### Everything that can go wrong

**by** Selina Novella (SilverThistle)

**Summary**

> Turns out interrupting a battle between two super powered mischief gods isn’t a good idea. Cue amongst other things, curses in rhyme, gender bending, de-aging, invisibility, animal transfiguration, a helicarrier full of monkeys, and in the end, a large, be-spelled, and dysfunctional family of super heroes trying to live their lives in a city that is absolutely insane.

> Assume there will be a lots of crack, and feels.

**Warning - classes have started and so my updates will be MUCH more spaced out and**
sporadic. I apologize.
Oh Puck me

Chapter Notes

I believe my stories speak for themselves. And they tell the readers, that obviously, I do not own the works in question. Honestly, I find the use of disclaimers to be either insulting the readers intelligence, or arrogant on behalf of the writer, in that they feel the need to differentiate between the source material and the writers work, as though there can ever be a comparison, with the possible exception of such "works" as Twilight. However, for legal purposes, as absurd as they might be, I do not own any work under copyright by Disney or Marvel.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Everything That Can Go Wrong…

Chapter 1

By Selina Novella

Why is it always New York? Tony wondered as he flew, swerving around various sky scrapers and magical blasts. Why is it never Detroit or something? Or hey, why couldn’t the big evil drop from the sky onto Westboro Baptist? That’d be hilarious. Shield might even have to give Loki a medal for that. Fury’s face would be priceless! Speaking of Fury…

“Give me a sit rep Stark!” Fury barked in Tony’s ear, distracting him from his thoughts. Really, can’t the guy talk without yelling?

“Well, we’ve got two crazy tricksters trying to outdo each other with their magical mojo, Mr Tumnus turned the Empire State building into a giant cheese sculpture, and Loki's has given the Statue of Liberty a makeover – complete with mini skirt, hipster glasses, an ice cream cone and an apple tablet. Oh, and converse. Really big converse.” Tony replied casually, spinning in mid air to dodge a purple blast that caused a tree in Central Park behind to him to start … was that singing? Sort of? And tap dancing.

The Avengers had been called in from the tower a couple hours ago, when reports of the most ridiculous use of magic Tony had ever heard of started pouring in. The Hulk was already off fighting flying washing machines with the odd dryer thrown in for good measure, a giant poodle had been seen earlier running through Central Park, a dozen giant pink carrots were flying around shooting smaller carrots at airplanes at LaGuardia airport, and Mayor Bloomberg was stuck speaking only in limericks.

Honestly, Tony found most of it hilarious, and was not at all surprised to find out Loki was behind at least half of it. Since that first battle he’d understood Loki better than anyone else had. Better than Thor did, and the two had lived as brothers for at least a thousand years from what Tony had pieced together. Loki just made sense to Tony, the way bombs did. Both were big and dangerous and exciting and Tony just knew what to do, how both ticked, how to disarm them, how to ride the explosions and it was a rush he didn't want to give up. They’d had several fights with Loki after he'd
escaped from Asgard a few months after the Chitauri invasion, and in each of them Tony had delighted in going head to head with the god. Loki seemed to enjoy it too, seeking him out to trade insults and shoot at each other in equal measure. Thor always gave Tony sad looks after these battles. Tony shrugged it off. It wasn’t his fault Thor just kept making the same mistakes over and over again. It seemed obvious to him, but then he could have been *Loki* far too easily. If he didn’t have Pepper, if not for Yensin. If it had just been Tony as he had been, America's favorite son, the Merchant of Death, betrayed by the man he considered father? Yeah. He could have been Loki. Hell, he could have been *worse* than Loki. As it was, he might be just a little bit evil. Just a teensy bit. 12% tops.

“Widow and I are evacuating civilians, but most seem to be more interested in pointing their phones at the battle.” Steve said through the com, sounding frustrated at the apparent lack of self preservation.

“They’re taking videos Cap.” Clint said with a laugh over a large explosion heard behind him.

“You can do that?” Steve asked curiously.

“Can we focus here, gentlemen?” Fury snarled.

“Oh come on Fury, it’s a bit old hat at this point.” Tony protested “For every mission that’s fighting evil alien death rays from dimensions of doom there’s always these nutty ones. I mean how many times have we all ended up shrunk, dropped into another dimension, turned evil or whatever? I now have a closet in the tower devoted to those sorts of things. Do you know how hard it was to find a pair of Jimmy Choos for Pepper if she gets shrunk again?”

“I’m sure she appreciates your thoughtfulness.” Natasha replied with biting sarcasm. “ Civilians cleared on Fourth through Second st.”

“Oh she always appreciates my thoughtfulness.” Tony smirked, and then yelped as the unknown villain of the day teleported directly in front of him. He quickly regained his balance with the repulsors to avoid a collision, and was left hovering, a flock of flying cars flying majestically beneath them.

“Excuse me, but exactly who are you? You’re interrupting The Game.” The being asked with faux politeness. He had goat legs and a tail, with little horns peeping out of curly blonde hair, and pointed ears. And was floating. Can’t forget that. And a British accent. What was up with villains and British accents? Even Loki had one, and he wasn’t even human, much less British.

Tony blinked and raised the face mask. “You’re kind of breaking my city, so you’ll have to excuse my rudeness.” He snarked back. “And who are you anyway?”

The faun pouted. “I was told that your people still knew of me in your tales. I am disappointed.” He turned to look at Loki, who was perched on a (currently floating) billboard, catching his breath and watching them. “What fools these mortals be!” He giggled to the god, obviously pleased with himself.
“I’m lost.” Tony muttered into the com. What was up with this guy?

“He’s Puck.” Steve’s voice whispered from his earpiece. “The quotes, they’re from a Midsummer Night’s Dream. Shakespeare?”

“Was he evil?” Clint asked.

“In the play he works for Oberon, the fairy king, and messes up his orders and just causes a lot of panic and confusion. But considering how inaccurate some of the Norse mythology is, I would take that with a grain of salt. He’s also supposed to only speak in rhyme.”

“He seems more the type to mess with people and just pretend he had misunderstood whatever Obi-Wan told him. And he’s definitely not rhyming.” Tony said, still hovering before the being and feeling rather vulnerable.

“Tread cautiously friend Stark!” Thor boomed into his com. “The Puck is a most fierce adversary and trickster. He is a member of the court of the fae. The Æsir do not tarry with such folk. They are fickle, easily angered and have great magic.”

“You don’t say…” Tony muttered.

Puck turned back to Iron Man, and gave a vicious grin. “Since you have not heard of me, I shall introduce myself. I am sometimes called Robin Goodfellow, when amongst mortals. But as you are familiar with friend Loki, you may address me as Puck.” He gave a flourishing bow before seemingly sitting on a patch of nothing, crossing one furry leg over the other and leaning forward, his chin resting on one hand, looking thoughtful. “Tell me mortal, have you never heard of The Game?”

“Not unless I just lost it.” Tony replied, using small gestures within the suit to alert Jarvis to start powering up the uni-beam.

Puck raised a puzzled eyebrow. “Mortals are so odd. Still, you present a challenge to the playing of The Game. One which, since friend Loki chose the venue, should have been mentioned. To do otherwise is against the rules.” His eyes dart back to Loki, who very carefully does not look guilty.

“I assure you, I have no control over the actions of these mortals and monsters,” Loki told him smoothly, not flinching when the Hulk roared somewhere in the background, followed by the sound of very enthusiastic smashing and a small explosion.

“No? After ten hundred years you still can not anticipate your fool of a brother?” asked Puck coolly.

Loki bristled slightly at the accusation, Fury demanded to know what the fuck was going on, and Tony lowered his face plate and blasted Puck full force with the uni-beam. It blasted the fae through the nearest building, then the one behind that and left him in a melty puddle of cheese, embedded in the cheddar Empire State building.

Loki looked horrified and gave an uncharacteristically blunt, “Shit.”


Then the cheese building exploded, leaving an angry Puck glowing a fierce red, and the smell of burnt cheese in the air.

“You got him angry.” Loki corrected, looking alarmed. “As you Midgardians say - Good luck with that.” And he started to teleport away only to be frozen midway through. Puck appeared before them so fast he seemed to teleport, the air hissing with the might of his rage. He snarled and said in that
tone of voice that always precludes things going really badly for Tony,

“Alluring god of silly tricks

Ye find thyself in quite a fix

Ye lie to Puck and draw him out

in battle with warriors of great clout

but now the Puck has become wise

and will no more believe thy lies

punishment shall be meted out

for the humiliation of this bout

You and your mortal allies both

Shall endure that which you fear most!”

So saying he snapped his fingers, there was a clap of thunder, a harsh blast of light in a sickly yellow color, burning pain and Tony knew no more.

When he wakes up it’s in the SHIELD hospital and his first thought is ‘Owww?’

His second thought is ‘What’s with the monkey in a lab coat?’ For indeed, before him is a small monkey in a lab coat with a SHIELD ID badge clipped to one lapel, and a stethoscope around it’s neck.

The monkey notices he’s awake and holds up a white board, on which is written “Hello Mr Stark, I am doctor Stewart. I am not normally a Capuchin. You are in the Shield medical wing. Please do not panic.”

Tony blinks. His doctor is a monkey. Ok. Weird, but he can roll with that. It’s not the weirdest thing that’s ever happened to him, even before he became Iron Man. So he opens his mouth and asks “Why would I panic?” only to cough in confusion. That’s not his voice. Seriously. Definitely not his. His is deep and masculine and a weapon of mass seduction. Not…

“You’re a girl Tony.” An amused looking little boy in the hospital bed next to him says.

“Oh hell no!”

End chapter 1
RDJ described himself as a weapon of mass seduction in an interview, and as we all know, he IS Tony Stark.
“I’m dreaming. Definitely dreaming. Cause there is no way I’ve got a vag.” Tony muttered into her pillow, which she’d pulled over her head. She was working very hard to ignore the tenor of her voice. “Nononononononono…” she moaned softly. It wasn’t that she had problems with women, in fact she liked women a lot. It was just, well… she had an honest to god WOMB. That was a little freaky.

The boy next to her, at least she assumed it was him, since as far as she knew monkeys can’t talk, says, “Tony, it’s not just you.”

She pulled the pillow down to glare at the kid, who was kind of adorable, with brown scruffy hair, big brown eyes, and a very large pair of glasses on the tip of his nose. “Who the hell are you?” she snarled, not in the mood to talk to anyone politely, especially a kid she just met. “And why are you in my room? Do I not warrant my own room anymore? What the hell is wrong with Shield, Dr Bananas?!?” She demanded, turned her glare to the monkey who shrugged and looks at the boy expectantly.

“They thought you wouldn’t mind sharing with your science bro.” the boy said, gently mocking. It took a second to register in her brain, and then she had launched herself out of bed and onto his, staring into the boys very familiar eyes.

“Brucie?” She breathed out the question. Ok. You know what? She could deal with being a girl. Especially if she could get away with some of her more feminine reactions without the papers questioning her orientation again. Guys could want to do emotional stuff if they wanted without being gay! Of course she was sort of gay, but you know what? Labels were for other people. And she kinda wanted to hug him. Bruce was a CUTE kid.

Bruce sighed and nodded solemnly, only to yelp as she yanked him up in a bear hug, squealing, “Oh my god, you’re adorable!”

“Tony! Tony! Hey! Put me down!” the boy whined, his glasses falling off and onto the bed. “Tony, you’re practically naked!”

This made her stop and drop him back onto the bed so she could stare down at her chest, which was a lot bigger than it used to be. “Well that explains the pain,” she muttered, poking at one boob rather disconsolately, doing the math in her head. The arc reactor is the same size as it was when she was a guy; it’s embedded in the same place too. Problem was, it was now a smaller space, smaller frame,
smaller chest cavity, and was smooshed by her boobs. So now, she was in minor pain, it was a bit hard to breathe, and the scars that radiated out of the arc reactor did not look nearly as sexy on her female chest as it had on her male one.

“My boobs are ugly,” she said sadly.

“Two seconds ago you were whining about your possession of a vagina, now you’re sad because you don’t like your breasts?” Bruce asked dryly, an eyebrow raised.

Tony shrugs philosophically. “Hey, I’m an open minded gu- er, girl. There’s nothing wrong with being a girl. I’m just not wild about possessing a womb. Babies grow in there, and it’s going to make sex really annoying.” Her eyes widened. “Oh my god, I’m a virgin. I think. Maybe. God, I got rid of my V card when I was 12. Which in retrospect is kind of creepy.” She tilted her head to the side curiously. “Magic is weird. Am I going to get periods? I really don’t want those.” Would Pepper be willing to fix the virgin thing? Cause that would be kind of awesome. How would that work? Her mind went spinning into several different scenarios, all equally interesting, and satisfying for both parties.

Bruce snorted. “Tony, focus? How could I possibly know the answer to that? And periods aside, it could be worse.”

Tony blinked and glanced at him once more. “Why, what happened to everyone else?” Was Thor a woman too? Or Steve? She’d really love to see either of the blondes as girls. If Clint ended up a woman she would tease him till the end of time, she thought with slightly evil happiness. Or were they kids too? She bet Natasha was a cute little girl. Pepper would love taking her shopping. The doctor Tony had decided would forever more be called Doctor Bananas gave a resentful “ook ook!” annoyed at being forgotten.

“Puck turned the doctor into a monkey?” Tony asked, confused. “Why?”

“Not just the doctor. I think he turned all of Shield into monkeys,” Bruce corrected.

Tony took a moment to consider the likelihood of Puck even knowing Shield existed, dismissed it as unlikely, considered a more likely perpetrator, took a deep breath and then fell back on the bed laughing so hard she could barely breathe. Bruce looked on with calm benevolence from his hospital bed, hiding a small smile, while Dr Bananas snarled at the billionaire and left, slamming the door on his way out.

Tony finally got a hold of herself, resolved to keep some things to herself and raised her head. “So he turned Shield into a boat of flying monkeys. Did Fury end up as the wicked witch of the west? Cause green’s a good look for you, but I don’t think he could pull it off.”

Bruce rolled his eyes and hopped out of bed, glasses once more balanced on the tip of his nose and hospital gown pooling at his feet. “They have the others next door. I think it’s easier to show you.”

