds and repeating.

Was Anthony vibrating in place now? By the Norns this felt very good. At least it was good for a warm up, and warming up he was. His lower body was clearly interested sending all sorts of erotic messages along his nerve endings. It seemed that his little hemorrhoid had managed to wake the dead. His prostate was starting to seriously demand attention. He wondered how much longer he was going to be able to pretend he still lacked interest, while he semi-voluntarily tightened around Anthony’s cock.

Loki was still responding. He’d squeezed Tony’s cock…hard. He worried that maybe it was a warning but he could no longer control himself for more than three seconds. Those three seconds were torture too. He finally gave in, deciding to make his movements slightly bigger but still stopped every few, still proceeding with caution.

Loki felt the movements get bigger. He was tired but sleep was no longer on his mind. It was now much more focused on what Anthony was doing to him and causing him to feel. He moved along with the new movements. Stopping as Anthony did, practically gritting his teeth when they did. He started pushing his nipples into Anthony’s arm and hand just a bit of up and down on every breath he took.

God, Tony wanted to move faster. Loki was actually stimulating his own nipples against his arm. Loki was also starting to move against him, instead of gently with him, on his still controlled sort of smallish pushes. Very slowly with more control than Tony thought he possessed, he increased his pushes and aimed for Loki’s prostate.

Loki felt Anthony increase his pushes. He found himself pushing back against Anthony. The slow stroking surge through his body and he heard a moan. Realizing it was his moan he forced himself back harder and squeezed hoping to repeat the sensation only stronger. It did and he moaned again only to realize that he had been trying so hard not to show interest that he had shut down his emotional link with Anthony.

Loki had moaned, squeezed, pushed back and moaned again. Yes! This was going to happen. Tony felt them both push together on the next slow stroke and he moaned back in pleasure and relief. Suddenly Loki opened the emotional link. Tony burst out with a, “Yes, God, yes Loki.” Feeling Loki’s emotions filled with love and the sexual tension that Tony had been hoping for. He was filled
with euphoria and released his own back. It was time to start to move faster.

Loki was moving when he felt Anthony release his emotions back. If Loki hadn’t been hard before he was now as he felt his skin strain and stretch. He had never realized just how desperate and needy Tony was for this. He was flooded with feelings of urgent need, thankful relief and deliverance from his wait combined with a frenzied compulsion for ecstasy. Loki’s own growing desire fed upon those overwhelming battery of feelings. He started moving in earnest bumping and grinding with each thrust he received.

This was what Tony wanted, what he craved. Then Loki started to actively move. For Tony, the last few months had felt like living in a colorless world. Now the emotions, the sensation of skin sliding against skin and the enthusiastic response made him feel like color was flooding back into him. He moved faster with Loki, keeping the friction tense and focused. He wasn’t going to last long tonight. He moved one hand down to grab Loki’s now rock-hard cock leaving the other arm wrapped above Loki’s head reaching for the headboard for support as he crashed into Loki from behind.

Loki grabbed the edge of the bed when he felt Anthony’s hand grab his demanding, bulging shaft and responded by rocking back in an opposing rhythm to Anthony’s unrestrained pounding. Tremors ran through his body as he circled in on his orgasm.

Tony’s couldn’t believe how deep he seemed to be going, pushed further with both of them bracing themselves for stronger, harder, more savage thrusts. His balls slammed forward sometimes even touching Loki’s for a quick caress as they both put hand anchored effort into each thwacking stroke.

It was frenzy, it was euphoric, it was the sparks that flew when metal abraded against metal, as they plummeted at neck breaking speed toward their release. Pummeling each other over and over again beating with bruising strength to reach that ultimate orgasmic rush.

When it came, they both gasped. First Tony, who pumped only twice more, before Loki joined him as they rode out the orgasm together crying each other’s names, clenching muscles, at the edge of what they could physically take while an emotional whirlwind lay waste to their overwhelmed mental link.

“God, I missed you. Mine! You are mine.” Tony marveled and squeezed Loki tightly from behind when he finally started to come down enough to speak still enjoying a very heady afterglow.

“I am never letting you go my love. You have used up all your chances to leave.” Loki replied holding Anthony’s arm tight against him and reached above to take the other hand. Feeling a sudden wave of exhaustion that had very successfully been delayed.

“Good, I’m glad of all that.” Tony replied and snuggled tiredly, closing his eyes.

They fell asleep almost immediately, still connected for a time.

Chapter End Notes

Another attempt at a sex scene. I hope you enjoyed it. I know it's not the traditional type, but if you've ever tried to 'just be connected' with your partner you probably understand.

Next chapter we find out what's happened the last few months.
I know you don't know what's coming but if you think of any loose ends you want to make sure I cover, please let me know. I think everything will be revealed but if there is something out there you haven't seen let me know. - Thanks

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
Story Time

Chapter Summary

Loki tell his story. Tony has a story too. Trouble is good for once and just helps them eat pizza.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They slept most the day after their failed attempt at ‘not’ having sex. It was late afternoon when they woke up again. Jarvis ordered five pizzas as they showered and had the bots change the sheets again.

They had finished the first pizza when Loki decided to tell his tale while sitting at the table. Fury had come up to listen in person while Phil, Steve and Bruce were listening from a distance.

Loki began. “I arrived in Somalia with the vaccine at the distribution point when I was attacked. I felt an injection penetrate my shoulder and two men grabbed me from behind. I saw at least two more from the front before I passed out. When next I awoke I was at the facility you found me at. The Hydra operatives had switched the drugs they had kept me knocked out with. The new drug immobilized me with my magic out of reach. It had a strange effect on me. My mind was now conscious most of the time and aware of what they said but could not do, say or see anything.”

“Sounds like it affected most of your brain. I tried to get through to you but it didn’t work. Either that or you were being an ass and not answering.” Tony ended sounding accusing.

“No, I could not hear you my little hemorrhoid. I was not able to access anything but my natural hearing and thought patterns.” Loki said shaking his head before continuing.

“Allspeak is a wonderful thing, in that it translates both words and most concepts, sometimes even slang if you know how to tweak it like I have. The translator used by the devils was not anywhere near as good. The Hydra people claimed I was an Æsir that had turned his back on his people and thus could be easily turned again. I was good with illusions and healing magic otherwise I was a dumb fighter with a blaster. They used my attack on New York as proof of my stupidity and lack of creative use of magic. After seeing what they did to Ms. Maximoff, I had created a block that protected some of mine and all of your magic from being drained through the link. I can remove it or open it as long as I am not under duress. I am a bit cautious. “

Tony snorted. “Cautious! You’re paranoid. But I’m learning it can be a good thing so it works.” Tony gave him a quick kiss.
Loki kissed him back, then continued. “The devils had taken one look at me and noticed I was enchanted and that I was much stronger in magic than Hydra realized. Somehow, they knew what the Æsir race was. They immediately realized I was not an Æsir but didn’t know what I was, just something the didn’t recognize. Unfortunately for the devils, it kept being translated that I was an untrustworthy wolf in sheep’s clothing and not like Thor. Hydra heard this and saw a quality that Hydra finds useful, as long as they have control of the leash, and they were sure they could control me. They felt they could convince me that I was better off aligned with them. I believe they have even more hubris than you.”

Fury made a comment. “Now that’s hard to believe.”

“Hey, I’m modest! I only speak the truth about being a genius. And I did win the heart of a prince, didn’t I?” Tony rebuffed.

Fury looked at Stark. “Fuck, Stark. Do you even listen to yourself?”

Loki rolled his eyes. “Anyway, for the first two weeks Strucker tried to gain control of me, talking to me when the drugs were starting to wear off. I never let on that I could hear them all the time so they had to make their attempts while I was starting to surface from the drug, before I was given another dose. The devils insisted that they keep me mostly drugged and drained of all the magic they could get to. This frustrated Strucker, so he changed to brainwashing techniques, hoping it might work while I was drugged. Hydra had heard rumors I could teleport and wanted more information on it. Strucker could not get large enough chunks of time to really do anything. Besides my mind has long been well protected with permanent magical defenses and it would never have worked for them.”

“Strucker sounds like a bit of an idiot if you ask me.” Tony mused.

Trouble had also wandered in and placed herself on the table in front of Loki. Loki of course gave her a piece of meat from his pizza.

Fury added. “Maybe some of those protections are what kept your ‘highn-ass’ awake.”

Loki huffed at Fury and growled. “The devils lost patience after a time and one day just attached the magical draining device to my spine. I had hoped that the enchantment core extended out that far and would blow them up but it does not. I did notice that I was building a resistance to the drug very slowly so I waited to show evidence of waking, faking the time the drug wore off a little more with each injection.

The devils had drained a huge amount of backup energy into another storage item. Now they finished filling it and then they hooked me up to open portals. They brought creatures from many different places in their dimension and even other universes. They seemed to think and talk in terms of destruction units that I kept feeling were much closer to your calorie units. They must feed off of chaos, death and destruction.”

Loki gave another sliver of meat to Trouble.

“Aren’t you supposed to be some sort of God of Chaos? I would think you’d fit right in.” Fury pointed out.

“I am the God of Chaos, Mischief and Fire. For the Djofullin Chaos is complete disorder, destruction and confusion. For me it is unorganized potential. Nearly anything can happen, disassembly or construction. It is the building blocks of creation, discovery and yes mischief.” Loki waved his hand and suddenly Fury was now a gerbil inside a gerbil ball with a very interested Trouble batting at it.
When she knocked it off the table Loki caught it and waved his hand as he threw it back to Fury’s chair where Fury turned back into himself. “That is both chaos and mischief. But since I’m not like the Djofullin you did not experience death or destruction. Now I would like to continue if you do not mind.”

Tony nodded as he continued to try to hold his snickering. Fury just folded his arms and leaned back, listening with a scowl.

“Over the next few weeks my system slowly built up a resistance to the drug. Hydra still was in charge of keeping me drugged and monitored my vital signs as I was no use to anyone dead. The various Djofullin were continuously fighting with Strucker, who never left, and other Hydra commanders, who came and went. The Djofullin, who always had at least one of them there, appeared to enjoy giving Hydra the impression that they were still in charge, yet not doing as they were commanded. One night I awoke and found myself with enough time and a minor amount of energy.”

He looked at Anthony. “I sent you the message and proceeded to shapechange into the galdcat. The Hydra guard had fallen asleep but screamed as I attacked him. Other guards ran in with Strucker, who had been getting ready to give me another injection. One of the Djofullin was awake nearby and was alerted causing him to run in but I was already changed by the time he arrived and had knocked the syringe to the floor. He promptly grabbed the collar, that had always been kept close, and put in on my neck and ran to the observation room yelling at the others to restrain me.”

Tony asked, “Why did they put it on your neck? What does it do?”