Tony shrugged, carefully tied her own gown shut in the back, cause hey, new body not even taken out for a spin yet, she’s not showing off the interior to just anyone! and followed the boy out of the room. They went down a typically white and dull hospital hallway into another hospital room. There were the rest of their teammates; at least Tony assumed they were their team mates.

The first one she noticed was Steve who glared at her from a chair beside one of the beds, probably attempting to stop her from even starting to laugh. Tony gave a slight cough; he did look rather
ridiculous in a pink hospital gown with little teddy bears on it, and looked around the room. One bed appeared empty, aside from the fact that the blankets seemed to be draped around a body that wasn’t there. Judging by the curves that was a sleeping Natasha. Cool. Apparently invisibility was a thing. And no, Tony didn’t know Natasha’s measurements by heart! That would be creepy and wrong. (But she totally did.)

A chubby toddler with blonde curls was sleeping in the bed next to hers, tiny wings peeking out from the hospital gown. Tony wasn’t certain who that was, though she had a good idea and had to bite back a snort of laughter. She moved on to the next bed, which contained a very peeved looking black cat with bright green eyes, attempting to get away from an energetic blond corgi trying to lick its face. Those two could only be Loki and Thor, and wasn’t that hilarious? They really did get on like cats and dogs.

The assessment took only about five seconds, and Tony couldn’t hold back a giggle. At Steve’s impatient growl, she pointed to the new figures “So, Natasha’s invisible – that’s apt for a spy. Barton’s a cupid – also apt. Loki’s a black Norwegian Forest cat – figures with the whole Norse, magical thing. Thor is the corgi I assume. I’m a chick – I still need to see a mirror by the way, I have no idea what I look like. Brucie is a kid and Shield’s now staffed by monkeys. So I guess your super serum kept anything from happening to you?” she asked curiously.


Tony blinked. “I take it you don’t normally speak German?”

Steve glared. “Was denkst Du?”

“I’m going to take that as a no. I guess we don’t have a translator until Natasha wakes up, unless…” She glanced at Bruce who shook his head, his glasses once again sliding down his nose.

“If you needed Hindi, Mandarin, Thai, Urdu, Lao, Malay, Pashtu, Sudanese, or Spanish I could help. I never learned German. And how did you know what breed of cat Loki is?”

“I went on a couple of dates with a Swedish supermodel who dragged me to these rare cat shows. I do have an eidetic memory you know. Why does everyone always forget that?” Really, it was rather insulting. All anyone ever saw was Tony Stark the playboy partier who can drink anyone who’s not Natasha or a god under the table. Or they see Tony the guy who builds weapons. They never stop to think – wow, he can also learn everything you need to know about thermonuclear astrophysics over night, or wow, he actually does know how to use every weapon he’s ever designed, from guns to bombs to repulsor blasts. She had built herself a heart from scraps in a fucking CAVE for crying out loud! And everyone always waved it away, tried to put him or now her in a little box. Except for Bruce, who was so used to breaking boxes to pieces he didn’t put anyone in boxes anymore.

At that point, Loki seemed to get fed up with avoiding Thor and leapt from the bed onto Tony’s shoulder, tearing her from her thoughts. Tony yelped in surprise at the sudden claws embedded into her skin through the thin hospital gown. “What the hell, Loki?”

The cat narrowed his eyes and slowly green letters formed in the air. “I may be trapped in this form but I refuse to endure Thor slobbering all over my fur. You make an acceptable perch.” Well that was… almost a compliment. Coming from Loki that was practically an offer to make friendship bracelets and be besties forever.

Steve leaned forward and demanded eagerly, “Du hast noch Magie? Kannst du uns zurück verwandeln?”
While Tony and Bruce were left totally confused, Loki wrote back “I have SOME magic. And if I could change you back don’t you think I would change myself back? Puck is a strong foe. I had hoped one of you might defeat him while I kept him occupied—most likely the beast.” He looked pointedly at Bruce. “Obviously my plan did not work.”

“Thanks a lot for the heads up on that by the way.” Tony said, glaring at the cat, who gave a sort of bobbing motion that could have been a shrug.

Thor gave a series of barks looking hopefully at his brother. Loki made a “fft” noise and wrote: “No, I will not translate for you. You never say anything worth listening to anyway.”

Thor looked hurt, whined sadly and rested his head on his paws, unable to contribute anything else to the conversation if Loki was unwilling to translate for him.

“Sei nett zu deinem Bruder.” Steve told Loki.

“He is NOT my brother!” Loki wrote and hissed, his claws digging into Tony’s shoulder.

“Ok, OW! Enough with the German and the family drama!” Tony protested, snatching Loki off her shoulder and cradling the cat to her chest instead. Loki blinked at the change of scenery, but seemed more amused than angry about it, the tip of his tail twitching back and forth.

It was at that point that the blond toddler woke up, stretched and blinked up at them, rubbing a small fisted hand over his eyes. “What’s going on? Who are they?” He asked Steve in Clint’s voice which proved that Tony was correct about whom the putti was. Steve threw his hands up in frustration at not being able to answer.

“Do you speak German?” Tony asked.

Clint blinked. “What? No? Are you civilians? What are civilians doing here?” Agitated, his wings flapped and he found himself three feet off the ground with seemingly nothing holding him there. “WHAT THE FUCK!?” He yelped in surprise, only to have his wings stop flapping, causing him to fall back onto the bed.

“Ow! What’s wrong with me?” he demanded, looking down at his chubby little hands and arms and trying to see behind his back. His wings fluttered helpfully. “What did that Narnia reject DO to me!?”

“He turned you into an adorable little cherub!” Tony grinned, enjoying her teammates panic. “And Steve only speaks German and I’m a chick and Brucie’s a kid and Thor’s a corgi and Natasha’s invisible and Loki’s my new familiar.” She summed up, beaming at him with a happy smile, enjoying Clint’s angry glare.

“Don’t think I won’t hit you just because you’re a girl.” Clint threatened, waving a chubby little fist in her direction, only to zoom upwards and hit the ceiling when his wings reacted without his permission again. ”And Loki's your WHAT?!”

“I’d love to see you try Cupid!” Tony laughed. “And no hitting my cat.” She scratched Loki behind the ears with mock possessiveness and he purred, both leering at Clint with equally sadistically amused glances.

“I believe you have it backwards Stark. If anything you’re my familiar.” Loki retorted from her arms, peering up at her.
“But you’re the cat,” she protested, pointedly ignoring Clint’s outraged shouts.

“I’m a god. And you’re still a mortal, abet a very clever one. You should feel lucky I deem you worthy to be considered such.” Loki replied, following her lead in ignoring Clint. Only Tony could feel the rumbling purr of amusement that caused.

“I’m going to kill both of you!” Clint snarls adorably, and this time hits the wall.

“Warum ich?” Steve muttered to himself.

“This is the crack team that foils my every plan? I am deeply shamed.” Loki’s thought appeared in green smoke as his eyes following the bouncing archer, making Tony grin. She knew that quote.

Natasha, apparently woken by the noise, threw a scalpel (and where the hell did she get that?) into the wall next to Tony’s head. Tony squeaked and lurched backward, Loki’s fur stood on end, and both sets of wide eyes stared at the empty looking bed.

“What in the hell Widow?! You almost turned me into a one eyed pirate like Fury!” Tony snapped, unnerved by the close shave.

The room waited expectantly Natasha’s response. And waited. They glanced at each other in confusion. Natasha was not normally the most verbose of individuals, but she never missed an opportunity to taunt Tony.

They blinked at the space where Natasha’s head should be. Still nothing.

“Uh… Tasha?” Clint prompted, “You ok?”

There was a soft thump on the bed, two small indents appearing in the mattress like she’d slammed her fists down. The side table drawer opened and was rifled through until a pen floated up and then a sheet of paper. “I CAN’T TALK.” She wrote clearly.

“Nun, Scheiße.” Steve said succinctly.

The next few hours were a blur.

Tony called Pepper to let her know what was going on (“What do you mean you’re a girl?! Tony you have a shareholders meeting in two hours!”) but eventually she promised to have Tony’s tailor sent to the tower when they get out of the hospital.

Clint tried to call Coulson and ended up with a rather surprised looking Colobus monkey in a suit (which was now literally a monkey suit, Tony can’t resist pointing out) who looked rather shocked by the sight of Clint the Cherub before the camera was stolen by an angry looking mandrill with an eye patch who could be no one other than Fury, who snarled and growled at them, not particularly worried about them understanding him, but more interested in just screaming abuse.

Loki – who seemed to have decided Tony was indeed his new best friend, yawned theatrically on her lap in response to Fury's threatening growls, even though thanks to the Allspeak, both he and Thor could actually understand what Fury was saying. Thor seemed rather insulted by the large monkeys language actually, judging by his furrowed brow, his back turned ears and soft growls. Tony echoed the cats yawn, and both shared an amused glance as Fury bared his teeth at them and seemed, if possible, even more pissed off. Natasha must have then decided to turn off the video feed, because it seemed to turn off by itself. Leaving them all sort of staring at one another, nonplussed for
a while, until Bruce’s stomach growled loudly, breaking the silence.

Bruce colored slightly. “I guess I’m hungry.”

Tony grinned. “I vote for a jail break and then Sardis.”

“Great. So a cherub, an invisible woman, two gods, Captain America and Tonya Stark walk into Sardis wearing hospital gowns…” Clint snarked at the amused woman.

“They haven’t turned me away so far, even after that thing with the playboy models and the bus boy in the coat room.” she replied with cheerful arrogance.

Steve shook his head. “Vielleicht sollten wir einfach nur etwas bestellen und liefern lassen.”

Tony looked expectantly down at Loki.

Loki, looking thoroughly put upon, translated. “He says you should get take out.”

“Works for me.” Tony shrugged and stood, cradling Loki in her arms; the cat squirmed until he was riding on her shoulder instead, head held high. Tony was amused but said nothing. It reminded her of that anime Pepper liked but pretended she didn’t, with the girls with weird hairdos and superpowers fighting in skin tight sailor suits. There was a talking black cat in it and it was always perching on the leaders head. The fact that it was Loki, and that it was pissing everyone but Bruce off, just left her with a warm gooey feeling somewhere around her arc reactor.

Steve frowned and started to yell something only to slap his forehead in frustration when he remembered no one could understand him, and that Loki probably wouldn’t translate his lecture to Tony. Instead he waved vaguely to the door, muttering to himself. Thor gave a soft woof and did a sort of running flop off his bed, sliding on his little doggy tummy until he hit Tony’s feet and looked up, embarrassed. Loki sniffed pointedly and ignored him.

Bruce helped Thor to his four stubby feet – apparently not everyone could adjust to four legs instead of two as easily as Loki had. But Loki had probably done this before, if the mythology was to be believed. Tony made a mental note not to mention the horse thing though. She wasn’t sure that had been consensual if it had happened, and there were some things even Tony didn’t find funny. Clint attempted to walk on his own and found it very frustrating; eventually Natasha picked him up and carried him instead.

They must've made quite a sight walking out of Shield, but there wasn't much the various primates could do to stop them, since none of the affected agents spoke monkey and thus had no way of understanding each other, deciding on how to prevent the escape of a bunch of super heroes was impossible. Getting a cab to take the odd group to Avengers’ Tower was a more difficult undertaking, especially looking like a bunch of escaped mental patients, complete with hospital gowns, but they got there eventually.

By the time Pepper walked in they were in the main room of the penthouse. Clint was fluttering around the high ceiling, trying to figure out the whole wing thing. Bruce was sitting on the couch next to Loki, Thor was sprawled on the floor at their feet, looking forlorn without Mjolnir, Natasha was, presumably, sitting at the bar, Steve was ordering a German to English translation book via Jarvis and Tony was talking to the tailor who had arrived shortly after they did.

“You need to get to a salon. You look
Tony grinned, unfazed and very pleased to see her girlfriend. “I think some extensions would be good. Maybe some blonde highlights?”

Pepper tilted her head, a gentle smile on her lips. “We’ll see. We also need to get you a manicure, your nails are atrocious.”

Tony scoffed. “They’d break off the minute I got into the workshop.”

Pepper sighed in agreement, accepted the glass of wine Steve offered her and observed with amusement from the couch while tiny Mr Goldstein impatiently ordered Tony around like an errant child to get her new measurements.

Bruce looked up at her and offered a shy, “Hello.”

She smiled back warmly. “Hi Bruce.” She glanced around and raised an elegant eyebrow. “So what exactly caused all this?”

“Someone Loki was fighting. We made the mistake of joining in. He was really mean.” Bruce explained and then blinked, frowning at himself, confused at his sudden lapse into childishness, but dismissed it for the moment. “Apparently they were competing in something he called The Game. I could hear the capital letters.” He explained at her raised eyebrow.

“So they’re the reason the news has been showing pictures the Statue of Liberty looking like a hipster and melted pieces of cheddar instead of the Empire State Building?”

“Yeah, the Statue was Loki.” He looked down at the cat next to him, who managed to look smug. “Then the satyr was talking to Tony, I missed that bit since the Other guy was fighting some flying washing machines.” He shrugged at Pepper's incredulous look. “I don’t even blink at the craziness anymore.” Bruce told her mournfully. “Apparently getting us involved in The Game was cheating which made him mad. He looked like Mr Tumnus from The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe and called himself—”


“I caught Puck and Shakespeare. Seriously? Weren’t gods enough?” Pepper asked, exasperated. Thor flopped onto her feet, looking apologetic and gave a little whimper. She grinned and reached down, playing with his large ears. “Of course I didn’t mean you.” Thor panted happily, in doggy heaven, everything else utterly forgotten.

Loki spoke up then, wanting to extrapolate on Bruce’s story. “The Game is a contest between gods or beings of mischief. There are set rules and one chooses the location. One loses when either they are unable to perform anymore magic, they die, are driven mad from the chaos or both get bored. Or one cheats. Then they forfeit. You may have heard of the platypus? That species was the result of another Game.”

Bruce shrugged philosophically. “So Puck was already mad and then Tony hit him with the uni-beam—”

“Of course he did.”

Tony cut in “—and then he started talking in rhyme and saying something about making us deal with
Loki nodded and wrote “Puck is a fae, and very powerful, but their abilities are much more prone toward mischief. It causes a more... artistic license when it comes to punishments. The playboy becomes a woman. The man for whom control is essential becomes an excitable child.” He paused and allowed the words to fade away before continuing. “The woman who is a spy can no longer turn her ability to go unseen and unheard off. I am trapped in a single form. I imagine Barton loses his ability to be seen as anything more than a joke with a bow and arrow, and Thor is a useless little dog.”

Thor growled at the description.

“And Shield?” Bruce asked.

“I have no idea what the rationale behind that was.”

Pepper peered down at him, mind racing. “You did that, didn’t you?”

“Why on earth would I turn my enemies' support staff into a barrel of monkeys?” Loki asked calmly, paws crossed daintily.

“Cause it’s funny as hell.” Tony said, having already come to that conclusion. She flopped onto the couch and swept Loki up into her arms, leaning back casually. “I mean, did you SEE Fury's face? It was red and white and it probably matched his butt!” She smirked. “Best prank ever. Seriously, I’m considering petitioning to get Loki awarded the Noble Prize for this.”

Loki purred, pleased at the appreciation of his prank, something he rarely experienced in Asgard. Perhaps Midgard was better in some ways, if people here could appreciate his magic.

Pepper pursed her lips, staring at her girlfriend with slight horror. “Tony… are you having a bromance with Loki? The same Loki who set an alien army on New York? Who threw you out a window?!”

“Maybe. Can girls have bromances? I’m not sure, I always watched Big Bang Theory instead of How I met your Mother.” She glanced down at Loki, completely unconcerned. “It has Alyson Hannigan in it. She played Willow on Buffy. Don’t think I didn’t notice you quoting Spike earlier. But seriously, no throwing me out of anymore windows. Defenestrating each other is definitely against the bro code.”

“We’ll see. If you are a good little familiar I’m sure we can work out a reward system.” Loki replied and kneaded his paws on her shirt before curling up in a ball and seemingly going to sleep.

“Seriously Tony?” Pepper stared at her, slightly shell shocked.

“Oh come on, this isn't nearly the worst thing you've ever caught me doing. And it could be worse. I like him. We read each other well and share the common goal of driving Fury and all of Shield insane. I’m aiming to give Fury a heart attack sometime this year. What’d you think? Realistic goal?”

Pepper decided for the sake of her sanity not to answer that and instead glanced around, frowning. “Where’s Natalie? I mean Natasha?” she corrected herself. That was still weird. The woman she had gone shoe shopping with was a super spy who could kill someone with her pinkie finger; and probably had.
“Natashalie, wave a glass, would you? Your former boss wants to say hi.” Tony said, aiming the comment behind her toward the bar.

A martini olive obligingly shot through the air and hit Tony solidly in the back of the head.

Pepper frowned. “So you really are invisible?” she asked, a bit sad for her sort-of-friend.

“She can’t make any noise either. It’s like in Hushed.” Bruce piped up, and then noticing them all looking at him blushed slightly. “I like Buffy. I used to watch it with Betty, and Tony made me think of it.”

"Diese Referenz verstehe ich nicht. Was ist Buffy?" Steve asked Jarvis who answered quietly.

“Who doesn’t like Buffy?” Tony asked rhetorically, ignoring Steve's comment and running her fingers through Loki’s thick fur. She glanced at Bruce and then up at the ceiling. “Jarv! Can we get some food in here? We’re all pretty hungry.”

“Of course, Madame. Shall I order breakfast or lunch?” The AI asked, as usually totally unfazed by his creator’s latest shenanigans.

“Breakfast I think. We could all use the sugar rush at this point. And watch it Jarvis, or I’ll turn you into a Jarvina.” Thousands of lines of code ran through Tony’s minds eye, already working out how to do it, even if she never chose to.

“I shudder at the thought sir.”

“You should.” Tony grinned. “You’d sound like Mary Poppins.”

“The food should be here in approximately fifteen minutes. I also took the liberty of having some gourmet pet food ordered for the discerning Asgardian pallet.” Jarvis said, choosing to ignore the previous statement. Mary Poppins indeed.

“What would I do without you Jarvis?” Tony asked rhetorically.

“Probably starve to death sir, if you didn’t blow yourself up first.” He replied dryly

“Ha ha.”

They all turned to watch the tailor who was attempting to get Clint’s measurements at this point, having already gotten Tony’s, but Clint’s aversion to being touched was causing his wings to flap, causing him to keep bobbing around.

“I cannot vork like dis.” The poor man muttered, finally pinning Clint down by his wings and forcibly getting the numbers he needed.

“Das kannst du laut sagen.” Steve muttered.

Thor woofed his agreement, before being distracted by Pepper, rolling over onto his back, shamelessly begging her to rub his tummy. Tony wondered if she could bribe Mr Goldstein to make Clint a diaper with hearts on it. Maybe some glitter too. She snickered. Maybe if she threw enough money at him…
Nein, auch ich wurde getroffen. – No. I was also hit.

Was denkst Du? – What do you think?

Du hast noch Magie? Kannst du uns zurück verwandeln? – You still have magic? Can you change us back? (which was rather optimistic of him, asking an enemy to fix something he helped cause in a round about way)

Sei nett zu deinem Bruder. – Be nice to your brother.

Warum ich? – Why me?

Nun, Scheiße. – Well, shit.

Vielleicht sollten wir einfach nur etwas bestellen und liefern lassen. – Maybe we should just get take out.

Es war Shakespeares Puck? Ich wusste es doch. – It was Puck, from Shakespeare? I figured it out.

Ich werde mich niemals daran gewöhnen. – I am never going to get used to this.

Diese Referenz verstehe ich nicht. Was ist Buffy?- I didn't understand that reference. What's Buffy?

Das kannst du laut sagen. – Tell me about it.
By around three that afternoon most of them had settled down, changed into appropriate attire for their new forms – if clothes were required at all- and Tony had been shown how to shave her legs and underarms. That had been a battle Bruce had been all too happy to leave in Pepper’s capable hands. Now Tony was curled up with Pepper (who had already finished her meetings for the day) on the couch in a cuddle puddle of ridiculously long, attractive limbs, bickering and exchanging occasional kisses. Loki was curled on the top of the couch next to Tony’s head, observing the room. Clint was taking a nap on a ceiling beam above, apparently even magical toddlers with wings needed naps, which, Bruce thought, explained why he felt a little grumpy and tired. He resolved to take a nap himself after the news program was over. Thor was curled up in a ball at Steve’s feet, and Natasha had put a throw on her lap to show where she was so no one made the mistake of sitting on her. Again.

“This is J. Jonah Jameson from the Daily Bugle!” announced the angry looking man in a funny mustache from the large plasma tv. “Once again our city has been trashed by those freaks we call the Avengers!” He glared out at the audience. “Aided this time by the known war criminal Loki! My sources have informed me that that commy bastard Stark was seen conversing with both Loki AND this new mutant creature that desecrated the Empire State Building and vandalized the Statue of Liberty! Starks pinhead of a CEO, Pepper Potts, has not responded to accusations of fraternization with known terrorists, but we know the truth! And we demand justice!”

Loki hissed and wrote in the air “Why are we listening to this rude little mortal? He clearly has no respect for you. If this is an example of your people, you would have been better off under my rule.”

Tony laughed. “Relax. The man’s a joke. No one with half a brain takes him seriously. The guy has a hate on for mutants, super heroes, homosexuals, foreigners, and women. He makes a complete fool of himself every time he’s on the air. He’s like Pat Robertson, if he had an alliterative name and a
silly mustache.”

Steve said something in German with a pleading look.

“Sir, Captain Rogers said, ‘Please turn it to the regular news, Tony. They might need our help with
clean up from the battle.’” Jarvis translated patiently.

“None of you are in any condition to do much of anything until I set up a press conference
tomorrow.” Pepper pointed out. “But he’s right Tony, Jameson’s just going to rant. I do need to find
out if SI is going to need to give money to aid cleanup crews.”

Tony pouted, the look now devastatingly effective on her female face. Bruce felt the ridiculous urge
to climb onto her lap and give her a hug. “Alright. Jarvis, turn to NBC or something.”

“Of course sir.” Jarvis replied.

“Thank you, Ms. Stark.” Pepper said to Tony, eyes twinkling.

“Will there be anything else, Ms. Potts?” Tony asked, equally amused.

“No, that will be all, Ms. Stark,” she replied calmly.

Bruce enjoyed watching the game the two played. It was playful and full of underlying meanings, all
of them as sweet and strong as the bond between them, and obviously one they’d played for a long
time.

The channel switched and stopped on another news program, a pretty copper haired woman replaced
the angry mustachioed man. “Welcome to Channel Twelve, action news, I’m special correspondent,
Summer Gleeson. Today we saw another heroic battle between the Avengers, as they pitted
themselves against Loki and a currently unknown second villain. Witnesses state that the second
villain appeared to be a half man half goat hybrid. More news on that as it comes in. The crossfire of
the battle has left chaos in New York, the Avengers themselves were reported injured and the only
word so far is that they are in recovery in an undisclosed hospital. Casualties thus far are mostly in
property damage: the Empire State building was turned into a solid cheese version of its usual self
and the upper levels were completely melted when the goat man was blasted into it by Iron Man.”

Images of the melted building and various shaky phone cam videos of the fight were shown behind
the woman, followed by images of tourists looking around, delighted that they had managed to be in
New York during an Avengers battle and get on tv.

“We have reports that the giant poodle seen in Central Park is currently being ridden like a horse by
known mercenary and assassin Deadpool. Police are wary of getting close to the unstable man, who
has been known to shoot people for being in front of him at taco stands.” The scene shot to a live
video of Deadpool, wearing a cowboy hat and boots with spurs over his usual costume, whooping
happily on top of the three story high poodle that was bucking, annoyed at being ridden like a pony.
They could faintly hear the merc singing Yankee Doodle at the top of his lungs.

Clint gave a sleepy laugh from up in the rafters. “That guy cracks me up when we don’t have to deal
with him.”

On screen, Summer looked like she wasn’t entirely sure she was awake and not dreaming. Bruce
couldn’t blame her. After the Chitauri battle life in New York had taken a turn for the weird.
“LaGuardia has cancelled all flights until the large pink flying carrots can be corralled. Known
mutant, Dr. Jean Gray, a telekinetic, has joined the air force in trying to corner these air born
menaces. Downtown, tow trucks are gathering the remains of the smashed washing machines,
dryers, and other appliances, left over from the Hulk’s fight with them earlier. Meanwhile in China Town cranes are being used to remove the anvils that fell from the sky to the tune of the Coro Di Zingari – also known as the Anvil Chorus. The flying cars have all parked on top of the United Nations building and the NYPD, the FBI and the UN’s own police force are now attempting to decide who has jurisdiction to remove them. Numerous reports of minor government officials having been turned into monkeys remain unproven.”

Bruce noticed Tony grinning like a loon out of the corner of his eye.

“The Statue of Liberty, who received a magical makeover during the battle remains unchanged. The White House has informed us that it has sent out a request to Sorcerer Supreme, Stephen Strange, to fix our beloved national land mark. Let’s hope he can. Back to you, Tom.”

After that it was just a weather report that said the green rain in Queens was not dangerous and there was no need to worry, and the news ended.

Bruce groaned and gave a stretch. Being a kid again was kind of nice, all the aches and pains he never even noticed anymore were gone, even the Other Guy had calmed down, more sulking about not being allowed out to play than angry. He did have a huge craving for chocolate milk though.

A soft snore broke the comfortable silence of the room and Thor gave an amused huff while the others laughed at Clint, who was now entirely asleep.

“Is it safe for him to sleep up there?” Pepper asked worriedly, looking up.

“Eh, feather butt will be fine.” Tony waved a hand impatiently. “Cherubs are immortal aren’t they?”

Loki sniffed and replied, “Puck is not so powerful that he can grant anyone he wishes immortality. That said, he is probably more durable than previous. Most likely should he fall he will simply bounce.”

“Jarvis, if he does, I want a video of it.” Tony looked delighted at the idea of his teammate bouncing like a feathery power ball.

“Of course sir.” Jarvis replied dryly. “And Miss Romanoff has a question she requested I bring to your attention.” Natasha had quickly taken control of one of the Starkpads forever lying around the tower in order to communicate to Jarvis anything she wished to contribute.

“Okay then J, what’s the spider have to say?” Tony grinned at her rhyme.

“She says ‘Stark, why are you not down in your lab trying to fix this? And why exactly has no one decided Loki should be in a cage and not playing happy families?’ end quote.”

Bruce blinked. He hadn’t thought about it, but it was very out of character for all of them to be so unconcerned about their transformations. Even though, as Tony had said, this sort of thing did happen to them at least once a month, Tony was always the first to find a solution, working tirelessly in the lab for days. And the fact that no one had given more than a token protest about Loki’s joining them in the tower was even weirder.

Loki seemed to decide to answer the question himself. “I’m sure Anthony is simply intelligent enough to realize that I could simply teleport away should you attempt such a thing. For an immortal, Puck’s anger burns itself out swiftly, and if he remembers, he restores that which he changed. My presence here makes it more likely he will not overlook you. It serves as a beacon to other magic users, unless I choose to mask it.” He waited for the smoke to fade and then continued.
“As to your first question, fae magic is more subtle than Asgardian magic, in that even in mischief or anger, it desires for its subject be happy with what it does. That we were all changed together forms a small bond, causing those affected to seek each other out, to feel a connection, and feel distress at the idea of being separated. We may be unhappy briefly with regard to our changes, but as the spell gains stronger footholds into our bodies you shall find yourself unbothered. You change to fit the magic.”


“Precisely. Those not affected by the magic however will certainly not have the same luxury.” He glanced down at Pepper with something resembling respect. “Anthony is lucky to have such an open minded woman. On Asgard women do not have the equal status they have gained here. Having a warrior turned into a female, even in jest, is considered shameful for them and their partner. The woman would be expected to hide herself from the court, while the male would go on an overly dramatic and unnecessary quest to win back his male hood.” He sniffed again.

Pepper looked faintly pleased at the compliment. Tony looked startled. “But in the Eddas it says you changed into a woman often.” She pointed out, looking up at the cat.