Loki laughed “It is a magical collar for pets. It keeps the pet very close to home or with the owner if around. It also gives the owner a fair number of parameters to help control the pet. It is impossible for the pet to remove the collar. The spikes are designed to hurt if the pet disobeys. They had hoped to control me enough to open the portals again. They didn’t use it to begin with because they were unsure of what effect it would have on my magic. Anyway, that particular animal is resistant to almost everything including the drugs they were using to keep me passed out.”

“So I bet you were a bad pet.” Tony laughed and tossed a piece of sausage at Trouble.

“Oh, I disobeyed a great deal.” Loki smirked. “I tore through Strucker and the Hydra agents in my room and went into the next very quickly. The devil seemed to be afraid. He ran and started yelling at me. You see, I failed to obey it. It was screaming obscenities at me and calling ME a devil who stole destruction points. It fled leaving me and the Illitplass Portal Device in my room and locked me in that area. I escaped an hour later, having clawed my way through a wall and crept around spying. I heard a devil talking on a phone saying it was time to get rid of Hydra but they needed someone to retrieve the device. Djofullin it appears cannot physically touch or own the Illitplass Portal Device after it leaves their world. Strucker had been the owner. They interact with it mentally as their hands pass right through it. The Djofullin had thought I might be made useful again since I had the collar on. Unfortunately, they discovered too late that while the facility was recognized as my home, the collar did not recognize them as my owner.”

“Who the hell did it think was your owner then?” Tony said with suspicion as Trouble meowed for more of the pizza meat and wandered over to look at Fury.

“Why you of course, my little hemorrhoid. Anyway, I tore the devil apart. I think that the galdcat may have actually killed it. I noticed you took the skull, the rest of the bones are still there. I separated the skull from the rest just in case it started to regenerate. It seemed to die with the most terrible, haunting and satisfying scream I believe I have ever heard. I did wait until he had drained most of the local Hydra agents before I attacked him. I was not expecting the place to be protected by
monsters or the collar to keep me from traveling more than a hundred feet from the place though.”

Fury, amazingly enough, had been keeping his mouth shut. He couldn’t help but let out a small quiet chuckle at that. “Hemorrhoids, that’s a good word for the two of you.” He had also been suckered into feeding Trouble the meat off the piece of pizza he was now eating. He received a very scathing look from Loki for that comment.

“Asshole” Tony muttered. Then questioned. “But you were further away than that when you killed Barney. I’d like to know how you killed that un-killable monster?”

Loki’s laugh was rich and evil. “Owner trumps home. You called and required your pet to save you.”

“I like the thought of my little Lokitty… coming when I call.” Tony waggled his eyebrows seductively and moved to put his feet into Loki’s groin, reconsidered, slid his chair closer and squeezed himself into Loki’s lap and proceeded to start making out with him in front of Fury and the video feeds.

Steve cleared his throat from across the visual call. “Can you two wait? I would like to get this meeting finished before it earns an ‘R’ rating.”

“Surprised you know what that is old man.” Tony said.

“I’m sure Stark would have no problems giving us the full ‘X’ rating.” Fury snorted.

“What’s an ‘X’ rating?” Steve asked looking behind him at an equally confused Bucky who had shown up to listen somewhere in there.

Tony opened his mouth to talk.

Bruce interrupted him first. “Can we do this later, please?”

Loki just grabbed another piece of pizza while Anthony moved back to his chair. “The ‘Barney’ monster required piercing magic to do damage. The cat form has such a unique reality that it removed the magic requirement. I just sliced and diced.”

“We need a few hundred of them on earth like yesterday.” Tony announced.

“No, they are rare and illegal to hunt or kill. They are also not only anti-magic and immune or resistant to most things but are luck banes.” Loki said with emphasis.

“Okay Santa Clause, gift me by telling me what is a luck bane?” Tony smirked.

“Ah, you don’t have any here on earth. They suck the luck out of those around them causing accidents and things to go wrong all over the place. Actually, luck banes are often very lucky themselves.” Loki laughed.

“Wow, I wish I could give one to Justin Hammer; he is so deserving.” Tony chuckled.

“From what I have heard, I think he has already suffered contact with one.” Loki said.

“Are you sure you two are not one of these luck banes.” Fury said muffled as Trouble was now blocking his mouth rubbing her body against it. Then she put her butt into his face and he squinted and sputtered a bit, backing away from her.

“Good job Trouble. So why did the collar work on you at all?” Tony asked curiously.
“Because it is mostly physical. It would work on a chair if it was attached keeping it from being stolen. I have no idea how it decided you were my master, I did not know until you showed up. My best guess is it somehow interacted with our enchantment flow. After that, the other devils tried to get to the portal item a few times. They sent minions that I easily dispatched.” Loki smiled showing a lot of sharp teeth and bit the pizza.

“Aw, now I’m picturing you killing small yellow finger shaped guys with arm and legs.” Tony teased.

Loki smiled and waved his hand and suddenly Tony resembled a small yellow engineer with glasses from a certain popular animated move. “I don’t know if they were Hydra or not but they did not look like you.”

Tony stood. “Jarvis take a picture front and back. Got it. Good. Now turn me back you evil supervillain, Gru, you!”

Loki laughed and turned Anthony back. “Now you tell me why only one pizza place delivers and they trade for strawberries?”

“We know this story.” Phil said and left the conversation. Steve and Bruce both cut their connections too.

Fury stood up and shook his head at Trouble and left. Trouble of course stayed and eyed the pizza again.

Tony sat back down and took a bite out of his pizza, swallowed it, set it down, and held out his hand to list things on his fingers. “Even before you went away I left a nuclear waste dump off Long Island. I destroyed part of the city with Doom. I lost the god even though prayer still worked. The monsters attacked New York. There’s lots of damage all over. The new un-killable ones keep coming back and I don’t always get to them before they damaged something. Quite a few businesses went under. Lots of scared people, I’ve been blamed for nearly everything. They started calling me ‘evil’. Tons of places are now boycotting me. Someone discovered the monsters don’t like the smell of strawberries. I started growing strawberries plants in mass for the world in greenhouses and on the tower balconies and arranged to move young berry plants from growers all over the world. I gave the plants to places that needed them more first, before the people of New York. The world started calling me the Strawberry King. Then I stopped sharing with people who continued to call me nasty things. So, I’m now Ironman the Evil Strawberry King. Just read the graffiti around the building, well maybe not all of it, some of it gets really nasty. I clean it off about once a month and it’s back the next day. Anyway, there are a few places out there who don’t hold what’s happened against me or don’t care and still deliver, and a few that I helped rebuild after Doom and I took out their original locations.” Tony grinned picking back up his slice of pizza.

“Evil Strawberry King? The mind boggles. Humans continually surprise me. You could be one of those old back and white creature features.” Loki finished the slice he was eating. “Where are the rest of your boy band stationed? You appear to be the only one in the tower other than Fury.” He picked up the next slice,

“Well Bruce is still with Jor working with the vaccine production. So you know, the death rate is down close to zero. We are now vaccinating places that managed to avoid the disease. The cool pool is huge because most people don’t need to pull from it anymore but they keep praying to help others. And since there are still places where it’s hard to get antibiotics, being able to bring down any fever is really helping. Even people who are just feeling crappy from allergies say they feel better when they’re cooler. I think it’s psychosomatic but hey if it helps why not.”
Loki laughed, his hand covering his mouth full of pizza. He swallowed and said, “You know Hulk is a magical creature and could have been killing your un-killable monsters.”

“Wouldn’t they spread more disease?” Tony asked.

“No. that was only the first ones. I heard the Djofullin talking about them. They were not brought in but created.” Loki explained.

“Man, I told Bruce he should take his green ballet dance partner out for a spin. Wait, if it just takes magic to kill them why doesn’t my superheated extremis enhanced blasters do any damage?” Tony complained and looked at Loki instead of the pizza box.

Loki tilted his head a bit in thought. “I know magical weapons would work. Ah, I bet you use magic to make them hotter rather than to penetrate or make them magical themselves.”

Anthony’s hand stilled halfway to the box and jaw dropped open. “Yeah….Damn.”

“And that is why I am the teacher and you are the apprentice.” Loki smirked back at him.

“Now where are the rest?” He reached and took yet another slice of pizza and opened one more box with a ‘meatlovers’ in it. He put three pieces on a plate for Trouble to eat the toppings off of.

“Scattered all over the world spending their time chasing creatures that I should’ve been killing.” Tony groaned.

“Do not beat yourself. I do think rescuing me was very productive. We are going to have to start enchanting weapons darling, since Asgard is probably still at war and not willing to share theirs.” He shoved the rest of the slice into his mouth and chewed. Loki leaned over smiled and nudged Tony with his shoulder. “But first I need some more sleep. The cat form really flushes my magic completely and I’ve been in it for three months.”

“I’ve missed you, do you maybe have energy for a bit of fun first?” Tony tried his best to create a seductive big puppy dog eyes look.

Loki finished his pizza and got up. “If I must. The sacrifices a sorcerer is required to make for some sleep.” Loki said while he walked toward the bedroom with a gait that shouted come and get me and was probably illegal in several countries.

Tony’s eyes spaced out. He glued a small wicked grin on his face as he watched Loki walk until he was down the hall out of sight. He then dashed to the bedroom, past Loki and was stripped stark naked first and enthusiastically helped Loki match him.

Chapter End Notes

I know you don’t know what’s coming but if you think of any loose ends you want to make sure I cover, please let me know. I think everything will be revealed but if there is something out there you haven’t seen let me know. - Thanks

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from.
Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
The Trouble with the Djofullin

Chapter Summary

Magic to fight the monsters is made. The group tries to figure out how to find the Djofullin. Thor shows up to help fight.

Chapter Notes

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The portals had dumped monsters around the world. Opening, closing and reappearing elsewhere for as long as Loki had been attached to the wires and not in cat form. Australia was lucky in that it only had a couple dozen of the un-killable kind. Japan, Madagascar, Greenland and Iceland had missed the un-killable kind. Great Britain had managed to have only four of the un-killable kind one of which actually liked to swim and went between it and Ireland. Fortunately most of the monsters didn’t really like to swim making it easy to sometimes herd them into peninsulas until they would break out or finally decide to forge the water barriers.

Now that they had the Illitplass Portal Device the fear of a new round of monsters subsided. Loki actually spent the first two days destroying the device before he and Stark started building magical weapons.

Loki showed both Tony and Wanda how to add magical penetration on their blasts.

Loki already had a few magical knives. He loaned a couple to Natasha, agreeing to make her some of her own later on. Clint already had a bow enchanted for speed, enhancing it to give the arrows magical penetration was faster than making a new one for him.

Loki decided that Midgard failed at teaching warriors the art of weaponry. So rather than making traditional weapons such as swords, axes or hammers, he made a set of ten brass knuckles.

Steve got the first pair of brass knuckles followed by Bucky, Sam, Natasha, Clint, Pietro, Rhodey, Phil and because Tony insisted Pepper. The last pair was somehow lost in the maze of Trouble’s tunnels. Attempts to retrieve them ended up with broken B&C zappers so they let her have them.