“Yes. I never felt conforming to gender stereotypes was a worthwhile use of my time. Asgard also believes magic is a woman’s gift, not worthy of a warrior. There are very strict gender roles. The lone exception to the rule of male warriors, Sif, never uses her magic. She is afraid to appear weak.”

“Well that’s stupid.” Tony said, glaring accusingly down at Thor, who looked embarrassed and whined softly, his ears drooping. “What’s the point of being good with a sword or a hammer if the guy you’re fighting can just turn you into a goat or whatever? Who cares if you use magic instead of brute strength? And what does having boobs have to do with any of it?”

Loki looked tired. “Such has been my argument for millennia. As far as the concept of women being inferior regardless of magic, I am fairly certain your Black Widow could defeat the Warriors Three with very little trouble, and they are considered Asgard’s finest warriors, aside from Thor.”

Pepper frowned in thought and asked, “But Thor’s hammer is magical isn’t it? Do they look down on him for using it?”

Loki sniffed. “Of course not. There is no shame in using a magical weapon, any more than there is in wearing clothes woven by the so called softer sex. Creation is a job for women and lesser species, like dwarves. Of course no glory is given for creating the weapon that wins a battle. Or casting the spell that saves your life and those of your ungrateful companions. Using magic in battle brands the user a coward and a weakling.”

It didn’t take a genius to know this had been eating at Loki for a very long time. And judging by Thor’s shocked body language he’d never stopped to consider that treating Loki badly for using his magic was wrong. “But wait, I make all my weapons.” Tony pointed out, insulted. “Does that mean they’d think I was weak?”

Loki nodded. Tony glared down at Thor, who gave another sad whine, large ears drooping, his stumpy tail lowered as through to say ‘I’m sorry, I’m sorry, don’t be mad!’
“Well then, I just won’t grace Asgard with my presence.” Tony sniffed arrogantly. “They’re obviously a very backward people.”

Thor couldn’t make any counter arguments on the point without Loki to translate, and he gave a sad little huff, looking depressed and not a little thoughtful. Bruce wondered if he’d ever questioned his own culture before. Being banished to Earth last year had apparently taught him some much needed humility, but questioning the ideals he’d grown up with was a hard step for anyone, especially for someone who’d benefited from it’s biases.

Going back to Natasha’s comment Tony added, “I like playing house. I never got to as a kid, too busy trying to get dear old Dad to notice me. So, Pep’s the Mom, Cap’s the Dad, the rest of us are the kids.”

“One big incestuous family.” Bruce observed dryly.

“The family that lays together, stays together.” Tony agreed, wiggling her eyebrows outrageously. Pepper swatted the back of her head admonishingly. “Hush.” She told her, but she had to hide a smile.

At that point Clint rolled over and fell off the beam. He did indeed bounce like a child’s bouncy ball off the floor a couple times before coming to a stop, looking up at them, shocked and confused at his laughing teammates.

After dinner Pepper dragged Tony to some upscale hair salon with a name in French no one but Tony and Pepper could pronounce. Bruce had taken a nap earlier and now was down in the lab, running several simulations and trying to pinpoint exactly what energy type magic used. Perhaps he and Tony could figure out a way to reverse the polarity or something. When had science fiction become his life? he wondered, rolling his eyes. He was standing on a step stool to reach his lab bench, and had to keep shoving his glasses up his nose. Jarvis had put in an order for a child’s size pair with his prescription that should arrive sometime that week.

“Hey Loki? Earlier you said we’d adjust to the parameters of spell. I’ve been having… bouts, of child-like thoughts and feelings. Does that correspond to what you were referring to?” he asked, looking at the cat that, without Tony around had chosen to follow him down to the lab.

“Probably. You must understand that you currently are actually a child. With the brain, appetite and the same chemical ups and downs a child would have as it grows and matures. In Asgardian terms I would judge you to be perhaps three hundred years old. I am unsure as to the Midgardian equivalent.” The cat replied, licking a paw.

“I think I’m about four or five. I can’t be certain; I don’t have any photos to compare it to.” Bruce replied thoughtfully. Most of his possessions had been lost while bouncing between foster homes, seized by Ross as evidence, or lost on the road. It was only when he’d allowed Tony to talk him into staying at the tower that he’d actually had more than one pair of pants. Tony had dragged him to get a whole new wardrobe when he found out, which had ended up with Bruce needing to sit in a changing room doing breathing exercises while Tony told him really bad science jokes through the door.

Loki gave that little bob up and down that was his version of a shrug. “In Asgard we have portraits
painted and tapestries woven to capture memories. Sometimes there are also enchanted viewing stones that function a bit like your videos. Because we live so long however most try not to dwell too much on the passage of time. It can lead to madness.”

Bruce frowned. “I had never considered how heavy a weight immortality would be.”

"You should perhaps think on it. From what I’ve observed you no longer age either.” Loki wrote back, observing him carefully.

Bruce froze. This was a side effect of the serum he had not considered, it was so far beyond the realm of possibility he was dizzied by the thought. He collapsed with a small thunk on his ladder, eyes wide with shock and breathing hard, panicked. Loki jumped to all fours, poised to run at the slightest bit of green.

“I-I’m going to be alone aren’t I? Tony, Betty, everyone… They’re all going to die and there’s nothing I can do about it.” He choked out voice hollow and instead of hulking out, found himself bursting into uncontrollable tears, hiding his face behind his hands. He’d be alone, he’d have to watch everyone he cared about die one by one, while he was left, trapped with only the Hulk for company. He’d just gotten used to having friends again and now, now they would be taken from him. It wasn’t fair! His heart ached painfully in his chest, like it was going to burst.

After about a minute he was surprised to feel something soft bump against his hands, a light paw pressing to his knee. He looked up through teary eyes and found green lamp like eyes looking at him, before Loki nuzzled him gently. Bruce, utterly over whelmed, did not question the sudden kindness from his former enemy and hugged the tiny body against his own, Loki gently licking away his tears with a rough tongue. Finally after about fifteen minutes, Bruce managed to get a hold of himself, the tears drying into a trickle.

Loki’s words appeared before him. “You are not alone. There are many immortals in this world and even more in the other eight. Your own Captain Rogers will not feel the touch of time any more than you will. I am not entirely sure he’s allowed himself to consider it either. And you would be welcomed on Asgard. They would relish the chance to go head to head with a berserker such as you and your other half. Even in your present state you would not be turned away.”

Bruce sniffled, drying his runny nose on his sleeve. “Why are you being so nice to me?” he asked, not really wanting to chase Loki away, but experience teaching him no one was kind to him without wanting something.

The cat looked away, and then finally wrote, the letters smaller than normal like he was whispering. “I do not like to see children upset.”

Bruce blinked. That’s right, Loki had children didn’t he? Bruce had read the Eddas in college, but that had been a long time ago and he had forgotten most of it. “Do you miss your children?” he asked quietly, running his small fingers through Loki’s fur, unconsciously offering comfort.

The cat looked away, and then finally wrote, the letters smaller than normal like he was whispering. “I do not like to see children upset.”

Bruce blinked. That’s right, Loki had children didn’t he? Bruce had read the Eddas in college, but that had been a long time ago and he had forgotten most of it. “Do you miss your children?” he asked quietly, running his small fingers through Loki’s fur, unconsciously offering comfort.

Again in the smaller whispery writing, “Yes. Very much. I have not seen most of them since their birth. My fath-ODIN took them away. He looked at them and said they were monsters. They were ripped from my arms before I could do more than name them. My daughter Hel is banished, ruling the realm of the dead. Fenrir is chained in Asgard, a sword pierced through his jaws. Odin took my eldest son, Sleipnir, as his steed and I was forbidden from speaking to him. I do not believe he knows of our relationship. Jörmungandr was thrown from the bifrost into the abyss to land on Earth many millennia ago, I know not if he even still lives, and Váli and Nari…”
words broke off and his small body shook with sorrow, the names being repeating again and again until the air became foggy with green smoke, his breathing hard and fast, his eyes tightly closed, hiding his pain. Bruce kept his small arms around the cat, his heart quietly breaking for both of them.

Later the team gathered back in the common room, waiting for Tony and Pepper, Bruce and Loki carefully not looking at each other after their outbursts, but still sitting closer than they had been earlier that day. If the others noticed his reddened eyes they didn’t pry. The elevator binged quietly and the doors opened.

Tony literally waltzed into the room, her movements graceful and full of good humor. She did several rotations of the room before stopping in front of the circular couch and throwing her arms wide and tilting back her head, awaiting their applause. Bruce gave a few amused claps. Tony beamed at him.

Her previously short fluffy dark brown hair had been supplemented by extensions that she’d tied up in a messy bun held in place with two gold colored metal chopsticks with small blue beads shaped like arc reactors dangling from the ends. Shorter wild fluffy pieces framed her face. Smokey dark eyes twinkled at them and crimson red lips quirked at their stares, and her nails flickered in the light, painted Iron Man red on each but her index fingers which were instead a metallic gold. The effect was somehow both utterly feminine and utterly Tony.

“So… you like?” She asked, posing provocatively, showing off her new curves.

Steve’s face was bright red all the way up to his ears and Bruce heard him whisper “Mein Gött.”

Loki purred, eyes closed in a cat smile, obviously approving. Thor did a full body wag, panting happily. Clint wolf whistled and lost control of his wings, hitting the ceiling again. Bruce himself was suddenly very glad he was in the body of a child, so as not to have any embarrassing reactions, Tony as a woman was beautiful but it was her natural charisma and daring that made her a knock out. Natasha threw another martini olive at Tony, obviously unimpressed.

Tony grinned unrepentantly at the bar. “Don’t be hatin’ just cause you ain’t got my mad skillz!” She told the other woman, who this time threw an entire decanter at her.

“Don’t talk gangster, Stark.” Clint told her, looking pained. “You were born with a whole freakin’ silver tea set in your mouth.”

Pepper followed her erstwhile boss into the room, looking amused. “Clint’s right. No ghetto talk from you, lady.”

Tony twirled on her heel to face her, showing off the high pair of stilettos and beamed. “I love high heels. They’re awesome. Why did you never tell me about how awesome they are, Pepper? Everyone should wear high heels. Except you lot.” She gestured at Steve, Thor, and Loki. “You’re all giants already. Jerks.”

“Because it’s still generally frowned on for men to wear high heels?” Pepper asked calmly, her eyes twinkling fondly.

They really made a beautiful couple, Bruce thought, not for the first time. Tony was all wild manic genius, ideas flying at the speed of light through her brain, impatient and engaging everyone around her whether they liked it or not, and Pepper was this oasis of calm in the storm the other woman created, placid, and omni-competent. They fit like puzzle pieces. And even with Tony as a woman
the two looked perfect together, like yin and yang.

“Pep, when have I ever cared what other people think?” Tony demanded, curling up on the couch next to Bruce, pulling him into her arms and playing with his hair with one hand.

Tony was a very tactile person, Bruce had learned his first week in the tower. He would ruffle Bruce’s hair, or touch his arm, steal his glasses or bites of his food and then complain about the taste. He would cuddle up next to him and read over his shoulder, eagerly critiquing whatever journal or novel Bruce was trying to read at the time. He also liked feeding people. He always seemed to have a bag of something on him; lately it had been astronaut ice cream, which tasted like crap, but Bruce could never turn down, couldn’t turn Tony down. Now as a woman, she had dropped all pretense, and seemed to be luxuriating in cuddling with anyone who captured her interest, mostly him, Pepper, and Loki, although she’d taken to ruffling Thor’s ears, or tweaking Clint’s feathers as she passed. Bruce often wondered if Tony’s childhood had been severely touch starved.

Speaking of Loki, he stalked across the top of the couch, stopping when he was almost nose to nose with Tony.

Tony blinked. “Yes?”

Loki blinked very slowly and purposefully, and then very carefully rubbed his head against Tony's. Tony sat still until this ritual finished, and Loki pulled back, and looked at her as though making a point, and then curled up in a ball, his tail slowly trailing up and down Tony’s neck possessively.

Clint blinked. “What the fuck was that?” he asked.

Bruce knew, but wasn’t sure he wanted to tell the others that Loki had just covered Tony in his scent, basically staking his claim to the engineer. She had a feeling Tony knew too, her dark eyes looked thoughtful and warm.

Pepper probably knew too, and she looked uncertainly at the still powerful cat-shaped god when she went to sit beside Tony. Loki however leapt down onto her lap and sat, as regal as any king, and butted her hand until she began stroking him from nose to tail, purring contentedly, his eyes shut in bliss. Bruce wasn’t sure if the god had decided Pepper wasn’t a threat, if he’d decided her and Tony were a package deal, or if he was just lulling her into a false sense of security. He hoped it was the second. He had a feeling if pressed, Pepper could be as dangerous as Tony, and would not take being separated from him/her lightly. And, after what had happened between him and Loki that afternoon, he kind of wanted the god to have people in his life that Odin couldn’t rip away from him.

His thoughts were interrupted by Tony telling Jarvis “Hey, make sure you take lots of pictures while this spell's going on. I wanna make a family album.”

Pepper gave her a mock glare. “You mean you want me to make a family album.”

She grinned, unabashed. “Isn’t that what I said?”

The two bickered affectionately over his head, and Bruce snuggled into Tony’s arms, looking around at the rest of the team. Clint had turned on an episode of Doctor Who, and Steve was watching entranced at the antics of the tenth doctor and Rose. Natasha had joined them, preening Clint's feathers with deft fingers. He could feel the vibration of Loki’s purring next to him. He felt… peaceful. Warm. Wanted. Like he was home.

Down at their feet, Thor looked up at his feline brother, troubled and deep in thought.
German – translated once again by Lokia

“Also meinst du, dass ich vergessen werde, das ich jemals nicht Deutsch gesprochen habe? Und ich werde überhaupt kein Englisch mehr sprechen wollen?” - You mean I’ll forget that I ever didn’t speak German? And I won’t want to speak English anymore?

“Mein Gott.” - My God
The day began with pancakes. Well, actually it began with Tony rolling over and almost squashing Loki, who’d snuck onto her and Pepper's bed sometime last night. The god had hissed at her angrily and had given her a scratch for her carelessness, but that was beside the point. The point was, there were pancakes.