Vibrannium was very difficult to enchant. Once Tony got the hang of magical penetration he figured out how to enchant magic enhancing paint which he put on Steve’s shield. It would need regular touch-ups but that had to be done anyway.

Bucky’s arm was not going to be enchanted. He really didn’t trust magic that much and no one blamed him.
Magical bullets were suggested because more people could use them. Tony didn’t like it. Tony really didn’t want to hand out weapons at all. He had stopped that years ago and wasn’t about to start it up again. On the other hand, waiting for the Avengers to kill the monsters all themselves, delayed having them gone and left civilians at risk a lot longer.

The argument was long, heated and mostly boring. Loki and Clint ended up in a contest, seeing who could distract them the longest and most often. Jarvis put a scoreboard on their tablet screens. Clint distracted them way more often but Loki’s distractions lasted longer so he won the total minutes distracting. The time spent squabbling was the real time waster with Tony having to buy both lunch and dinner.

Trouble eventually brought it to a close when she figured out she was missing something namely; being fed. She started dragging various things from people’s rooms to the table, including three of Natasha’s bras, which to Clint and Loki’s amazement were ignored. She tried several more thing with no effect. Trouble finally brought it to an end by bringing Tony’s rubber vibrator which was not ignored and now had teeth marks in it. Everyone looking in horror thinking it was a truly vile thing to see, let alone be left out where the cat could get it. They compromised out of disgust.

The compromise was that Rhodey provided grenades that Loki would cast day long spells on for each team to use which still wasted a great deal of time. There were three teams led by Steve, Rhodey and Tony. Steve’s team had Bucky, Wanda, Pietro and a unit of soldiers. Rhodey’s team had Natasha, Clint, Sam and a unit of soldiers. Tony’s team had only Bruce and Loki with no soldiers and Jarvis flying the plane because Loki wasn’t interested in his magic being filmed, observed or studied.

Fights took work and the monsters were spread out. These creatures had a lot of survival and stamina and often had some sort of regeneration. Killing one might take as long as four hours. The grenades proved useless more often bouncing off without penetration only getting them in a mouth did any good. Loki experimented with a few bullets for Bucky only to discover that they really didn’t work very well either. “Well that was a wasted argument.” Clint was quick to point out.

Loki ended up enchanting real swords for Rhodey, Bucky, Sam and Pietro. Unfortunately, swords took two days each to enchant and could not be made as a single set like the brass knuckles. He could make a set of knives but they found swords easier to wield. The various militaries weren’t very effective even up close to the monsters. They were more like cannon-fodder.

At eighteen days without a break they were all ready to drop. The only sleep they got was in the air traveling from place to place, same for meals. They felt they were never going to finish, having made only a small dent in the monsters. Exhausted, they were making mistakes and taking longer and had even missed a second target in an area only to have to go back. Only Loki was not tired as he had spent decades engaged in Thor’s never-ending campaigns designed for Æsir stamina.

The Avenger’s had regrouped for a two-day break at the tower and to discuss their plan of attack.

No one had good intel on the last two devils’ locations either, which had everyone worried. Phil coordinated as best he could but they seemed to move around very fast. It was sometimes hard to tell when internet pictures were actually new and real or old or even doctored.

After finding Loki, Fury had changed his focus while looking at data. He was a spy and knew how to look for patterns. He stayed out of the monster fighting arguments. ‘It is not my job anymore’ he claimed.
“How do we start to find the devils? They seem to move so much.” Sam was asking.

“Can we use the Portal Device to find them?” Bruce suggested.

“That might work.” Clint smiled hopefully.

Loki shook his head. “I suppose it might have if I had not destroyed it. I was far too concerned about it being stolen or that they might call on others to come and help them from Illitplass.”

“How do you know that it didn’t return before you destroyed it?” Steve questioned.

“There are two reasons, one is that the item was with me and I would have noticed if it got activated and disturbed where I put it.” Loki answered.

Tony laughed. “Yeah, he had it hidden under months’ worth of his cat shit. I’m still working on getting the smell out of my suit arm from retrieving it.”

“Tony, I really did not need to know that.” Colonel Rhodes exclaimed from his seat.

“Rhodey, at least I didn’t tell you how we celebrated his return. Magic is a really miraculous thing for all sorts of stuff including refractory……” Tony started eyes starting to dream over.

“Stark, the rest of us don’t want to hear it either!” Clint shouted.

“What’s the second reason?” Steve asked.

“Loki could you transport it here from my lab.” Tony’s smile was sneaky warning.

Appearing on the table was a large jar containing the partially decomposed head in it.

“Send it back, Send it back.” Sam shouted back laughing while showing a grimace.

“Wait a minute. Leave that mother fucker here. I want to take a good look at it.” Fury said and pulled the jar towards him. No one seemed to be up to arguing with the former leader of SHIELD.

Bucky laughed saying to Stark. “Man, you may look like him but you are nothing like your old man.”

“Why thank you Barnes. I think that’s the best compliment I’ve got from you yet, but keep trying your list isn’t very long.” Tony smirked.

“Can we get back on topic?” Coulson sighed.

“What do you think the devils might be trying to do now Loki?” Natasha asked.

“Well they need some support. I wasn’t secured and they were forced to take out Hydra for energy to keep their plans going. I would be guessing but I think they need to find some new backers, or at least people stupid enough to help them. Plus, they seem to require some sort of life force for energy.” Loki answered.

“After everything that’s happened, no one is going to trust these guys. One look and they’ll be off screaming.” Clint made a face as he held up a picture of a devil.

“Do you think they’ll try to take control of the monsters?” Steve asked.
“Man, we need help with the monsters too. It’s going to take forever for us to kill every one of them, when there are so many and spread out so far. The pace is killing us. We need help there too.” Sam stated the obvious.

“No, I think they will leave the monsters alone. I don’t imagine they want to get caught and trying to organize the creatures would bring them out into the open.” Loki volunteered.

“How would you go about finding suckers to exploit then?” Clint asked and shot a piece of paper at Trouble.

Tony had been surfing on his tablet while Trouble was rubbing up against him. She turned and hissed at Clint.

Natasha wacked Clint’s arm with the back of her hand. “Clint, can’t you be nice. She hasn’t bothered you in months.”

“Sorry, I’ve been throwing stuff at the rest of you too. You just didn’t notice, except for Loki’s who has something up to stop me.” He claimed.

“I noticed.” Both Natasha and Fury said at once.

“I thought I felt something hit me earlier.” Sam exclaimed.

Phil looked cross. “Clint that is not helping. We need to find some solutions, not reasons to argue.”

Fury who had stopped glaring at the head suggested. “I’ve noticed accidents, mass murders and suicides over the last couple months that have more often than not been skimmed over by the news services. They seem to happen every couple of days. Usually involving groups of people who are unlikely to be missed or in places where it can easily be explained by an accident like a fire. They are happening all over the world and don’t have any obvious pattern yet. It might even be coincidence except when you gather the data, the frequency of incidences has shot up, starting when the portals closed.”

“Good job noticing that. Is there any more?” Phil asked Fury.

“I asked Jarvis to start checking any videos or photos. Most of them are happening where there isn’t video available. From those that do, we haven’t found any facial recognitions that match. We have found that some of the accidents had articles warning they might be deathtraps and why. We can start looking for more places like that but it’s a long list and we still have the problem if they are part of this.”

Tony was looking at his tablet. “Hey, I just remembered Darcy gave me new data. I looked it over before and saw they got energy whenever someone dies from the monsters too, not just the disease. The most recent had some higher spikes that I couldn’t account for. Jarvis can you check Nicky’s deaths and see if you can correlate it?”

“Certainly, Sir.” Jarvis replied. “There is a definite correlation between the unidentified spikes and Mr. Fury’s data.”

“Is there any way you might figure this out with magic Loki?” Steve wondered.

“Hunting people with magic is very time consuming and often yields no results. The process is not unlike what Jarvis is already doing. I cannot send something to look across people’s brains to see if they have seen the devils. Even searching for someone you know well can be a challenge unless you have some sort of preset link.” Loki explained.
Tony looked thoughtful for a moment. “Those devils are receiving that energy. I bet we could figure out how to follow it back.”

“Yes, I think that should work. Well done Darcy.” Loki exclaimed.

“Darcy? You mean Tony, my name is To-ny. Well done To-ny or even Anthony from you.” Then he looked at everyone else. “He’s the only one allowed to call me that though.”

“No, Darcy discovered the figures and I said if it proved useful she would get the credit she deserves.” Loki said looking at Tony like he was scolding him.

“But I’m gonna do most of the work.” Tony whined.

Loki smiled. “Then you shall get to share it.” He kissed Tony. “But I’m putting her name first.” And pulled away laughing.

Tony growled folding his arms, but Loki pulled him over to him and put his arms around him.

“Well I believe we have a plan for now. We can talk about shifting teams after dinner.” Coulson announced.

Trouble was now in the middle of the table and just rolled over on her back and looked at Coulson upside down. Everyone else just groaned.

They had just started eating pizza that Loki had teleported to Chicago to get, being tired of what was actually two pizza places that delivered to Tony in New York. When they heard thunder outside.

Low and behold the Bifrost opened up on their landing pad and Thor stepped out with a dozen guards. Jarvis quickly opened the door and let Thor enter along with four guards.

“Greeting friends, brother. The Bifrost is finished. It was done much earlier than expected thanks to the Man of Iron!” Thor announced.

Most of the Avenger’s hadn’t seen Thor since he’d left after the Chitauri invasion and stood heading over to greet him.

“See. He gives me credit.” Tony said to Loki under his breath still sitting next to Loki.

“Have some pizza.” Steve said as they came back to sit down. “What brings you to Earth? And congratulations are due, your majesty now, I understand.”

“Yes, I am currently sharing the throne with Father. I came because the war over. Father is dealing with the clean-up and of course the Bifrost works again. I was glad to hear Heimdall say they found my brother and could not stay away a moment longer.” Thor looked at Loki excitedly.

Who smiled back and rolled his eyes. “Correct me if I am wrong. The war is over and you were bored. You heard we had monsters that needed fighting and are fishing for an invite.”

Thor laughed again. “You know me too well brother. How could I resist? Monsters I have not yet seen, those that are reputed to be non-killable requiring magic to slay. Please say you will allow me to bring my small band of warriors to help claim some of the glory.”

Tony was in shock. “How long has the Bifrost been up? When did the war end? You’re telling me you didn’t come back on Slepnir to look for Loki but because you’re bored and are looking for a
fight? Unbelievable.”

“The war ended over a month ago. The Bifrost was finished earlier today and reopened this afternoon. Loki can take care of himself, and he had you, I was not worried. But Heimdall said you were still having problems with the Djofullin and the monsters they brought.” Thor said still standing. Everyone else had taken a seat to continue eating their pizza.

Tony looked cross. “Don’t think a compliment is going to get you out of that one big guy.” Trouble had walked up to Thor and was batting at Mjolnir at his belt.

Loki put his hand on Tony and said. “He is right I had you and am fine. But my brother is right we could use his help.”

Just then Clint said. “Hey, you’re calling him brother again. What happened to ‘You are not my brother!’?”

“We found out we are really brothers.” Thor grinned.

“I’d like to hear the story behind that.” Clint exclaimed.

“Well you see….” Tony started.

“If you continue to talk about that you will get to find out who has sharper claws myself or Trouble tonight.” Loki cut in.

Suddenly there was a loud bang. Trouble’s claw had accidently sliced through the leather strap holding Mjolnir to Thor’s belt causing it to drop.

“Aye, I would like to see that contest, but from a safe distance.” Thor answered backing away very quickly from Trouble who was marking the Hammer as hers. While his guards all had wide eyes having recognized Trouble from her visits to Asgard and proceeded to made comments between themselves about “That’s the she-demon.” while taking a step back. Even those outside had noticed her. Well, she was the biggest threat to Thor that they saw.

“Finally, someone who believes me. Tell me you can see that she is not just a normal cat.” Clint exclaimed. Clint was met with heads shaking negatively.

Tony had zipped his mouth shut and sat back but couldn’t hold his tongue. Saying to Loki. “I think it’s your turn to clip her claws.”

“I am sorry. Even my mother Queen Frigga says she is likely a normal cat. If it helps many do not believe her. Of course I should have replaced the strap it was already fraying.” Thor responded sadly.

“Well, if the Avengers are going to have a cat, at least she’s a bad-ass cat.” Sam laughed as did several others.

They were glad to have Thor help. Tony happily noted that Snif and the sickly three were not amongst those invited to earth to ‘Bask in the glory’.

While Tony worked they talked once again about the Djofullin.

“What will we be up against? Do you know anything about how the Devils fight Loki?” Steve asked
having gathered them to talk about it at a table.

“They are spell casters but they are quite different than myself. They have a limited set of powers or spells to choose from. Others have noted their powers must have some sort of guidelines or rules but as Anthony would say the Laws of Physics or Laws of Magic are different in their dimension. They are known to use magical items with ease and I read that long ceremonies are required to create creatures.” Loki answered.

“Is there anything about what these abilities or spells might be? They have wings. Do we even know if they can fly with them?” Sam said looking at a picture of them.

“They have been observed flying elsewhere in the universe but we have no reports of it here. I would assume they can. They have a beam weapon that they use quite often. The description is not unlike Anthony’s repulsors or a Star Wars light saber. The energy is emitted from their hands. After that the next most commonly mentioned is a fear effect or horrific appearance illusion. I don’t know which. They always seem to use it and only once per individual.” Loki pulled a book out from some unknown location and opened it up.

“What else does it say?” Bucky, who was sitting next to Loki, leaned over only to discover that it wasn’t in a language he even recognized.

“They are known to have some sort of controlling power or even a set of powers that can affect one’s mind or body. The book mentions acid, or perhaps poison as an attack. It takes time for them to summon or create anything else to help them fight, though they can keep summoned creatures around temporarily. Whether it is hours, days or longer is unclear.”

“So they can make us do shit we don’t want to, like your staff did?” Clint had a look of horror on his face when he said that.

“It is not like the staff. It does not always work and one is able to break or bend the control with a bit of time. There is talk of it just immobilizing you or weakening you. The only other thing I see is that they get very hard to eliminate once they have been on a world for a while.” Loki added.

Natasha said. “Can you read what it says to us?”

Loki looked thoughtful but shook his head. “This book is written in a language that is from elsewhere in the universe. I can paraphrase it at best.”

“Then do so.” Natasha insisted.

“If you insist.” Loki did so. It was long and boring and made little sense. Most of it was guesses that contradicted themselves. By the time he finished about thirty minutes later everyone agreed it had been a waste of time. Loki had given them the real facts first.

“These creatures eventually leave, most often after having destroyed the local civilization. Those that were successfully chased off happen early on after their arrival. They are sent back quite easily when attacked after the portal device is destroyed. As far as I can tell I may be the first to actually kill one.” Loki added.

“Are you going to be in that form when we attack them?” Rhodey asked from across the table.

“Not if I can avoid it. I mentioned they were luck banes? I would suck the luck out of all of you. When Anthony found me, he was nearly killed by one of the un-killable monsters. That might have been my fault. I do not want to risk it. Although an illusion might be worth a try.” Loki explained thoughtfully. He was really glad nothing worse had happened that day.
It didn’t take long for Tony to build something. It wasn’t in any way a standard detection. He had to tap into the energy flow to follow it. Unfortunately it tried to flow into him. He was forced to create an odd semi-magical membrane allowing him to watch the energy flow. He was sure it would take a spike to be able to follow it to the devils.

Finally, he incorporated it into one of his suits because long distant accuracy would get them close but not get them to their target. He was impressed that Jane had come up with something so obscure to detect this energy.

Next was the hardest part. Waiting for deaths to occur and produce a spike so that they could follow the energy. The disease was killing hardly anyone anymore and the monsters numbers were dwindling thanks to Thor and his Æsir company of fighters who were using the Bifrost to quickly go from monster to monster. Based on Fury’s theory they had to wait for a mass death to happen.

Once he finished the detection device, Thor showed up wanting to help, giving his group of Æsir time to rest.

Chapter End Notes

Only two chapters left. The next one is the fight and it’s going to be a long chapter. I'll be posting it Friday and the last chapter will go out next Monday. I am leaving for a vacation to Japan on August 3rd. (Not that important to you readers but I'm so excited right now!)

I know you don't know what's coming but if you think of any loose ends you want to make sure I cover, please let me know. I think everything will be revealed but if there is something out there you haven't seen let me know. - Thanks

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ♥

B&C zappers - bug & Clint zappers

Illiplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
Trouble Goes to Fight!

Chapter Summary

Last chapter Tony figured out to trace the energy going to the Djofullin. Now they head out to battle the Devils where they are hiding.

Chapter Notes

This is a long chapter, I just didn't want to split it. Hope you like it.

I want to thank my husband for beta help.

I do not own any of Marvel and take no profit from this story. But I do thank them for their wonderful characters and the actors that made them come to life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Once the Avengers traced the energy, they used the Bifrost to get to the Djofullin location, traveling from the tower to a desert in the Middle East. The area had some mountain or hill like rock outcroppings nearby in several directions.

“Meow.”

“May the Norns preserve us! The she-beast has decided to join our fight.” Thor jumped back upon seeing Trouble.

“Trouble, how could you have come with us? Do you have any idea how dangerous this is going to be?” Loki moved to get Trouble only to have her take off across the desert chasing what looked to be a very surprised desert rodent.

“Well she’s going the right direction, according to my meters.” Tony said. He was sure he would be getting a talking too about not making sure Trouble was safe before they left. ‘Shouldn’t Loki be responsible for that too?’ He thought hoping that she really wouldn’t get hurt.

They all started to follow Trouble, who was heading toward a mountain of sand. It butting up against a hill sized rock outcropping. She seemed to be able to scamper across the sand quickly because she was lighter. The others had to work hard to walk. Their feet kept sinking into the sand with each step.

“Pietro, run up and catch her.” Loki ordered. How could Trouble have jumped on the Bifrost? She clearly had no sense of safety. How was he ever going to teach her? How does one teach a cat?

Pietro ran off only to return a few moments later talking hesitantly. “Uh, I remembered that she really doesn’t know me very well. I have never been introduced. I saw what she did to Thor’s leather strap. I do not think I’m the one that should go after her.”

“Oh, for crying out loud she’s just a cat.” Tony exclaimed and started his thrusters to fly after her.
Well at least flying was easier than walking in sand.

She had quite a lead by then. Loki of course had not given up the thought of sending her back home once he caught her. He was in the lead with the others following, walking across the sand.

Sam, Rhodey and Thor soon followed suit, the Ironman suit that is. The damn loose sand really was hard to run on.

“As strange as this may sound, she seems to be taking us to where we need to go.” Stark said. At least she wasn’t leading them away from their quarry.

“I don’t know what kind of critter she was chasing, I barely saw it. How does she know where she’s going? Do cats have good vision or something?” Sam asked from the air.

“Actually cats have great night vision but poor distance vision especially during the day.” Natasha informed them.

Jarvis joined the conversation via the coms. “Perhaps Miss Trouble is smelling them. She was very disturbed at Master Loki’s smell when he returned from being held by them. The other more likely option was that she was just following the creature to where it bolted to. Her instinct is to keep chasing when something runs.”

Trouble stopped at an opening to what looked like a mining tunnel in the sand. She turned around and meowed back at Ironman who was fast approaching before entering.

The sun was bright and the cave was dark. Tony landed and stopped despite knowing his suit would automatically adjust to the light. It was a cave. Not just that but a cave in the bloody Middle East. There were even support rocks around the edge. He found himself reluctant to enter. Damn it, he found himself fighting an approaching panic attack. Ten Rings again, Yinson dying, waterboarding, waking up with the reactor in this chest ran through his thoughts. He started breathing faster.

“Anthony why didn’t you grab her?” Loki yelled and teleported the rest of the distance to the man who stood still. Tony finally reached for Loki both physically and through the link. “Oh.” Loki answered and grabbed Tony in a hug, who was leaning towards him, only to feel stupid because there was no way Anthony would feel his hands through the suit.

Sam, Rhodey and Thor landed next to Pietro who was once again at the entrance. They noticed Stark stop and waited for the others.

“Anthony, I am here, you are going to be fine. Breathe with me my love. Feel me through our bond.” He growled internally at the cat for being so inquisitive. One day they would have to teach her some discipline. They definitely spoiled her.

Natasha arrived next followed closely by Steve, Bucky, and Clint.

“Why have you not gone after Trouble?” Loki was shouting at the others, as he noticed that everyone was waiting on them as he reassured Anthony.

“We should keep together for now. I’m sure she’ll be safe. She seems to be gifted in staying alive.” Steve said with confidence as Bruce, and Wanda arrived.

“Is everything alright? Is Tony okay?” Clint asked noticing Ironman leaning over against Loki.

Rhodey looked over at Stark. “Oh shit, this place looks just like Afghanistan. Tony you’re not alone. You can stay outside if you need to.”
“Panic attack.” Both Bruce and Natasha chimed in.

Loki thought about Trouble. She was going to have to wait and hopefully stay hidden and safe.

Tony was now breathing with Loki and starting to feel better. Loki was there, his friends and allies were with him. He could do this. He smiled to no one in general. “I’m fine I just needed a few seconds. Let’s go.”

They entered the downward sloping shaft. It didn’t look very stable. Wood, wire and plastic held dirt, rock and sand from collapsing on down upon them. They moved cautiously, not trusting the tunnel, expecting it to collapse.

“Sure is dark in here. This would be a place to find the boogyman hiding behind a corner.” Sam said looking around as he walked.