Tony had a tendency, when she was drunk, to put AI’s in all her electronics and appliances. Clint, when he’d first moved into the tower, had almost had a heart attack when he walked into the kitchen and everything but the refrigerator beeped, clicked, or whirred a hello. Once he got his breath back he declared it was the coolest thing ever, and he proceeded to introduce himself to all of them. Tony had been kind of impressed, most people got weirded out by his bots, even really obvious ones like You, Butterfingers, and Dummy. Clint had dived right in. He also decided he was the Avengers chef, and when he wasn’t shooting things, at Shield, or watching every episode of Doctor Who known to man, he spent most of his time experimenting with recipes with input from the appliances. She was pretty sure they liked him better than her. Maybe if she stopped blowing stuff up in the kitchen…

After morning fun time with Pepper, Tony had entered the kitchen in flannel Iron Man pajamas and given a happy squee when she’d seen Clint on a stool, wearing a (now very oversized) apron with the statement ‘Fuck the cook” on it, wielding a spatula and flipping pancakes. It had obviously taken him a while to get into his stride in his new body, the evidence for this being several half cooked pancakes stuck to the ceiling, but she’d get one of the flying rumbas to clean it up later.

“Chocolate chips in mine!” she demanded eagerly, making gimme hands at him.

“Don’t you want to watch your girlish figure Stark?” he mocked, wings fluttering. Tony was pretty sure his wings corresponded to his moods, and the spy hadn’t figured out how to hide the response yet.

“Fuck that!” she replied, “I want chocolate!”

He obligingly ordered one of the kitchen bots to get him a bag of chocolate chips from one of the cabinets, waving a hello to Pepper as she came in, Loki at her heels.

“Good morning Clint. Where’s everyone else? We have a press conference in an hour.” She said, glancing around.

Clint handed her a plate of blueberry pancakes off the stack at his right.

“At least someone remembers I can’t have strawberries, Tony.” Pepper teased.

“Fft. His pancakes can’t make you scream like I can.” She leered back with a grin.
“Steve’s out for his run, he took Thor with him for walkies. Bruce is still asleep. And Nat’s sitting across from you, Tony.” Clint answered Pepper.

Tony blinked and looked across the table. “Er, sorry Natasha,” she offered. From experience she was pretty sure Natasha was rolling her eyes at her.

Loki meowed, looking expectantly at Clint, who glared down at him. “Jarvis got you kibble. You can eat that,” he snapped and turned back to his skillet, flipping a chocolate chip pancake.

Loki hissed, and turned to look accusingly at Tony, who shrugged. “Hey don’t look at me, I have no idea what a god turned into a cat by a satyr is supposed to eat!”

The god in question sniffed, leapt gracefully onto the table, sat down next to Tony’s elbow, and wrote, “Bacon would be appreciated. Failing that, sausage or fish is acceptable. Cats are carnivores, I’ve no idea why you humans insist on using grains, corn, and lentils in your premade pet foods. Are you really so stingy that you refuse to allow them to eat real meat as nature intended?”

“Demanding little thing aren’t you?” Tony laughed, scratching lightly behind one ear, making the cat’s eyes slip to half mast. “And beats me, SI never looked into the pet food market. Hey Clint, can you get one of the bots to fry up some bacon? They don’t listen to me anymore.” She gave him a mock glare.

“If it’s for puss there, forget it.” He replied not turning around. The problem with Loki’s new method of communication was that you had to be looking at it. “You can make it yourself.”

Tony scowled. Yeah, Loki had turned Clint into his butt monkey with the scepter, but that was ages ago! Get over it! “Come on Cupid, you’re in my house, you use my bots? Then you make food for my … whatevers,” she finished, stumbling slightly. What were she and Loki exactly? Loki batted at her hand with one paw, annoyed that she’d stopped petting him to think. She grinned and continued. Who cares? She’s Tony fucking Stark, she’s whatever the hell she wants to be.

Pepper finished her two pancakes and walked over to Clint and said something quietly to the winged toddler which made his wings droop. He nodded and motioned for the same bot who took out the chocolate chips to get bacon out of the refrigerator. Pepper beamed at him and kissed his cheek.

“I’d like everyone dressed and ready in forty-five minutes, that means you Tony.” She turned to look at the inventor sternly.

“Of course Pep! My public needs to see how hot a girl I make! I’ll pull in lesbians now! It’s an unexplored market.” She looked proud of herself. Loki and Pepper both glared at her. “What?” she asked, feigning cluelessness. The cat and CEO glanced at each other and rolled their eyes. “Hey! No ganging up on me!” Tony protested. Loki and Pepper working together was a scary thought. She was pretty sure if Loki had had Pepper on his side, he really would have succeeded in taking over the world.

Pepper headed out to do whatever she did before a press conference and Bruce wandered into the kitchen, wearing small Hulk feet slippers (Tony had ordered and put in his closet last night) and rubbing sleepiness from his eyes. “Morning.” he yawned, sitting across from Tony and then yelping in surprise when he found himself on Natasha’s invisible lap. He jumped up like he’d been set on fire, stammering apologies to the spy, his cheeks pink.
The ever present tablet lifted off the table and It’s fine. was typed out on the notepad app she kept up. I’ll move over.

“Pancakes?” Clint offered as one of the bots put Loki’s bacon in front of him.

Loki nibbled it daintily.

“Yes please, and chocolate milk?” He looked hopefully at the cherub, who was even shorter than he was.

“You got it.” Clint took a deep breath, looking determined, and then fluttered over to the refrigerator in a fairly straight line, retrieved the milk and chocolate syrup and placed it in front of Bruce with a glass. Bruce gave a big happy smile and stood on the bench to stir together then ingredients.

“You are so cute, Brucie.” Tony cooed. “Can I adopt you?”

Bruce smiled at her, amused. “I thought you already had.”

“Yeah, but I think I must be ovulating, cause I want you to be my own little boy.” She grinned back at him, enjoying the others winces of discomfort, although whether it was at the idea of her having a cycle or her being responsible for a child, she wasn’t sure.

Heaven help us all if you get pregnant. Pepper should put you on birth control. Natasha typed out and shoved the tablet under Tony’s nose to make sure the other woman read it.

“Rude.” Tony sniffed and shoved her empty plate away. “Well lady and gentlemen, and I use the term extremely loosely, I must get ready. My public awaits. You coming?” she asked the god, who shook his head and returned to his precious bacon.

“Suit yourself, fur ball.” Tony replied and headed upstairs. Makeup wasn’t that hard. She literally was a rocket scientist (among other things) she could figure make up out!

It turned out she couldn’t. She ended up looking like someone had given her two black eyes and then punched her in the mouth. She looked sulkily up at Pepper who dabbed at her eyes with a makeup remover pad.

“Being a girl’s hard,” she whispered to her girlfriend, as though she were imparting an important secret.

Pepper laughed softly. “It can be. But it can also be fun.”

Tony leered at her and wiggled her eyebrows. “I found that out this morning.”

“Several times as I recall.” Pepper smiled, amused.

“Hey, the multiple orgasm thing? Awesome. If I could figure out this make up thing I’d be set.” Tony replied earnestly. A thought crossed her mind and she frowned and looked away from Pepper, nervous. “Hey Pep, would you be mad, if I ended up being a girl for a long time? I don’t know how long this is going to last.”
Pepper shook her head, eyes soft. “I love you for you, not your body, although that’s always a nice side effect. You can’t get rid of me just by switching genders.”

Tony hugged the taller woman tightly, carefully avoiding getting make up on her white suit. “Love you Pep.”

“Love you too.” She then glanced at the clock and briskly whipped the rest of the makeup off. “Now, I’ll do your makeup, Jarvis is corralling the rest of them, and we’ll be out in front of the building in five minutes. Capiche?”

Tony nodded and submitted patiently to the foundation, eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara, lip stick, and whatever other powders she was covered with.

The press was pretty used to press conferences with the Avengers by now. They held one after each major battle, and attendance went up and down depending on their condition after a battle; sometimes Thor would be off visiting Jane or doing deeds of daring do in Asgard, or Clint or Natasha would be on a mission, or Tony would be at a conference somewhere, usually dragging Bruce along with him. They were used to seeing different numbers of their super heroes on the stage. This was a new one though, even for the older more jaded reporters.

They watched, various details for their articles cataloged in their heads as Pepper Potts (A living example of the American Dream wrote Time Magazine. Rags to Riches! Was Forbes not entirely accurate byline; as Tony Starks PA she’d made more in a month than many people did in a year. To many peoples amusement, the National Enquirer had run a story on hidden codes in the Harry Potter books that revealed the exact date of the apocalypse instead) stood at the podium, joined by Captain America, and an unknown (statuesque) (attractive) (self possessed) (wearing a black chanel wrap dress that ended above the knee, a red silk scarf around her neck falling demurely over her chest, Stuart Weitzman high heels studded with diamonds, hair up in a tasteful half up do, make up minimal but flattering) woman wearing sunglasses, a small dog (corgi) (Jack Russell terrier?), a small boy (Stark’s new heir?) (Tony Stark’s love child!) (New poster kid for a charity they’re supporting probably) (Did Stark get shrunk again?), and a… was that a cupid?

Some of the more Greek mythology savvy writers immediately started making (inaccurate) connections between the satyr villain of yesterday, and the fluttering cupid before them. In the back various photographers snapped photos as Pepper moved to the podium, the chatting reporters silencing at her expectant smile.

“Thank you everyone for coming,” she said pleasantly. “I am sure you all have many questions, and I promise we will answer them as best we can. Tony Stark will give a brief statement, and then we’ll open the floor for Q&A.”

The press waited patiently for the handsome billionaire to step forward, and was very surprised when the brunette with the sunglasses stepped forward instead. In one graceful movement she removed her sunglasses and whisked off her scarf revealing the arc reactor imbedded in her chest, grinned cheekily at them and said, purposely quoting herself, “I am Iron Man.”

There was a stunned silence and then a multitude of flashes as the cameras tried to capture (Toni Stark) (Tonya Stark) (Antonia Stark) (Iron Woman) (the Iron Maiden!), who preened under the attention, posing for the cameras like she was on the red carpet. Finally she waved her hands in a
‘down boys’ fashion and the blinding lights tapered down to something more manageable.

“As you clever folks have doubtless figured out, we had a little incident two days ago during our last battle. Our own God of Mischief was having a pissing contest with what we’re calling a fae, some of you may have heard of him, he goes by the name of Puck, see Shakespeare for more details.” Whispers broke out amongst the crowd and she again waved them silent. “For some reason he didn’t take my blasting him through a couple walls well,” she paused for their laughter. Even as a woman she still had it, they were still eating out of the palm of her hand.

“Apparently he decided to teach us all a lesson. You see the amazingly attractive results before you. We’ve been told by a trusted source, no I can’t tell you who, Ms. O’Conner, you cheeky flirt,” she winked at an older female reporter who’d started to ask, "that Puck tends to get bored easily, and we shouldn't be stuck like this for too long. I do not have an exact estimate though. Immortals tend to have different time schedules than the rest of us.”

She swaggered over to the assembled heroes and gave the press a smile, sun glasses once more in place as they took the cue and more photos were taken. “So I’m sure you all are wondering what happened to our merry band?” she asked, smiling at their cheers and questions, gesturing to them like Vanna White introducing a new puzzle on Wheel of Fortune. “You all know Captain America, the Star Spangled Man with the plan? His little punishment isn’t too bad; he’s stuck speaking only German. I’m sure you all can appreciate the irony.” The crowd chuckled in agreement. “Our hunky God of Thunder (copyright still pending) is this adorable little pup over here.” Thor jumped up on his back legs, tail wagging and tongue hanging out. The cameras flashed eagerly, this was fantastic, these photos were going to sell like crazy! “Our archer Hawkeye got a little shrunk I’m afraid.” Clint had a fixed smile on his face, looking like he really wanted to stab Tony in the eye with an arrow. Tony seemed to notice because she quickly moved on to Bruce. “And you all remember my science bro, Bruce Banner?” The women in the crowd, and some of the men, cooed, utterly charmed when Bruce shyly waved a hand.

“Where’s the Black Widow?” one reporter asked.

“Oh, she’s here. She’s just invisible.” Tony replied, amused.

“Of course she is.” “Pull another one!” “Come on, Tony!” the reporters laughed.

“No seriously. Widow?” She prompted, turning to the end of the odd line. Natasha obligingly picked up Thor, who licked her invisible face happily.

“There you have it. The whole gang.” Tony grinned. “Any questions?”

They obviously did. Tony grinned. She kind of loved this. It was a huge power trip, having your every word hung on. She didn’t like it when her privacy was invaded of course, then she got snappish and pissed off, but when they conformed to her schedule, then she loved it. She’d been the media’s darling since she was twenty one, throwing them quotes, catch phrases, and scandalous photos, using the attention to piss off Obadiah, her board of directors and anyone else who managed to catch her ire. Thou shalt not piss of Tony Stark lest she smites you on the front page of every magazine in the US and some foreign ones. And the press ate it up. The crazier and more ridiculous she got the more they loved her.

“Do you prefer Mister or Miss Stark?” one reporter called out, curious.

“I’ll answer to either.” Tony shrugged.
“And how are you dealing with the new equipment, Miss Stark?” a male reporter asked, looking slightly ill at the thought of loosing his own.

“Well having to sit down to pee is a little weird. I’m kind of diggin having a pair of my own tatas to take wherever I go though,” she joked. The crowd, appropriately, tittered in response. Pepper rolled her eyes, her lips twitching slightly.

“What designers will you be wearing in this form?” One of the fashion magazine reporters asked eagerly.

Tony shrugged. “The usual ones I suppose, though as you can see,” she gestured to her shoes. “Pepper’s helped me expand my repertoire a bit.” Several reporters nodded sagely, Pepper Potts was known for her outstanding taste in shoes.

The questions turned to more serious things after that.

“What will the Avengers be able to protect us if Puck comes back? Mjolnir is still in the middle of the street next to Madison Square Gardens, can Thor still lift it?” a Times reporter asked.