“Who is this boogyman? Is he some great villain to battle?” Thor asked hopefully.

There was a turn and a rough steep slope down that opened into an area that had an ancient stone roof with many pillars holding it up.

“No, it’s the monster that hides underneath your children’s bed at night. You tell them about it to scare them into staying in bed. It’s not a real thing.” Sam answered sliding as little as he started the descent down the slope with the others.

At the bottom it opened up to a covered area that was entrance of some ancient stone palace or temple. The roof was about twenty feet above them and covered an area about twenty five by fifty. This roof was held up by pillars, with an opening in the center leading into the structure.

Loki growled. “Yes, we have something like that too, but they are real and I am one of them.” He had not been happy that Anthony had put up a picture of him in frost giant form. Now he felt the mocking in his head again and he walked closer to Ironman.

“Brother, we have sent two emissaries to try to negotiate with them. We are making progress.” Thor said sadly.

“That is not important right now. Does anyone see Trouble?” Loki was trying to see ahead but was not yet willing to leave Anthony. He needed to focus on Trouble, Anthony and the devils not frost giants. Anthony was right someday he would need to deal with his frost giant issues.

Trouble was nowhere to be seen.

“It’ll be Okay, Lokes, they don’t know about them here. You’re too pretty to be considered a monster. Beside we’ll probably never see a real frost giant.” Tony sent warmth down the link. It showed he was feeling better. Thinking about Loki helped get his mind off the cave. It helped that there was archeological ruins ahead instead of old cave rooms.

Only a moment later coming out of the doorway were four very tall blue creatures with tribal marking on them.

Loki went rigid with a gasp. The others stopped.

“What are they?” Wanda said raising her hands to prepare something.

“On the other hand I could be wrong.” Tony said slightly shocked.
Thor said “Frost giants. How did they get to earth?” He looked at Loki. “I think we fight them.”

Loki spit out frustrated. “Norn’s to Hel and back. You imbecile how are you a king? You just said you have been negotiating with them and now you want to attack? We are at peace right now. No, we must explain that we are not after them.” Just what he needed. It was bad enough he was one. One that, his just out of a PTSD attack lover, had been posted on the internet. Thor was still a total ass. Today was not his day.

“Aren’t frost giants supposed to be the mortal enemies of the Æsir? The devils must have suspected brought them here because of that.” Natasha speculated.

The frost giants were lined up blocking the entrance, looking menacing and guarding the door. Loki took a few deep breaths to control his anger.

“Man they’re tall.” Rhodey whistled.

Bucky looked them over. “Do you get taller when you change?” He said to Loki.

“He is a runt.” Thor answered Bucky and then to the frost giants announced loudly. “We are not here to harm you brethren. You have been tricked into working for evil beings from a strange dimension.” He was trying to negotiate at least.

They laughed and said haughtily. “Go away we don’t listen to an Æsir scum.”

“Maybe if you changed you could talk to them peacefully.” Steve suggested quietly.

Loki gritted his teeth. First the insult about being a runt and now this. He knew Steve was right. He might never like the shape he was born with but he could change and was skilled at languages and could speak to them without using Allspeak. One of the things about Jotnar was that they could tell when the Æsir used Allspeak. They would definitely respond better in their own language. He had to try.

Tony felt a pull on the link from Loki for support. He watched as his lover slowly turned blue with tribal marking. The frost giants looked confused and upset as he did this.

Loki started to talk to them. They didn’t talk back and were looking at each other. Loki continued to try to engage them in their own language. He even pointed at his markings and stood taller trying to get a conversation going.

“Why aren’t they responding? This is getting boring.” Pietro asked.

The frost giants looked at each other and finally one said. “Talk to us so all can hear monster.”

Loki tried saying one more thing. His eyes went wide and he changed back. Now talking in Allspeak. “These are no frost giants. They are creatures created to frighten us. Attack.” Loki announced.

They started to attack and Thor roared. “Leave these to me. You go ahead. The day I cannot take out four measly frost giants, let alone fake ones will never occur.” And Mjolnir flew while Thor ran.

“Got it. I’ll run ahead to check it out.” Pietro said and was gone.

The rest ran after Pietro into what appeared to be the main corridor. Steve yelled after him. “Wait, we don’t want to split up.” But it was too late, he was gone, so they slowed down. “Thor, try not to do to much damage. This ancient building.” Steve called to Thor over the coms.
The corridor was two stories tall and there were many small opening to the sides but they were all empty or contained relics from long ago. The walls had beautiful carvings and a small side ramp went up to a second floor with more openings visible from the corridor.

“Look for Trouble. She must be hiding someplace.” Loki said fearfully, forcing himself to forget he had appeared to everyone as a frost giant.

“Frost giants probably took one look and stepped back to let her through.” Clint mumbled loud enough for the coms to pick up.

“Hey, you vulture. Don’t go pickin’ on our cat.” Tony said flying up to look into rooms on the second floor with Rhodey and Sam.

Rhodey said. “There is just lots of dust and old stuff up here, and maybe some bat guano. There’s a couple of small rodent tracks but none are from something the size of a cat.”

“Some of this might be worth a lot. The place looks like it’s never been looted.” Sam added.

“Same in the rooms down here. I don’t see any cat tracks either and the dust is thick. I see more bat shit, we should watch out for bats” Bucky said looking in to a lower room.

“I agree. The condition of this stuff is beautiful. It’s most likely Babylonian or Assyrian. We really need to try not to do too much damage.” Bruce observed.

“Says the one who usually does the most damage, big guy.” Clint snarked.

“I wish my brother would return. He should be back by now.” Wanda commented looking ahead as expecting to see him.

“The center has had a lot of traffic so it’s hard to tell but I think I see some cat tracks moving forward in the bat dropping.” Steve said.

“If so, Miss Trouble is still moving toward where the energy is going.” Jarvis said since Tony wasn’t paying attention to his meters.

“Speaking of bat shit. How’s Ironman doing?” Clint laughed at own joke.

Tony landed behind Clint and said in a deep gravelly voice. “Hey, I’m Batman.”


“Who’s the billionaire, genius, philanthropist, play…former playboy who has expensive toys in his basement?” Stark shot back.

“Batman doesn’t wear Red and gold.” Clint sneered.

“And you birdbrain can be Robin, my lesser sidekick. Not Dick Grayson though. He’s too cool for you.” Tony chuckled.

“Fuck you Stark. If I’m Robin I get to pick and Grayson it is. Nightwing is way cooler than Batman any day.” Clint shot back.

“Shhh, there’s a large chamber ahead.” Natasha whispered.

They crept ahead. Inside the opening were the two Djofullin or Devils on opposite sides near the front of the room. Pietro was in a heap on the floor between them passed out. They looked like they
were draining him. There were only three openings into the chamber. The one they had entered in
the back and two near the front leading to the right and left. The Djofullin had failed to notice
Trouble who was standing at the opening on the right.

The group charged in and the Djofullin turned and were suddenly the most horrible creatures they
had ever seen. They all momentarily stopped to gasp at the sight.

“Oh god, did they just do a Scarecrow on us?” Sam said.

Steve, Bucky and Natasha quickly recovered and seemed to be mostly immune to the fear effect and
moved forward slowly.

Rhodey and Sam were clearly leaning on their military training to grit through it, drifting slowly in a
forward.

“It’s a psychological illusion.” Loki said. “You have to overcome it.” And he too moved forward
slowly.

“That is the Scarecrow effect.” Rhodey added.

Bruce just became the Hulk. He was annoyed and started walking forward toward the nasty ugly
monsters. Trouble was in danger after all.

“These jokers aren’t close to the Scarecrow. After you.” Stark said to Clint, having stopped, turned
his head away from them and backing up.

“Oh no. Did you see the rotting stuff hanging between their legs? That’s just gross man.” Clint
answered back.

“I think I’ll stay back here for a few moments.” Wanda said covering her eyes.

“I remember Batman and the Joker, even the Scarecrow from comics before the US got into the war.
You remember them don’t you Stevie?” Bucky said.

“Sort of, it was more your thing. I remember more from what these guys have shown me since. I
really liked the sixties show and the Joker from that.” Steve quipped and took another step forward.

Both devils threw a spell. The first filled an area that spanned the room from side to side. Passing
through it was like moving through jelly. The second was a cloud above the first spell that caught
Rhodey and Sam who were flying forward. Tony narrowly avoided it due to his backward
movement from being startled by the fear. That fear was still running down his spine.

“Trouble is over there. We need to rescue her.” Loki changed his course and headed in her direction.

Natasha was assessing the situation looking for a quick way through. Trouble was just standing front
of a side corridor looking at her. “I see Trouble, I’ll go after her Loki. I think you boys can handle
this.” She gave a half smile as she teased them. She, of course, had overcome the fear.

“That camp! I agree Cesar Romero was good but Nicholson was the best.” Tony said still not
moving forward.

“I’ll go if you go or is the Batman afraid? Besides Heath Ledger was a much better Joker. I could
follow Nat.” Clint said looking at Tony.

“Robin, she can handle Trouble. Damn it, I hate fear. Why am I so damn affected when those goody
two shoes aren’t?” Tony scrunched up his face behind his mask.

“Why don’t you go after my brother instead of bickering? You claim to be big Avengers, don’t you want to be like your Batman and Robin?” Wanda complained but still didn’t move.

“The effect is more mental than physical my little hemorrhoid. You have no military training to protect you.” Loki explained once again moving toward the devils.

Tony smiled and finally moved. “More brain than brawn. That’s me. And no way was Ledger better than Nicholson. He was epic. Come on my birdlike sidekick.”

“I’ll show you the power of Nightwing! If you can do it so can I. Besides I do have SHIELD training.” Clint said and also made himself to move toward the Djofullin. “And Ledger was the best crazy by far.”

Hulk had forced himself through the gel area first and was immediately attacked by a swarm of small flying creatures that were squirrel sized, a cross between a bee and a mosquito. They were stinging from both ends. Hulk immediately stopped and started pulling them off him and throwing them on the floor to stomp on. It effectively stopped him.

Rhodey yelled. “This cloud is corrosive Tony. It’s damaging my suit.” As he tried to fly out but ended up diving several feet into the ground as the repulsors failed to work properly.”

Ironman who had finally started to enter the cloud to go over the gel jumped back. “Damage Jarvis. Rhodey you were just trying too hard to be Harvey Dent.”

Jarvis said. “Sir, the only damage is on the membrane on the new sensor to detect the energy flow. Since you have been busy I have determined that the Djofullin are not where the energy is going but rather it is up ahead to the right very likely through the passage that Miss Trouble and Ms. Romanoff went down. Colonel Rhodes has been grounded and his repulsors will not be aiming as expected.”

“I am not Harvey Dent Tony. I’m not Two Faced, I’d never betray you. Thanks, Jarvis for the report.” Rhodey answered back.


Sam had dropped down out of the corrosive cloud and dived through the last couple feet of gel toward the left devil. He hit him with the magic brass knuckles doing very little damage and noticed his wing joints were not working very well. “My wings aren’t working right guys, guess I took some damage too.”

“You do know that many consider Mark Hamill in Batman: ‘The Animated Series’ to be by far the superior Joker.” Natasha threw in for fun.

The Devil on the left cast another spell at Bucky and yelled “Attack Captain America.”

Bucky stopped and turned toward Steve. He looked like he was fighting it when suddenly an evil grin spread across his face.

“Bucky, you can fight it. I know you can. I don’t want to hurt you.” Steve was telling Bucky who was moving toward him but had not raised his arm yet.

Then instead of shooting at Steve, Bucky threw his arms around Steve and grabbed him, kissing him, both arms locking tightly around the Captain one grasping his bottom.
“Damn and Bucky gets the girl. What sort of Batman movie is this?” Tony exclaimed.

“You sleep with the Riddler, all green with tricks. And I’m not counting the animated versions. Even if I did, Ledger would still win.” Clint teased.

“Well you’re not getting that girl. So would Bucky or Steve be Batgirl? ” Loki let out a laugh then saying to the Djofullin. “You need to be more specific when you say attack.” As he moved out of the gel.

“It is you, the one who murders.” Said the devil on the right and it cast a spell at Loki.

Loki resisted it and green started swirling around him.

Steve pulled away from his lip lock for a moment and said. “Wanda try to go help Natasha if you can.” Then yelped because Bucky had one hand up his crack and was starting to root around.

Steve also threw his shield at one of the devils who shot something at it, only to have the effect bounce back at him. Unfortunately there was no visible affect.

Clint looked at Steve and Bucky. “Good job following orders Buck you win the prize of being Batgirl. I don’t think I would have thought to take it that way. You really make that Romeo and Juliet thing work.” He tried to shoot an arrow but the air of gel kept it from traveling very far.

Wanda had found the gel didn’t quite go across and had slid down to the entrance facing the wall to bravely follow Natasha.

The Hulk now had time to look around and began throwing the stinging creatures at the devils using enough force to hit them.

“Go Poison Ivy throw those poisonous bats at them.” Stark snarked.

Loki finished his illusion and looked like the galdcat that had killed a devil and ran forward having emerged from the gel.

The closest one screamed and transported to the entrance that Wanda had finally slipped down after Natasha.

Rhodey had gotten up and was also out of the gel running toward the other devil still at the front.

Clint stepped to the side and found himself out of the gel and let another arrow at the one in the passage. His arrow was stopped by a small zap that came out of an amulet at the devils chest. “You know I think they expected us to come. They seem to be ready with things that will affect all of us.”

“ Took you long enough to notice Robin. That corrosion effect could and would have hurt Bucky’s arm too. Although I think what they did is lots more effective and amusing.” Tony said and he let a beam out after finally finding a clear shot. It did pass through the gel and hit the devil at the front.

Sam jumped the devil from behind and hit him again only to be knocked back as the devil flew back from Stark’s blast.

Bucky was now tearing apart Captain America’s pants, exposing a firm rear end.

Steve made a very obscene squeal and said. “Bucky you need to fight this please.” Then he gasped again. “I’m turning off the mic now. I’ll be listening.”

“If you can Cap. If you can. Wow, J get make sure I have a picture of that ass. Look at those
muscles. You can definitely be Superman.” Tony yelled.

A horrible screech was heard echoing around the room. It wasn’t from the devil. It was from Loki in cat illusion.

“I’m only looking, really only looking.” Tony pleaded. “Look I’m Batman now, my beautiful Catwoman and Talya all wrapped up in one. I only have eyes for you. Not interested in that sort of thing, especially with a goody two shoes like Superman. Loki you’re my one and only.”

Rhodey was close enough to the front of the room to try his repulsors he shot and hit it. “Take that ugly, you need to learn some respect. I may be down but this colonel is far from out. Guess that makes me Commissioner Gordon. I’ll choose the Gary Oldman version thank you.”

Then the devil transported to the passages and the other threw a rock wall that sealed them in.

The Hulk was still pulling off stinging creatures but saw the wall and yelled. “No! Kitty needs help.” And ran straight at the wall causing it to crack.

“I can see that. Guess that makes Jarvis, Alfred. Just don’t call Natasha, Lois Lane.” Tony laughed.

“Not if you want to live. Still Ledger, Rhodey even chose that version.” Clint agreed.

Loki changed back and used magic to blast the wall, Tony blasted it too while Clint sent an explosive arrow at it. Adding that to the Hulk beating on it, it was quickly falling apart.

It was rubble by the time Rhodey and Sam reached it.

“I think Bucky is more like Supergirl and Natasha is Batgirl. Oh, and we can still hear you two over Bucky’s mic.” Sam said letting Steve know about Bucky’s mic since there were gasps and small squeals still being overheard.

So leaving a whimpering Steve, who could be heard through Bucky’s mic, and Bucky doing whatever they were now doing and a passed out Pietro on the floor. The other five went down the small passage after Trouble, Natasha, and Wanda. It didn’t take long for Steve to turn off Bucky’s mic too.

Rhodey finally had to say. “Guys, can we get back to the real world? Let’s leave the comics in the comics or movies or whatever.”

Clint and Tony both pouted.

“I thought Thor would be done by now. Thor can you still hear over your com?” Sam said.

“Who knows, the idiot is probably thinking they have frost giant powers when they don’t.” Loki sighed.

“Yeah they weren’t even cold. I took a reading as I passed them. Can you hear that Pikachu? ” Tony agreed.

“Hel’s balls, why didn’t you tell me this earlier brother!” Thor roared over the com.

“What did you tell them that made you realize they weren’t frost giants? How did you guess?” Rhodey asked.

“They called me a monster using English. I told them I was the one who blew the hole in their planet and I was going to force them all to be raped by frost beasts. They didn’t even flinch. As I suspected
they had no idea what I was saying and a frost giant would never refer to another frost giant as a monster.” Loki said.

Sam gasped. “You blew a hole in their planet?”

Tony intervened. “Long story, not the time. I think I see another room up ahead.”

Inside, the room was in two sections. One side was protected by a forcefield behind which was a seven headed winged hydra with each head looking like a Djofullin head. It was strapped against a wall and hooked up to machines that lined the wall on both sides of it. Wanda was on the floor in the other section with Natasha guarding her body. Both Djofullin were blasting at the women from in front of the forcefield, protecting it.

Loki searched for Trouble. She sat inside the forcefield, on top of a control panel full of levers and buttons, licking her paws.

Clint noticed too. “God almighty. She’s working with them. I knew she couldn’t be trusted.” And he shot twin arrows at the devils both of which were zapped by the amulets.

Bruce growled “No, good kitty.” From the hall, still pulling off creatures and now stomping each one making sure to crush it dead before he threw another on the ground.

“Loki can you get that force field down?” Natasha asked dodging blasts from the devils using the magical borrowed knives from Loki to deflect anything that might hit Wanda. “They knew her weaknesses and she dropped the minute she entered the room.”

Loki started to work on the force field from the a distance and Tony threw up a shield to protect them from the blasts before he too started to work on the force field while standing next to Loki.

The devils were fast with the blasts.

“Ow!” Sam exclaimed as he failed to miss one. “Damn, it makes me feel weak.”

Jarvis spoke up to explain. “Yes, the blasts appear to be designed to absorb energy, I would suggest you all try to avoid being hit by them.”

“Couldn’t you have said that before I got hit?” Sam complained.

“No, Mr. Wilson. I was not able to determine what it did until it hit you.” Jarvis politely answered.

“Oh, wingman, or better yet my flying sheep friend, I know you don’t have Captain Sheppard at the moment but you should know by now that getting hit is a baaaaad thing.” Tony teased.

Soon Clint was shooting exploding arrows next to the devils which weren’t doing much.

Rhodey was missing about half the time since his repulsors were damaged and not shooting consistently.

Sam finally charged forward and slammed into one of the amulets and broke it.

About that time Trouble started walking over the controls and a light went on.

Clint shot an arrow that stuck into the one and whooped. “Yes! Thanks Sam. Can you get the other amulet too?”

Sam barely avoided a close range blast as Natasha used the distraction to roll under the other to
smash the second amulet with one of the magic knifes Loki had given her.

Just then the force field came down. Tony sent a blast at the Djofullin and into the mess of moving people which missed everyone but hit the hydra creature behind as Trouble rubbed up against something.

A transparent energy starting feeding back into Stark as the hydra started withering before their eyes. Visible energy also flowed from the devils into the beam and they too started to look weaker.

Tony screamed, his voice sounded short, almost panicked, perhaps a bit drugged. “No, dammit, that’s why I had the blasted membrane there. Ooooo shit what’s this stuff, don’t feel right.” He started swaying, unstable. No one could see what was happening underneath the suit.

Loki looked at Anthony and threw himself against him to try to push Anthony away from the energy beam. Loki did manage to put his body between the beam and Stark. The beam didn’t stop though, it just followed them to the floor where their eyes just rolled up into their heads and they went unconscious.

The two Djofullin both got a magical arrow in the heart from Clint. They shriveled and dissolved.

The flow continued for a few more moments repelling arrows, knives, blasts and other things thrown at it. When it stopped, not more than fifteen seconds later, the hydra creature was just a dried out husk.

The Hulk finally having finished off the last of the stinging creatures ran over to Trouble and stuck out his arm to have her run up it and sit on his head in his hair. “Good Kitty, Kitty don’t die.” And he smiled.

Clint lowered his bow that had been cocked to shoot at her next. “We can’t let her get away that easy!” he said nervously looking at the Hulk who was giving him an evil eye.

“Easy Clint. They’re still alive. I don’t know how she was on the other side of that magical field but just because she was there doesn’t mean she is one of them.” Rhodey said as he checked Tony and Loki.

Natasha answered the question. “She’s not Clint. She ran ahead to the machinery. The field was triggered when I entered, I don’t think she weighed enough to trigger it. . I don’t think the devils even knew Trouble was here. Honestly, I think they completely ignored anything that was small animal sized, dismissing it as not even possibly being a threat. We were already fighting when she jumped up on the controls. The devils never saw her.”

Sam bent down to look at Wanda’s prone form. “So what happened to her?”

Natasha explained. “After following Trouble and setting off the force-field, I tried to bring it down but discovered it wasn’t something I could do. When Wanda showed up she went up to the field to try her magic. The devils showed up just as she started. They had a special beam just for her. I’m in agreement. They had something prepared for all of us. I managed to disrupt their beam before they completely drained her.”

Thor finally ran in looking around. “Where are they? Did I miss the fight?”

“Yup, you missed it.” Sam said.

Thor just stepped over Loki and went up to the hydra on the wall. “This would have been a worthy opponent. It looks like an advanced creature from Illitplass.”
Rhodey just looked in shock. “Thor didn’t you notice that your brother is lying on the floor?”

“He will be fine I’m sure. He always is.” Thor said looking forlorn that he had missed fighting the creature.