Tony shrugged. “I’m not sure, he hasn’t tried it yet. As to threats, well despite how awesome we are, we’re not the only super hero team in New York. We’re coordinating with the Fantastic Four, and we’re asking Spider-Man to stop by the tower to figure out if he wants to work with us too. We’re also communicating with the mutant community, and Daredevil and Electra are being contacted as well. We’re also not all out of the game. We’re not sure how Brucie and big green are going to work, but they were already breaking the law of mass conservation, so who knows? I’m working on a smaller female friendly suit, and Black Widow’s even more dangerous than usual.” Clint fluttered up behind the animated woman and poked her in the shoulder pointedly. “Sorry Cupie, forgot about you for a second. Once Hawkeye’s gotten a better hold on the whole wing thing he’ll be back in business too.”

“Are you sure you can trust mutants to protect normal people?” an older man from the back asked, looking disapproving.

Tony looked at him seriously. “Yes I do. Mutations exist in all of us, my genius is a mutation, so are blue eyes, so was the first monkey who was able to stand up for long periods of time without a back ache. We are all the result of a long line of mutations. I am not going to turn away from those with gifts that can help save my city.”

“So would you say you’re pro-mutant Mr Stark?” another man asked, a voice recorder shoved toward her.

“Absolutely. It doesn’t bother me where you get your super powers as long as you use it to help the world, not harm it. You can get it from an accident in a lab, or as a gift from mystical powers from beings unknown, or land here after Krypton explodes.” She paused for laughter. “Or if you build superpowers yourself. It’s what you do with the power you’ve got that matters. Being a hero means not walking away from bullies, it’s saying no when you see someone being discriminated against.” She grinned self deprecatingly. “I’m not a very good super hero. I’m selfish. I fight for the people I care about, to clean up the mess I made. And I fight to show off. Real heroes are men like Captain America here, or Daredevil wherever he is at the moment. But I get by.” She finished, with a grin.

“I’m sure many here would disagree with you Mr. Stark. Many of us consider you a true hero.” One
argued.

“Aw, my blushes.” Tony smiled, swooning and fanning herself dramatically.

“So, would the Avengers fight Magneto if he came to New York again?”

“Last time he was here the Avengers weren’t formed and I was a bit busy being captured by terrorists. But yeah, we’re not going to support murder or genocide. I’ll treat a kid with mutant powers the same way I treat Brucie. Just because he turns into the Hulk doesn’t mean he’s wrong or bad, or anything else some of you have claimed. If you prick him does he not bleed? If you hurt him, will he not get pissed off? And if you shoot at him with very large guns, will he not beat the shit out of you?” she waxed poetically. “But being a mutant isn’t a disease. It’s not something that needs a cure, or that should be quarantined.”

“So the Hulk is not a threat?” asked a copper haired woman.

Tony beamed at her. “Summer darling! How’re you liking New York? Big story to start off with huh? To answer your question, nah. He likes to smash. We have lots of things that need smashing. He’s a good guy really, once you get past the mean green exterior. I’m glad to have him on the team and watching my back.”

“Dr. Banner, have you regressed mentally to a child?” a young reporter asked eagerly and his older partner slapped him on the back of the head and rephrased the question. “How are you dealing with your change, Dr. Banner?”

Bruce stepped forward, his shoulders hunched defensively. “It’s a lot less stressful than what usually happens when I change sizes and need new pants.” He joked tentatively. The crowd laughed appreciatively. He perked up a little. “My theory is that the other guy, the Hulk, took on most of the more childish qualities of the spell. Mostly he’s wanted chocolate milk and ice cream, since it started.” he admitted, and then slid behind Steve, embarrassed at the questions. A few of the women in the crowd cooed.

“Ms. Stark, Ms. Potts, how has the sudden change affected your relationship?” a woman from Entertainment Weekly asked eagerly.

“We’re better than ever, right Pep? And I’ll be an even more amazing and understanding boyfriend if I end up enduring a period.” Tony grinned at the pleased looking women in the crowd and the uncomfortable looking men.

“Miss Potts? Your thoughts?” another asked politely.

Pepper smiled. “Despite what many seem to think, I fell in love with Tony for who he is, not his money, his body, or his power. I fell in love with the man who can multitask twenty different things at once, all speeding along like a bullet train. I fell in love with a man who’s snarky and vain and excessive and brilliant. I fell in love with a man who flirts with everyone, but completely forgets everyone else when I walk into a room, because he loves me with his whole heart, both of them. And his suddenly becoming a her changes none of that.”

Tony could feel herself tearing up and darted forward, standing on tip toe to catch Pepper in a passionate kiss, one knee bending at a ninety degree angle, utterly ignoring the camera flashes and the cheers. A few minutes later they pulled back, their foreheads touching gently and she told her softly, “I love you Ms. Potts.”
“I love you too Ms. Stark.” Pepper whispered back.

The rest of the press conference went quickly, with a few questions for the rest of the Avengers – “Thor bark once for yes, two for no!” and “Hawkeye, are you still going on missions in your current state?” When Natasha was asked rudely “Black Widow! Are you wearing any clothes?” and a small knife imbedded itself in the concrete at the man’s feet, Pepper decided it was time to wrap up.

“Well, I think that went splendidly!” Tony laughed as she walked back into the living room, stretching her arms over her head luxuriously.

Steve glared at her like he wanted to say something but huffed instead.

Tony grinned broadly at him. “Come on, Cap! Lighten up! I know you hated the whole USO singing and dancing bit, but it’s part of the super hero gig! And they adore us! Hang on our every word! We get fan mail galore! I see kids running around in Iron Man t-shirts and SI is now working on an Iron Woman line! Iron Maiden? Iron Woman? Eh, I’ll figure it out.”

Steve crossed his arms. “Es sollte eigentlich darum gehen den Menschen zu helfen, Tony; Nicht ums Geld verdienen oder darum, von Menschen gemocht zu werden.”

"I’m sure you just said something very wise and important, but I can’t understand a word that comes out of your mouth, so oh well.” Tony smirked.

"Sir I can translate-"Jarvis offered.

"Nah, I’m good.” Tony replied, grinning as Loki gave a leap off the bar and landed on her shoulder, scenting her again. "Missed you too babe. But telling the public about our torrid love affair wouldn’t be a good idea. Pepper would divorce me and I’d end up with only 4.65 billion. I don’t know how I’d survive.” She grinned at Pepper behind her, who looked amused.

"You’d manage." She told her calmly. "But I’d take the kids."

"Noooo!” Tony wailed dramatically. “Not Happy!”

“I already have Happy, remember? I’d also take Rhodey. And Jarvis.”

“No way, Jarvis loves me best. Right Jarvis?” She folded her arms defiantly.

“Anything you say sir.” Jarvis replied dryly, and Tony pouted.

"Knock it off Tony, you’re making my head hurt.” Clint demanded, fluttering past. "That was exhausting and humiliating. Why did they have to see me? Why couldn’t we just say I was still in the hospital or something?”

"Aw, shy about getting your picture taken?” Tony teased. “But you look so cute in your little clothes and little baby booties!”

“Bite me Stark.” Clint growled adorably and fluttered up into the rafters to sulk.
“He’s very ashamed.” She whispered to Loki. Loki purred like a little motor next to Tony’s ear, enjoying Hawkeye's bad mood. Tony giggled. What?! It tickled! And it was not at all because she was giddy about having the god of mischief decide she was the best mortal ever. Not even a little bit. Nope!

... 

Okay, maybe a tiny bit.

German translated for me by Lokia -

"Es sollte eigentlich darum gehen den Menschen zu helfen, Tony; Nicht ums Geld verdienen oder darum, von Menschen gemocht zu werden." – It’s supposed to be about helping people Tony. Not making money or making people like you.
Thoughts and minds

Chapter Summary

In which Steve can't run anymore and has to open his eyes, Thor is introspective, Natasha makes a new friend, Tony and Loki talk about magic, the Hulk gets a cookie, Nick Fury is pissed off about everything, Darcy watches the Colbert Report, and Clint and Tony find out more about Thor then they ever wanted to know - but it's still hilarious.

Chapter Notes

I wrote out these shorter dabbles within the story, it's basically sad happy sad happy, etc. A lot of it is very introspective and sad, because, if you look closely, that's what the Avengers are. You can't avenge something until it's gone wrong. And for all of them, things went very wrong in their lives. But the point of being together is to find some measure of happiness and home again. Hopefully you'll see that in these pieces.

Next chapter will go back to the regular one person format.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

THOR

Thor regarded the large viewing crystal called a television thoughtfully. The man (or was that woman?) of iron was flipping though the channels, pausing to listen to clips of the press conference from earlier. And once again his brother was curled on the woman’s lap, licking one paw smugly.

‘How I wish I knew what goes through your mind brother.’ He thought wistfully. But gone were the days when Loki would take him into his confidence. He missed those days dreadfully, though he had not appreciated them at the time. His brother seemed unbothered by the spell, easily adapting to having four feet instead of two, his magic compensating for his inability to speak, and he appeared more grounded, saner, similar to the man he had been before the events that lead to the shattering of the bifrost.

Thor himself felt useless and weak in this form. He could not fight, could not even communicate his thoughts to his fellow warriors. Although he and Loki could understand the Captain when he spoke as the Allspeak spell their father had created translated all languages and dialects in their heads and allowed those they spoke to understanding of what they said normally no matter their forms, now Puck’s spell was preventing anyone from understanding his barks and Loki’s meows. It was most unfortunate.

And now the mortals on the television labeled him adorable. Warriors were not supposed to be adorable; they were supposed to be fierce and deadly! He sighed and put his head on his paws. His eyes again fell on his brother and Anthony Stark. What was it about this mortal that called to Loki
so? Thor knew he was not the sharpest sword in the armory, but he was not stupid; compared to his brother however, he often appeared hotheaded and foolish, something that was not considered a fault on Asgard, but here on Midgard… here Loki’s gifts were considered the more desirable. Intelligence, wit and cunning were all viewed as traits heroes and great men and women should possess. It was her intelligence that attracted him to his Jane, who must be missing him by now, though no doubt the Lady Darcy would discover his predicament on the twitter. Hopefully his beloved would understand.

The whole affair was baffling. And discouraging. He could smell his brother’s scent all over the mortal with his enhanced nose, claiming her as his own. Was Loki interested in taking her as a wife? It would not be the first time he’d taken up with a being outside the Æsir, though this would be the first since the deaths of Nari and Vali. The Allfather had not been pleased with their births. Looking back, Thor questioned the rightness of their extermination. The twins had actually had normal forms, unlike the rest of Loki’s children. He wondered absently what the Lady Pepper would do if his brother did announce such intentions for her mate. Mortal ways were still strange to him, and he was unsure if she would be inclined to share, even with a god.

His thoughts were interrupted by the Captain who entered the room and clapped his hand to his thigh, catching Thors attention.

“Hey Thor, you want to go for walkies?” he asked, Anthony glanced up from the television, uncomprehending.

Thor wagged his tail eagerly, all gloom forgotten. He liked walkies.

**FURY**

Nicholas Fury glared angrily down at the keyboard on his desk. Being a big ass monkey was not on his list of things he wanted to do with his life. They’d had to assign a tablet with text to voice abilities to every single agent they had: over three thousand. That was not in the budget for this quarter and it had taken ages to circumvent the various scanners that protected everything from their machinery to the barracks to the food pantries. Eyes had changed shape and prints had been altered when their forms had, and voice recognition was rendered utterly useless. Faced with not being able to access ANYTHING even he wondered if they had perhaps gone overboard with security. Coulson, as usual displaying an almost psychic ability to anticipate his orders had appeared with a couple of Starkpads – and didn’t that rankle, having to use that arrogant jackass’s tech just to communicate with his own second in command! It was a disaster. He really hated monkeys. And he was pretty sure he was allergic to his own damn fur.

He kept one of the vid screens up monitoring the various news stations, and silently thanked whatever god had created Pepper Potts and stuck her with Stark. If the man (or woman at the moment? Whatever, Stark was an annoying pain in Fury’s furry ass either way) ever made the mistake of firing her, Coulson had a standing order to offer her as much as she wanted to join Shield. As it was she curbed the stupid genius’s more reckless tendencies. He wished she’d consulted him first before the press conference, but reminded himself that Potts didn’t answer to him, and as such would have no idea he didn’t want Barton being presented to the world looking like a fucking two year old from a Christmas play.

With the Avengers out of commission it was an invitation for every god damn super villain in the tri-state area to come knocking. And the damage from that last battle was astronomical. The President was demanding to know what the hell they were supposed to do with that much cheese, and the
French were sighting some old treaty that said they weren’t allowed to alter the Statue of Liberty or reparations would have to be paid. Mother fucking cheese eating surrender monkeys. And no he didn’t give a shit if the flying cars were still parked on top of the UN! His migraine had appeared when he got reports that Deadpool had used that fucking giant ass poodle to rob a Mexican restaurant and had proceeded to feed the dog twenty pounds of tacos. Civilians were passing out from the methane gases it left in its wake! The mercenary had also spray painted a giant missive reading “Awesome fic Selina!” on a Shield convoy in bright purple, and no one could figure out what the hell it meant, or who Selina was!

“SIR?” Coulson’s tablet said, the monkey himself looking politely concerned.

Fury typed out carefully. “I AM SICK OF THESE MOTHER FUCKING MONKEYS WHERE MY MOTHER FUCKING AGENTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE.”

Coulson had the gall to look amused. “SHALL I GET YOU AN ASPIRIN SIR?”

Fury signed heavily. “YEAH. AND GET ME DOCTOR STRANGE ON THE PHONE. MAYBE HE CAN FIX THE CHEESE THING.”

“OF COURSE SIR.” Cheeky ass agent.

Where the hell did he get a Shield issue suit that fit a monkey his size anyway?

STEVE

Steve had been running. For a very long time. Most of his life in fact. He used to run toward things though. He ran towards the war. He ran towards a destiny he didn’t understand. He ran to rescue Bucky, to help the men he felt gave him purpose, whom he represented to the American people, even when he felt he was making a fool of himself. He ran into enemy territory, barely sparing a thought for his own life, his own questionable mortality. And then he ran away from those he cared for with the bomb. And when, after the ice he awoke, he had kept running. Because keeping still hurt. Keeping still meant thinking about the time he’d lost, the people he’d lost, the possibility of family with Peggy, of children, grandchildren. Of friends and neighbors and battles and men lost. Of Bucky lost. His best friend. His brother and partner and other half. Bucky Barnes was gone, and it was Steve's fault. No, he could not hold still. Could not think of that.

When he’d first seen Tony Stark, it wasn’t that he saw a man unlike his father, the man he’d known. It was that he saw HOWARD. Howard who had gotten a chance to have everything Steve would want and now couldn’t have. Tony was brilliant and cutting and damaged and so very, very like Howard. And it made Steve’s heart ache. So, he’d pushed the man away. Pushed every button he could find, became a caricature of himself so that Tony would not WANT to be around him. And it worked, for a while. But then Phil died, or seemed to die, and it was one more person who admired him, who saw him as a hero, who he couldn’t save. And Tony was hurt by it too, and he wouldn’t, couldn’t turn away.

So he became the leader of a group of super heroes, all of whom were older than he was, if you didn’t count the 70 years on ice. But if he kept running, kept busy, then he wouldn’t think of that. Wouldn’t have to look past the exteriors of his teammates, wouldn’t have to have his heart broken into pieces seeing how damaged they all were, these people he led, and had come to care about.
Pucks spell had changed all that. Suddenly, he couldn’t run. Couldn’t distract himself, couldn’t command. And if he couldn’t command, he had to follow. That’s what a soldier does, and deep down, at his core, Steve was a soldier. But no one was giving him commands. There was no enemy to fight, Puck had disappeared, Loki was not behaving threateningly. And was, at least with Tony and Bruce, becoming more accepted than Steve himself was. Steve admitted he had only himself to blame for that though. He had never been sure how to deal with Bruce and the Hulk. And Tony was still so painful. Brought up so many hard, painful memories.

Shield had no orders for him either. He was useless. And nothing was more frustrating or painful for Steve than feeling useless. He had no way of dealing with what was going on. He had clung to what he knew when he woke up in the twenty first century. He knew strategy and he knew honor and how to fight bullies. He did not understand magic and gods and aliens from another planet. And now… now he had to stop. Had to sit and listen. And not talk, because no one could understand him.

He saw how happy Bruce was being a child, and how tentative he was to embrace it, because everything good in his life always went away. He saw Tony, who took to her new form like a fish to water, exploring and experimenting like she did everything else that caught her interest. She was honestly utterly unbothered by her new form. Bruce had said she had freaked out for the first few minutes back at the hospital, but after that… it was like she threw a switch. Male. Female. It was more alien to Steve than any of the Chitauri. The two men (or man and woman) had always gotten along beautifully, and now that Tony was a woman and Bruce a kid, Loki seemed to slide in to a space no one had known was there. Bruce had only ever really been comfortable around Tony, and perhaps Pepper before this. But now, if Loki entered the room, leapt onto a chair next to him, or perched behind him on the couch, Bruce breathed. It hadn’t been right away. At first they’d been leery of each other, Loki having been smashed by the Hulk was probably the cause. But they’d come out of Bruce’s lab together yesterday evening, having clicked. And Steve did not click. Did not fit anywhere. He remained outside. Tony didn’t trust him, didn’t really want him around. If anything he felt anything at all towards Steven it was pity and annoyance. Bruce was still leery, and looked at him like he represented something to run from : military. He couldn’t help any of them. He remained on the outside.

He saw how hurt Clint was by the lack of his ability to fight, to defend. Steve wondered if he was running too. He also saw Natasha. Or rather, he didn’t see her. Which somehow, with her, made her more visible. Her sudden inability to distract, to manipulate, to use her appearance, or her expressions or whatever spy training she had to keep others from getting close, made Steve actually consider what was going on in her head. Her Shield files gave a very brief background on her, most of the details were above his security clearance. But one of the things that struck him hardest was a transcript from before the battle with Loki, a discussion between her and Clint. It was brief, only a couple sentences.

“Have you ever had someone take out your brain and play? Pull you out and send something else in? Do you know what it’s like to be unmade?”

“You know that I do.”

The files spoke briefly about how she’d grown up, in Russia, trained as a spy from a very young age. But until he read that brief dialogue on a sheet of paper, he hadn’t thought about what that meant. What she was. She was not a woman who played pretend, was an actress like some of the women in
the USO shows he’d done were.

She unmade herself. On every mission she did, every time she went undercover, she would carefully take herself apart, throwing away any part of herself that did not meld with the mission, the part she played. She could build whole personalities, based on other people’s wants, what they expected to see, what they needed to hear. She changed her hair, her speech patterns, her walk. For Tony, when she had been Natalie Rushman she’d been clever, quietly strong, inviting Tony to confide in her, to view her as someone he could trust.

And she did that _every time_. Left only her skills, and the people she answered to, because she didn’t trust herself to decide what was right. Truthfully, on a scale of morality, of instinctive knowledge of right and wrong, Steve was fairly sure Loki would be considered a better person than her. Loki knew right and wrong, for the most part. He just chose to ignore it. Natasha had no real concept. Clint had saved her, had gotten her to choose to listen to him, and use him as her marker, her corner stone. Before that, after her previous owners, and it hurt to call anyone that, but there was no other word for it, had stopped giving her orders, she’d been lost and simply took whatever jobs, whatever orders someone gave her. The money, he was fairly sure, never mattered. It was being given a purpose. Clint and Shield gave her that purpose. Gave her an identity to slide into. Because, aside from memories which were fuzzy, and her skills, she was empty. She unmade herself so often that there was nothing left.

Her file said she had multiple personalities stored within herself, that she could adopt any of them as needed. In some ways that was true. But in others, she kept them because they were part of her skills. The Avengers, that was her new mission. Her new purpose. And sometimes, he’d catch a look on her face, before the invisibility, that he only now wondered about. A slightly pained look when Tony would look at her untrustingly or Bruce would make a wry comment about her manipulation techniques. Or even Loki would look for her during a battle, wary of the petite mortal with no supernatural abilities. What kind of woman could lie to the god of lies? A woman who wasn’t lying. One became whoever she needed to be so completely that it became truth.

Sometimes she frightened herself. He was fairly certain of that. Little things. Like the way she avoided mirrors. Or the way she had cut off her beautiful long hair between her time at Stark Industries and whatever she was doing prior to her being sent to get Bruce. As though she was distancing herself, or punishing herself. Or the way, very, very rarely, he had caught her watching Tony and Pepper with the slightest hint of yearning. Maybe she missed being part of their team. A team that wasn’t so broken, because Pepper Potts held Tony together, and maybe she had also held Natasha together. Maybe she made Natasha happy. Her being invisible, and unheard, was painful for Natasha, he thought, because it pointed out the obvious. That no one ever really saw her, and no one heard her, not even herself.

As for him, Thor was the one he could relate to best. A god from another planet made more sense to him than the son of an old friend, a scientist who had attempted to recreate his own transformation and two people who were soldiers, at least in the most basic definition of a soldier. Thor couldn’t speak either, stuck as a dog as he was. And he was as much on the outside as Steve was. Watching helplessly as the man he considered his brother drifted farther and farther away, while being closer than he had been in years. The relationship between the two was complex and confusing. And it hurt Thor deeply. And Steve could understand that, some of it. And Thor could understand Steve. When things got over whelming, when the tower seemed stifling, and painful, and full of hidden traps they couldn’t see or comprehend, they ran.

Steve was good at it. Even if they were calling it walkies.
Being a kid again was kind of…liberating. He had told the reporter earlier that he was fairly sure the other guy had ended up with most of the more childish qualities. That wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t the whole truth either. The Hulk was a child to begin with, in the way that a child’s brain is basically the lizard brain, all emotion, need, and wanting to survive. He was really only about four years old, since it had been four years since the accident. But Bruce had neglected him for most of that. Tried to get rid of him, terrified that the Hulk was him, was a monster he had hidden inside of him. That he was like his father, if not worse.

Then the Hulk had protected Betty. Twice. And Bruce realized that Hulk wasn’t a monster. Not that he was a misunderstood teddy bear either. The Hulk had a violent streak, probably due to how people treated him since his “birth.” And he liked breaking things.

Puck’s spell however, seemed to offer the rage monster a sense of peace. Tony had called it a magical xanax, which was typical Tony. And the Hulk now spent more of his time awake, rather than buried in Bruce’s subconscious asleep, waiting to break out and defend himself. And he had laughed. You could have knocked Bruce over with a feather the first time he heard it in the back of his mind.

They had been watching the news, the afternoon after the battle. The Hulk had seen Deadpool riding that ridiculous poodle, and he had thought it was funny. He’d become almost annoying actually. He liked sweets as it turned out. A lot. And was constantly pushing images of candy, cakes and ice cream into Bruce’s mind.

Bruce wasn’t entirely sure he wanted the spell to be cancelled. Having this much of a say in his life, being able to feel strong emotions without waking up later, half naked and surrounded by debris, it was a miracle. A gift. And he liked the familial feeling he got with Tony and Pepper. And with Loki too. The other three were still feeling each other out, still tentative. Well, Tony wasn’t tentative. Tony threw herself into everything. So when she decided she liked Loki, that Loki was important, part of her strange little self made family, then that’s what Loki was, end of story.

Pepper was more cautious, especially after Tony had almost died in the Chitauri attack, but she also knew about, and harbored a grudge against, the World Security Council, who had been the ones to fire the nuclear missile at New York. At Tony. That made her angrier than Loki’s epic temper tantrum ever could. But she was nothing if not pragmatic. And since she had worked for Tony even when he was building weapons of mass destruction that would kill hundreds if not thousands of people, her sense of morality was probably pretty fluid too. So Loki? She’d deal with it in the same way she dealt with every other crazy thing Tony did. Accept it and turn it into something positive, something that could help Tony or the company. And if it couldn’t be turned? She’d get rid of it. Somehow.

Both of them accepted him. And the Hulk. Well Tony did. But Pepper didn’t tip toe around him either. And after the conversation they’d had, he felt safe around Loki too. Judging by the fact that the Hulk seemed to want to ‘pet the kitty’ whenever he saw Loki, he didn’t feel threatened by the god either. He was safe with these amazing, dangerous people. And they were safe from him. And they liked him. He was pretty sure that was a miracle worthy of a god. He refused to think about what would happen after. After was after. Now, he was happy. And he’d cling to that happiness with all his might.
‘COOKIE?’

Bruce rolled his eyes. ‘We just had a banana an hour ago.’ He mentally replied, unsurprised by the interruption.

‘WANT COOKIE.’ The Hulk demanded sulkily.

‘You mean you want A cookie.’ Bruce had decided that it was high time he worked on sentence structure with his other half.

‘YES. WANT A COOKIE.’ There was a pause, and then a frustrated, ‘PLEASE.’

Well, reward good behavior and all that, Bruce supposed. ‘Chocolate or peanut butter?’ he asked, pushing the button in the elevator that would take him up to Clint’s kitchen.

‘YES.’ came the hopeful response.

‘You can have one now, and one after dinner. Which do you want now?’ Bruce asked firmly.

‘….CHOCOLATE.’ The Hulk decided after a minute of thought.

‘Good choice. I like chocolate too.’ Bruce smiled.


TONY AND LOKI

Tony quickly grew bored of the TV and left it in the capable hands of Clint and his BBC America love affair. Instead she headed down to the workshop; Loki perched on one shoulder, looking around curiously before leaping down to land on the lab tables.

“Fury would have a heart attack if he knew you were down here. Remind me to send him the recording later.” She winked at the god. “So, oh God of Mischief, any chance you’d be willing to submit to some scans? I’d reaaaaally like to figure out the whole science/magic thing.” She smiled winningly at the cat, who blinked at her in amusement, as she tapped at several vid screens, presumably preparing the scans she desired.

"Your machines will not pick up much that would aid your goal. Midgardian technology has not advanced to the point where it can detect the more complex energy signatures. If you desire however, I would be willing to teach you some basic theory. For example the energy contained in the machine in your chest lets off a kind of magic. It is why the scepter of Thanos was unable to control your mind, his magic was at the same frequency, and they cancelled each other out.” He told her. It was pleasing, to work with someone who shared his drive for knowledge, even a mortal. Anthony pleased him on multiple levels really. There were very few in any realm outside Alfheim or Vanheim that could keep up with his mind. Fewer still who challenged him in return, who flyted with him eagerly, whose past shared a great deal of similarities to Loki’s own. That the man was also attractive, whether male or female was simply a bonus.

“Hell yeah! Jarvis, you getting this?” the woman demanded, sliding over in a wheeled chair to look at him attentively. It was rather pleasant; he’d not had a student in several centuries.
“To begin with, magic is manipulated energy that re-shapes the world around us according to the casters will. To get that energy, the caster, if mortal as in your case, has three options. They can use the limited energy within themselves – which is their own life energy, and is a dangerous undertaking, as if used up and not given a chance to restore itself will kill you. They can use items of power, tools which pull from the life around them – plants, animals, other beings, and direct that to their will, or they can call upon an experienced, powerful magic user, such as an Æsir, Jötun, Vanir, or elf. Each species has their own form of magic because each has a different kind of energy, and the caller must hope the one who answers the call is in the mood to be benevolent.”

Tony nodded. “So magic is based off all life energy?” she asked, clarifying.

Loki hesitated. “There are forms of magic that use the brief burst of energy as a being dies as its source. Mortals have referred to it as Dark magic, although that is a misnomer. The darkness has positive energy as well, and can be more full of life than the light. For example your planet has a plethora of life that grows in your oceans where light never touches.”

Tony made a noise of agreement.

“It is properly termed Death Magic. Such magic has a monstrous appetite and will devour the untrained and ultimately everything in its reach. Thankfully it is not self sustaining and eventually burns out when it runs out of fuel. But I digress. Within regular magic there are many subtypes. You are most familiar with matter manipulation” he gestured with a paw to her current form, “healing magic which uses energy to accelerate the body’s natural abilities, conjuring, and offensive magic, which you have witnessed me use as a projectile. As you do much the same with your science I shall not to go into that particular type of magic.”

After Tony nodded her acceptance he continued.

“Magic can also be used connect oneself to the life energy of Yggdrasil, the world tree, and from it, see into possible futures. My mother, Frigga was particularly adept with this type of magic. I myself never had the patience for it.”

“Thor’s mentioned the world tree before, what exactly is it?” Tony interrupted.