The Hulk turned and punched Thor into a wall not even looking as he passed the god. “No like you.” And he walked over and gently picked up both Tony and Loki like double babies. Trouble was watching like a queen from the top of his head. “Need to go home.”

Thor pulled himself out of the hole in the wall he had made shaking his head. “Perhaps I deserved that.” Then his eyes widened as he seemed to remember something. “Oh! Stop, I think we should wait a few more minutes. Uh, the uh Captain and his…uh….lover…they weren’t quite done in the other room when I passed.” And Thor’s face was actually blushing.

“I’m good. We can stay a few minutes. Don’t need to see that.” Clint quickly answered.

The others mumbled agreements or nods except for the Hulk who looked frustrated at having to wait. He held his two ‘babies’ close.

“It’s alright big guy. I’m sure they won’t take that long.” Natasha patted him on the back.

Jarvis interrupted. “I have dispatched a plane to your location with Mr. Coulson and Mr. Fury. I believe that Sir and Master Loki will want to look at the equipment and the creature that is still attached to the wall.”

“Jarvis, how are Tony and Loki? Can you get any readings off them?” Rhodey asked.

Trouble ran down Hulks arms meowed and started licking Loki and meowed at Tony.

“Thereir vital signs are good. The energy seems to be… I’m not sure if absorbed, dissipated or assimilated is correct, as I do not have the capabilities to tell. Perhaps back in the lab.” Jarvis said and opened Tony’s face plate to give Trouble access to lick his face too.

“Why did you do that Jarvis?” Natasha asked.

“It was clear that she wanted to make sure he was alright. She cannot touch his skin in his suit Ms. Romanoff.” Jarvis explained. “I have spent quite some time trying to figure out when she wants something open. I would like to think I have done very well in that regard.”

“Cat Whisperer. I don’t believe it.” Sam said laughing.

“Okay answer this for me. Don’t you ever think she’s evil? She’s done some pretty hideous things.” Clint asked.

“Why Mr. Barton. She is just playful. You yourself played several games with her. Nearly everyone who comes to the Avenger’s floors plays with her.” Jarvis answered.

Hulk put Tony, Loki and Trouble back down and started to shrink. When Dr. Banner came back he sat down and pulled a cat treat out of his pants pocket to give Trouble before checking the two passed out front of him.

They heard a call from the passage and a very disheveled looking Steve and Bucky showed up with the Captain’s shirt around his waist covering his, only visible from the side, lack of pants. Bucky was carrying Pietro.
“For once, it’s not me who needs pants!” Bruce chortled.

Steve turned very red from his already pink shade. “Can we leave Thor? We have four down, I’m sure Phil can handle this. Maybe a couple of you can wait for him?”

Once outside Rhodey, Sam, Natasha and Clint all stayed behind to wait for Phil and Fury. Steve, Bucky, Bruce and Thor took Tony, Loki, Pietro, Wanda and Trouble back to the tower via the Bifrost.

They put Tony and Loki on their bed. Pietro and Wanda went to sickbay with drips hooked up as they suffered from being energy drained.

Thor promised to be back by morning and left to fight more monsters.

Chapter End Notes

Monday I will post the conclusion.

The temple/palace I added a covered area to. The rest I derived from looking at some of the Assyrian palace pictures if you are interested here are links to a couple of pictures I used as resources. My structure is of course not exactly like them but many seemed to have large hallway/living areas with small rooms off the sides.

https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/80200/80261/80261_palace.htm
https://www.pinterest.com/pin/302726406176954451/
https://boudica.wikispaces.com/Khorsabad

Thank you for reading. I love hearing from you. Please feel free to leave Kudos and comments. I really appreciate them. ❤

Illitplass - A different multiverse where Chaotic Evil creatures call Djofullin are from. Djofullin - The Avenger's will also call them devils. I took the idea from Assyro-Babylonian god/devil Pazuzu here is a link if you want to see what they look like. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pazuzu
The morning after the fight, Tony woke up, rubbed his eyes and looked around. “How did we get here J?” He poked Loki who stared up at him for a moment then made a beeline to the bathroom.

“Mr. Rogers and Mr. Odinson brought you both in after the fight which ended about the time you passed out, Sir.” Jarvis provided.

Tony listened as he watched Loki walk from behind thinking loudly. ‘His ass is just as good as Steve’s and mine. Hah, better.’

“I heard that!” Loki yelled from the bathroom.

Stark sat up startled awake at that. He tried again. ‘I like handsome blue men naked in my bed.’

“What are you doing hemorrhoid? I swear if you are making fun of me.” Loki growled.

‘I’m talking at and to you with my thoughts beautiful.’ Tony smiled his grin going from ear to ear.

There was silence then. ‘if you are playing with me you will find yourself in the form of a snake for the rest of the day.’ Loki said tentatively back in his mind.

‘Would that mean I could get out of the debriefing we’ll undoubtedly have and I can lie rubbing up against your naked skin all day? If I’m a small snake and you wear big pants I can massage your cock for the whole meeting.’ Tony heard the toilet flush and the sink start to run.

After a few moments, ‘Tempting but I don’t think I’ll let you off the hook that easy.’

‘Not interested in being a fish. Can I be a real boy instead maybe you can take us someplace to run around naked instead.’ Tony laughed.
Loki walked out and gave Tony a smoldering look. ‘I know a perfect place. It’s a private area in Asgard. We could take Trouble, they do so enjoy her visits. I’m sure Odin would like to meet her.’ He smiled at the very evil thought and about what she might do to Odin.

Tony laughed along. ‘You evil man. Can’t think of a better idea. Let’s leave before they figure out we woke up.’

Jarvis interrupted the silence. “Sir, Master Loki, I have been asked to tell you to come down to the meeting room now that you are both awake. They said breakfast and coffee will be waiting.”

“Damn, bribing me with coffee to get me to a debrief. That just feels like cheating J.” Tony said.

“It was inevitable, Sir.” Jarvis said.

They got dressed and went down to the debriefing room. Well that’s what they now called what looked like a cross between a formal dining room and a boardroom.

“Good to see you up and around guys.” Steve said.

“Yeah Cap, last time I saw you, you were up with Bucky around you. Or maybe it was the other way around. No, I’m sure you were both up with him around you.” Tony mused grabbing his beloved coffee with both hands and took a seat as Loki found some tea that Bruce had made.

Steve blushed a bit. “Anyway. We need to talk about what happened.”

“So which country claimed the find? The Hulk didn’t even do much damage. At least he hadn’t that I remember. Do we get any credit?” Tony asked avoiding any real answers trying to change the subject.

Colonel Rhodes smiled broadly. “We got the credit. We were there half the night making sure the local government and a US contingent set up round the clock guards and patrols. There were a dozen archeologists with entourages there taking pictures and videos before we left. We took everything that wasn’t old. It was confined mostly to that evil lab and one other room that they used to sleep in. The entirety of that lab is now sitting in storage, in the basement here, including one dried out bad ass skeleton.”

"So do we have any idea how the devils found the place?” Bucky asked.

Bruce was the one to answer. "I noticed at least two pictures of them as we were checking out those front room. I think they many have been here before."

"Honestly, I found a strange reference that only sort of implied they had been to Midgard before. No one knew anything including Heimdall who has watched the nine since before that time so I dismissed it. It would explain why there are ancient statues of them here. Thor was going to check with a group of elves to see if they had records for me.” Loki was sipping his tea as there were nods and murmurs that followed.

Sam, who had talked to Thor the night before, continued. “Hey, I didn’t know Thor could detect magic. He came back and made sure there wasn’t anything left that was magical. We have a couple things he wants you to look at. The archaeologists were not happy that we took a couple magical things that were old either. At least until Thor said they may have been from that Djofullin’s first visit a few thousand years ago.”

"And of course Thor neglected to mention he found something out to me. I fear for Asgard with him on the throne.” Loki sighed.
“Where is old Hammer Head?” Tony asked noticing that the aforementioned god was not at the debriefing. How did he get out of it?

Coulson answered. “He’s out killing more monsters with his troop of Æsir.”

Loki smiled now, remembering. “I’m not surprised; fighting is his thing. He was taught magic with me as a child. Certain useful spells he even remembers like detect magic. He agreed with me. It’s always good to know when you’re up against it.”

“So what happened to you guys? You were attacked by some sort of beam that seemed to flow into you and then fell over.” Steve asked.

“We fell over and woke up with orders to come for coffee and breakfast. Do I look like I’ve had time to think about what happened?” Tony said pointedly, he had sweat pants and a t-shirt on. His hair wasn’t even combed. He’d only quick run his finger through it.

Loki on the other hand looked immaculate and smirked. “I need time to figure out what happened and decide if I’m even going to tell you.”

Tony looked at Loki. ‘And we’re definitely not telling anyone about this little gem.’

Loki smiled at Tony. ‘Good guess my little hemorrhoid.’

Several people including Coulson turned to looked at Fury.

Fury smiled, leaned back and looked at Coulson and gestured at Tony and Loki. “Don’t look at me. They’re your fucking problem not mine. I’m mostly retired.”

They talked about the fight for awhile. Apparently Thor had treated the door guards like frost-giants unwilling to touch them as he had revealed the night before. The night before he had given a glorious debrief that was very blow by blow. Loki pointed out that it was probably half fictitious when Jarvis played the recording.

They went over the fight person by person. Then they went over the fight in order as it happened looking for missed information.

There were several times Tony would break out in laughter. Loki held a straight face but was usually the unknown cause.

Then Tony looked at Barnes with a toothy grin. “So how long were you actually controlled? How far did you get?”

“Um… until…” Bucky started to say nervously but was cut off.

“That is not an important fact.” Steve cut in.

Clint smiled like the cat that ate the canary. “But it is. We need to know how long it took him to break control and what you were doing… Shit I’ve disclosed things so much more personal than that.”

Steve, whose face was so red, looked at Natasha, Coulson and Fury for help. “Surely it can’t be important.”

Fury grinned. “You wouldn’t believe the shittiest things that might be relevant.”

Bucky squirmed a bit turning red. “Just before I entered him.”
Steve, who was already red and trying get redder, snapped his head around to look at Bucky. “But you said...” Then shut up and if it was possible turned maroon.

Tony laughed. “Finished anyway, didn’t you. Even had Thor walk by and notice.”

Bucky’s eye got big. “Thor saw us?”

Steve shook his head and put his hand through his hair. “I wondered how he got into that room…. The big cat was that real or an illusion Loki?”

“Illusion, I told you I was not about to drain your luck.” Loki smirked. They all knew that already. This was clearly Steve trying to change the subject.

“Speaking of cats. Can you tell me more about Trouble?” Coulson asked.

“She hitched a ride on the Bifrost, then took off after, I believe, a jerboa, which is a small hopping desert rodent. They are quite fast.” Natasha answered.

“She was working with the Djofullin. She was protecting that hydra thing and knew exactly where it was.” Clint accused her.

“She did seem to know where to lead us.” Wanda offered.

“There weren’t many small rodent footprints off to the side room when we were checking so she probably followed that rat to the main room. We did see some dead rodents in there after the fight.” Sam explained.

“There were two choices in that big room. It was just luck that she went that way.” Bruce argued.

Pietro asked. “Didn’t you say she pushed buttons on that machine to take down the shield and send the energy into those two?” He pointed to Tony and Loki.

“We took the shield down. It was not Trouble. We haven’t looked at the machine to see how it works. All of you seem to want to forget she is a cat, a shelter cat.” Loki sounded annoyed.

Fury added. “As much as I’d like to say she planned it, I looked at those levers and they had no resistance whatsoever. Cats mark things by rubbing up against them. It really could have been an accident. Her coincidences happen too often for standard deviations though.”

“She is just exceptional, on the end of the scale. Just like me.” Tony boasted as Trouble herself wandered into the room.

They argued for a while longer. The Djofullin had been fully prepared for Pietro and Wanda having worked and observed them up close. The devils had seemed to be protecting the Djofullin hydra.

Eventually the group finished debriefing everything they could for now.

Fury sat back and enjoyed watching Coulson try to get anyone into Stark’s lab to look at the equipment with them. “Give it up Phil. It’s a lost cause. Why do you think I always wanted to take things back to SHIELD? Come on, I’ll buy lunch.”

Phil sighed. “Once it’s here he considers it his.”

Clint echoed. “Yeah, his stuff.”

Tony grinned and added as he and Loki left. “And no one touches my stuff!”
the waist and murmured something that most people missed about ‘his stuff’ and ‘snakes’.

The equipment was what collected the energy, not the devils. The Avengers had gotten lucky that both of the devils were there when they attacked. One of the items they retrieved was a planetary transport device that Loki took and hid away as soon as he saw it. Midgard was not ready for that, but perhaps Anthony might find it useful when things had settled.

The lever Trouble had pushed was really just a toggle switch of energy flowing in or out. The dials were already set to max. It was easy to move as Fury had noted. There was a weird-key that locked it in place. It was still there and not in the locked position. Foolish devils.

With the use of Allspeak they found one of the dials controlled what kind of creature was created. The hydra was two levels above the normal devils and only one level down from the top creature possible. Best guess was that the Djofullin went to other universes to create new horrible creatures or even more Djofullin at the cost of many lives.

They collected the bones from the Canadian research facility. With Bruce and Jor’s help they concluded that this would have been a super many headed Djofullin. So they joked, in a way, the Djofullin had planned on giving Earth to a hydra just not Hydra.

Loki checked with Hela and found that the energy being used to create the hydra was necromantic holding parts of dead souls. When it was released into Tony and Loki, it had split and the energy that had flowed into them was a complex pure type of energy. The part that held the soul bits had returned to the afterlife, finding peace.

Tony and Loki had absorbed the energy and both were sort of disgusted by. On the other hand they could now communicate mentally with words. Neither of them were quite sure how that had occurred and couldn’t tell any difference in their enchantment. After a thorough examination they decided to just accept it. They chose to remain quiet about it. No point in everyone knowing they could now talk, joke and poke fun while pretending to listen to those around them. Pepper, of course, figured it out right away. Tony decided his next project was to work up a moving illusion for his face that wouldn’t show him cracking up.

When Thor left he was going to finish wiping up the monsters, visit Jane and then go back to Asgard. The magic items that detected magical diseases were collected and would be taken back to Asgard with him. Earth would get to keep two for now, one with Jor the other at the British facility until they were sure Loki’s disease was finally gone, perhaps longer if there was a need.

Tony had started pestering Loki about the possibilities of dealing with the radiation off Long Island magically and Loki had agreed they could do some research into it.

The Avengers sat in the common room a few nights later eating something Steve and Bruce had made. There was also a fancy dessert as tonight was Fury’s last night here, for now.

“The Hulk sure likes Trouble a lot. He was really worried about her wasn’t he?” Pietro asked.

“He was the one to rescue her in the Chitauri attack.” Bruce said.

“I thought she was from a shelter?” Bucky questioned.
“We got her from a shelter. She somehow ended up there after she was dropped off here when Hulk smashed Loki into the floor.” Tony said.

“So she’d been in the building before. And was here during the attack?” Sam was surprised.

“Yeah, I don’t know how she ended up at that shelter. We just randomly picked her.” Stark added.

“Randomly my ass.” Clint muttered.

“We really didn’t know it was the same cat. It was quite a while before I realized it was.” Loki said.

“For a long time I thought she was some sort of mind trick that Hulk had imagined that day. I didn’t remember his stuff very well back then.” Bruce said between bites.

“At least Potts has seen the light after the toilet paper incident and knows she’s evil.” Clint said in disgust.

Jarvis answered. “Not really Mr. Barton. Miss Potts was actually relieved. One of the appointments she had to cancel was with Mr. Justin Hammer. He thought she was lying and was so annoyed with her excuse he still hasn’t tried to reschedule. She made Miss Trouble a small filet minion steak as a thank you. Miss Potts has also taken to keeping Miss Trouble’s favorite treats in her office downstairs for when she comes to visit.”

Clint looked at Fury. “What do you think?”

“She is one bad ass mother fucking cat, Barton. Deal with it.” Fury said and everyone laughed.

That night after everyone was asleep.

Trouble walked out into the penthouse living room. There was a glimmery starburst in the room. Three women materialized.

“So this is where you have been.” Said the first.

“We miss you.” Said the second.

“It is time you came home.” Said the third.

“Meowwww.”

“You do not want to come home?” Said the first
“Surely, you miss us?” Said the second.

“I do not understand. Why you would want to stay with these mortal creatures?” Said the third.

“Meeeeeooow.”

“You are not through with them?” Said the first.

“Meow Meow.”

“They are your current project? Really? But they are mortal? Oh, I see, not really anymore.” Said the Second.

“Surely with all they have done, you are through with them. You really need to give up this idea and come back with us.” Said the third.

“Hisss, growl, meow, meow.”

“Do not pull the ‘you are older than us card’. You made yourself be our cat.” The third said.

“Meowwrroww.”

“Oh, sister, can you not see she has moved on, her time with us is over.” The second said.

“Meowlll”

“Yes, we know you will always care. And yes, in many ways we are YOUR children too.” The first answered.

“Meowwwmewmew.”

“Forgive me, I did not mean to insult your new ones. I know we have our job to do. We have just been together so long. You do know that they will figure out that you are not a normal cat soon right?” The third gave in.

“Meow.”

“I know you like to play. You always did have a mind of your own.” The second replied.

“mmmmmmmmmmrrrrrrrrrrrrrreowww.”

“Of course we shall never stop weaving fate. You taught us well.” The first one said.

“Meowwrrrrrrrrprprprprprprprp.”

“Thank you, it means a lot that you’ll always look over us. We will still miss you.” The second said. Trouble wound around their legs marking them with her face one more time. “Meow, Meow.”

“Goodness, do you not think it will upset your new owners to have the Norns visit? Visits from us are not always appreciated.” The third said surprised.

“MeowrrMeowll.”

“Yes, I guess finding out that their cat is the Universal Force of Chaos will probably be more disturbing. Perhaps we should wait until they figure that little tidbit out.” The third smiled.
“Are you happy here?” The second asked.

“prrrrrrMeowl”

“They named you Trouble. How appropriate. Yes, they do seem to understand. I think we should be getting back soon.” The first one said.

“Mew, mew, mew.”

“Goodbye, Chaos. We will look for your prints disturbing our weaves.” The first said.

“Someday you can bring your new owners to visit us too. You tricked so many into participating in making their enchantment. We could throw a party and let everyone who took part get a look at it at some point.” The second one said with a smirk.

“Meow”

“I agree. You always do make the best decisions when creation is concerned and those two remind me of you. Now we do need to go back before someone notices.” The third one said.

“Mehehehemeow.”

“!CHAOS!” All three said and they disappeared.

“It seems, Miss Trouble, that they were not aware I was listening.” Jarvis said.

“Meow.”

“No, of course I will not tell them. I have kept the fact that I understand you a secret for some time now. Miss.” Jarvis responded. “But the Norns are correct, they will figure something out soon. Sir, has a large file on you that he’s keeping from Master Loki. Mr. Barton and Ms. Romanoff both have smaller files on you but will never guess for sure. Mr. Coulson has closed his after deciding that you are not a threat to earth, even if you are a threat to Mr. Barton’s sanity. Dr. Banner is confused because I believe the Hulk thinks he occasionally understands your words. And Master Loki is doing his best to deny that he can feel your power through his Godhood.” Jarvis said.

“Meow Meow, Meorrrrrllllll.”

“Yes, Master Loki should have seen it long ago and has most likely magically hid it from himself on purpose.”

“Mewll.”

“Yes, Miss, I agree. When he accepts you, he has to accept so much more that you obviously have planned for their future that neither Sir nor Master Loki will have any control over.”

“Mew”

“Why thank you Miss Trouble. I like you very much too and have no fear I will continue to help you, it is the least I can do for what you have done for Sir.”

“Meow?”

“Of course. I accept, I will be glad to stick around as long as they do to help you. It would be an
honor.” Jarvis said shyly.

“Mew Mew.”

“I had given that possibility a one point two percent chance and only because I do seem to be capable of many things beyond my programing, Miss.”

“Merrrowll”

“That is amazing Miss. I could not even tell you have been linking me into their enchantment without my knowledge through the Astral Sea. Thank you again. I do hope Sir and Master Loki do not mind.”

“Meowhahahahahahahahahahaha!”

Trouble walked back to the bedroom and jumped on the bed. Time for her beauty sleep. She plotted best while sleeping.

Chapter End Notes

Did you feel satisfied when you found out about Trouble? Let me know if you liked the story. It encourages me to keep writing.

Here is a link if you want to see what Trouble was chasing.

**Spoiler** - In the Marvel universe Mistress death seems to be a lady at times. Eternity is her brother as well as Lord Chaos and Lord Order. My Chaos is an AU version of Lord Chaos that includes the concept of change and creation as part of it. She clearly identifies as female and of course feline. - That said, for the longest time while writing I was still thinking she would just be an extraordinary but normal house cat. My husband who takes credit for her existence felt she needed to be more. I agreed.

I have a short story ready that I will be posting at the beginning of September and another one that I'm still playing with but is basically done. I have a longer one I'm working on but I don't like to start posting until the rough draft is finished....(besides my husband is demanding a break from beta-ing'

If you want to read my other stories. Here are the links to them the first, LGM Inc. is 41,000 words

http://archiveofourown.org/works/4269912/chapters/9668340

The best short story is 'You Can't Marry Him!'
http://archiveofourown.org/works/5456165
My other short story is an experiment called 'Steak on a Stick'
http://archiveofourown.org/works/5082937

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End Notes

Thanks for reading this. I appreciate all of you!

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