“Yggdrasil is,” Loki paused, searching for the words. “There are nine known realms that the tree connects. You might define them as specific points in dimensions or worlds, for lack of a better term. Each is connected to one another, and if one is magically sensitive enough, they can slip from branch to branch, exploring each without the use of the bifrost. It is how I gained the name Sky Walker. Some are, or were, planets. Asgard was a planet once, long ago, before a series of wars with Jötunheim broke it into pieces. Now it is a smaller asteroid, the life on it protected by the Allfather's magic, which not only prevents the atmosphere from breaking away, but also artificially provides light. The other eight realms are Midgard, Jötunheim a planet of ice and darkness, Muspelheim where the fire demons dwell, Vanaheim home of our sister race the Vanir, Nidavellir where the dwarves live, Alfheim home of the light elves – the dark elves were destroyed by Odin's father, King Bor. Their home world still remains, it is called Svartalfheim - the dark world.” he added seeing her curious look. “Helheim is one of the two realm of the dead. It is named for my daughter who rules over it. Its counterpart is Nilfheim which houses Valhalla, where the souls of champions of Midgard are brought by the Valkyrie to serve under Odin during the next Ragnarok.”
Tony blinked. “That’s a little… insane.” She finally said.

Loki gave a cat shrug. “*Some Midgardians seem to have grasped the concept surprisingly well, despite how small their abilities with magic are. I have heard them referred to as neo-pagans.*”

“She’s a little… insane.” She finally said.

“Huh, how ‘bout that? I never thought those tree huggers had a clue what was going on, who knew they knew more than I did!” She paused, gathering her thoughts. “So do the other pantheons exist? I mean, Zeus, Osiris, Jesus or whatever?” she asked.

Loki glanced upward in thought. “*Zeus and his queen Hera and their realm of Mount Olympus do exist, though they are not part of Yggdrasil. It is similar with Osiris and his family. I have never come across your Jesus, but his existence is not out of the question.*”

“They’re not part of the world tree? But they are connected to earth? I mean they had to visit for us to know about them right?” Tony asked, confused.

Loki’s tail lashed in agitation. “*The way it was explained to me when I was a child, was that it is as though another tree tangled its branches with ours, close enough that the insects under the bark could intermingle. I have visited Olympus on several occasions. There I took the form of a goddess and went by the name of Eris. I believe they are still cross with me over that minor war in what is now Turkey.*”

“Huh. I guess gods have long memories.” Tony murmured, still overwhelmed at the onslaught of information.

Loki arched a be-whiskered eyebrow. “*You have no idea.*”

The lesson continued on into the night, both oblivious to the passage of time, equally delighted with the other, questions were asked rapid fire, new theories suggested, refuted or expanded upon, some even Loki hadn’t considered. Jarvis recorded dutifully, and in the privacy of his own server, wondered if the god would remain after the spell ended. He hoped so. He made his creator happy in a way she’d not been since the death of her mother.

**CLINT**

It took some digging, but he’d eventually unearthed the child's bow and arrow set Coulson had given him as a gag gift several Christmases ago. It fit his pudgy little hands perfectly. He grinned wickedly, and carefully pulled out a bag of one of Bruce’s calming teas from his pocket, tying it to the arrow. This would teach that damn cat to mess with his mind. He might not be able to kill the bastard, or even shoot him in the eye socket, but hey, an eye for an eye right? Turnabout is fair play, blah blah blah. Loki messed with Clint's mind, he'd mess with Loki's.

He fluttered up to his preferred rafter and waited patiently for over an hour, fell asleep, woke up when the sun rose, and waited some more until his target stepped out of the elevator. He ignored Tony, narrowing his attention to the black cat winding around the woman’s ridiculously expensive high heels and….

He released the arrow.

It hit the ground directly in front of the cat, spraying its contents all over both cat and shoes.
“Clint, what the fuck man!?” Tony demanded, her hands on her hips.

And Clint cackled.

Loki had sniffed the tea curiously and gone wide eyed. He gave a low purr and rubbed his face against the carpet, sniffing it, and looking intoxicated.

“Clint, what the hell did you do to my Loki?” Tony asked, after watching the odd display for several minutes.

“Catnip.” Clint replied proudly, in between laughs.

Loki flopped onto his back, his smoky magic letters appeared, oddly disjointed and in different sizes. “Anthony, you are my faaaavorite mortal. Do you know this?” he asked in between sniffs.

“Oh god, you got him HIGH!” Tony moaned, falling onto the nearest couch, looking torn between amusement and horror.

“This is a most pleasing odor.” He informed them, zoning out for a minute before asking out of the blue, “Do you know how we discovered Thor was a thunder god?”

Tony looked curious. The question had never occurred to her. “No.”

“No what?” Loki had lost track of the conversation.

“How did you know Thor was a thunder god?” Tony repeated patiently.

Loki snorted, causing the pieces of catnip to drift a few inches. “Every time he pleasured himself, it would rain. And when he reached climax, lightning would strike and there was a biiiiiiig thunder clap.” He looked up at them from upside down, eyes dilated. “Asgard does not have storms. It is allllllways sunny. Except when my brother espied a pretty maiden! Then we’d have a storm eeeevery night for weeks!”

Clint couldn’t breathe for laughing. He’d never expected this.

Tony didn’t seem much better off. “And how did they find out? That it was him that caused it?” she asked between guffaws.

“I caught him!” Loki boasted. “All of Asgard was in a panic! The Allfather didn’t understand why his magic had failed.” He did a wiggle like he was making a snow angel in the tea before continuing. “I walked into his room. I needed a book. It was a good book, and Thor had stolen it because he was mad that the Vanir he fancied liked me more. I was adoooooorable. And I discovered him in bed, and he was grunting like a bilgesnipe struggling with a parrrrrricularly difficult bowel movement!” The god paused to make a choked little snicker and then continued. “I was only two hundred years old at the time, and thought he was in pain, so I threw off the bed covers to see what the matter was! Imagine my shock when I found him naked! Naked naked naked. Naaaaaaaaked…”

“And what happened then?” Clint demanded eagerly.

“Hmmm? I was frightened by the noise, and his nakedness, so I ran to Mother! And she told Father! I have yet to see him turn such a color again! And Thor was soooo mad at me for telling, he attempted to sell me to a Jotun as a slave. But mother caaaught him!” He somehow managed
to communicate a sing song voice through the movements of his tail. “But THAT made meeeeee mad
and so I told the whoooooole court why the storms came. He didn’t leave his room for a year! And
everyone laughed at him whenever it rained!”

The giggling cat was suddenly tackled by a very angry Thor, whose large ears were flattened against
his skull, barking at him furiously. Loki didn’t seem to even notice his anger.

"Thoooor! Hello! Have you ever smelled this plant? It is like Valhalla in a tea bag! Would you
like some? I believe the archer has more. He has veeeeery nice arms, don’t you think? But I like
Anthony best. Anthony smells pretty, and she is nice to me, and we talk about magic! I like magic.
And bacon. I’m huhuuungry!”

Thor noticed the writing, and his eyes widened, and then he barked angrily at Clint and Tony,
obviously realizing that something was wrong with his brother. More so than usual anyway, Clint
thought.

Tony waved her hands wildly. “Don’t blame me Bolt, I didn’t give him the kitty weed.”

Thor turned his eyes to Clint, who quickly fluttered out of the dogs reach and laughed at him. “What
are you going to do? Choke the chicken and hope I get struck by lightning?”

Thor actually bounced when he barked this time, and they could see dark clouds gathering outside,
blotting out the sunrise.

“Father eventually tied his powers to Mjolnir, and now lightning only comes when he’s mad. He
killed a dragon with it once.” Loki added, looking unconcernedly at the threatening weather.

Clint gulped.

“He also carried around a blanket everywhere until he was almost four hundred years old.” Loki
told them helpfully.

NATASHA

Natalia Romanova didn’t really mind being invisible much at first. It was the not being able to talk
part that bothered her. She didn’t talk much normally, but when invisible it made talking a little more
necessary. Things like “I’m sitting here,”, “Don’t put that burning hot pan on my hand,” and “Stop
trying to shoot me with paint balls Stark or I swear I will end you.” She also couldn’t help her
partner much, and without Coulson around, Clint needed someone he could vent with. Stark was
working on a miniaturized version of the archer’s bow and quiver, but until then as far as she knew
he couldn’t use his Shield issued ones. And feeling as humiliated as he did by the whole cherub
thing, he was not in a good place mentally. She thought it brought up bad memories from his time at
the circus, and his brother, and a whole boat load of issues he normally kept buried under layers of
snarkiness, practical jokes and his Shield training.

And why did the super soldier who slept for seventy years and woke up to find all his friends’ dead
turn out to be the most emotionally stable person in the tower? she wondered. Stark was bipolar, had
ADHD or some combination of the two, along with his PTSD, and major issues with authority;
Bruce had his obvious rage issues, and the multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity
disorder, whatever they were calling it now; Clint had his own PTSD after the Loki incident – and if
the cat hadn’t been able to teleport, she’d have delivered him to Shield by now. Even if they couldn’t
have held him for long, Clint would feel better for a little while. And the family issues between Thor
and Loki were a Freudian’s wet dream, especially with their chosen weapons being a hammer and a
spear.

As for her… the Red Room was not known for instilling their agents with anything resembling
sanity. Natasha’s sense of self was fluid, she could slip from one persona to another, like a normal
woman changed shoes. She was never entirely sure if the persona she presented to the other
Avengers, to Shield, was even real. Most of her emotions were feigned. She could feel them
sometimes, if it was part of a persona she wore. But usually she reacted based on what others
expected her to be feeling. She could feel some things though. Right now she felt tired. And lonely.

Her weary thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of a Skype request on her tablet. She opened it
and found herself invisible face to (currently visible) face with Susan Storm, aka The Invisible
Woman of the Fantastic Four. The beautiful woman smiled at her.

“Hi, is this Agent Romanoff?” she asked politely.

Natasha typed out a Yes? in the text area.

The woman was utterly unfazed with the apparent lack of a person on the other end. “I’m Sue Storm,
Tony Stark contacted me? He thought you might want someone to talk to who understands the
whole invisibility thing.”

Huh. Every once and a while Stark managed to do something considerate and it always threw her
through a loop, especially when it was also well thought out. Dealing with invisibility by herself
wasn’t quite what she had expected. There were a few problems she’d been having…

She typed out -Please. I’ve had to wear the same uniform for the past three days, otherwise I
look ridiculous. I understand you developed a fabric that turns invisible with you?

The blonde woman beamed. “I know exactly what you mean! I kept ending up naked in the middle
of the street, and then turning visible again! It was a nightmare, and made me feel like a poorly
written sexy lamp character.” She laughed. “The fabric bends light around it, which is what my
power does. Since yours is magically induced it’s slightly different, but worth a try. Would you like
to come to the Baxter Building for the afternoon? I can fly over and pick you up. You can borrow
one of my extra uniforms for now and then we can threaten Richard until he creates some more.  I
have to warn you, my brother Johnny will probably try to hit on you,” she grinned wickedly, “but
you have my full permission to hit him back.”

Natasha gave a rare, unseen smile. Thank you, it’ll be nice to get out of the tower, even if I’m
just going to another one. I’m curious if you’ll be able to see me.

Sue looked thoughtful. “Maybe. Magic always seems to throw a wrench in science. It always drives
my husband crazy, when he manages to pay attention to anything outside the lab.”

I know what you mean. Stark doesn’t come up for air for days at a time when he’s in the
workshop. Banner’s the same way.

Sue looked curious. “What’s it like, living with Tony Stark?”

Natasha made a little frowning emoticon and then typed. It’s a roller coaster.

The other woman laughed again. It was a nice laugh. “I just realized you’re the only woman on the
Avengers. We can bond over being the token female in a group of macho men and self absorbed geniuses. Do you like frappuccinos? There’s a Starbucks downstairs that doesn’t even blink anymore when I order while invisible.”

Natasha typed out a smiley face. **I love frappuccinos.**

Perhaps the whole invisibility thing wouldn’t be so bad. She’d been Natasha for months now without a break. It’d be nice to be Natalie again for a little while. People *liked* Natalie, wanted to spend time with her. They didn’t automatically avoid turning their backs on her. Even Pepper couldn’t forget entirely about Natasha, even when she tried to do girl time together. Shoe shopping wasn’t the same when you knew your shopping partner was choosing her shoes based on how many ways she could kill someone with them.

**And please, call me Natalie.** She added, feeling almost happy.

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**JANE AND DARCY**

In New Mexico, Darcy Lewis threw popcorn at the screen, giggling like a mad woman. “Your boyfriend is a corgi!!” she informed her friend, who glared at her.

“Well, that explains why he didn’t call.” Jane Foster muttered.

“And Arms got turned into a valentine delivery boy!” Darcy continued, chortling.

“I just don’t understand why Shield didn’t let me know about it.” Jane continued, ignoring her (now full time and paid) lab assistant.

Darcy shrugged. “Maybe our clearance wasn’t high enough? Or maybe they got punked too.”

“Maybe…” Jane looked down at her lap uncertainly.

“Oh *come on* Jane, you know the big guy’s nuts about you.” Darcy assured her boss, rolling her eyes. “If his unending wooing isn’t enough to convince you, maybe the fact you two do the horizontal tango for at least FIVE HOURS when he comes to visit will? I don’t know how you don’t end up with some really bad chaffing.”

“DARCY!” Jane yelped, blushing horribly.

Darcy was completely unabashed. “You know it’s true. Hey, if you ever need a break, feel free to tag me in.” she added hopefully. Hey, what kind of bisexual woman would say no to a tumble in the sheets with a guy with amazing pecks who along with the designation as God of Thunder, was also known as a fertility god? Darcy sure wouldn’t, Meow!

“I’m not going to dignify that with a response.” Jane sniffed.

“Fiiiiine.” Darcy said, turning back to the television with a grin. “Hey look, Stephen Colbert is accusing Stark of being the anti-Christ again!”

“Nation! We in the US have a problem, and it’s not just bears!” The comedic pundit announced to
his cheering audience. “Tony Stark has once again proven that I am right! At a press conference earlier today we found out not only is he rich, handsome, and living in a phallic shaped building with a self proclaimed pagan deity, but now, he’s a cross dresser!” he stage whispered with wide eyes. The crowd cheered. “I know, I’m scared too. But fear not! I am not taking this sitting down, even though technically I am. I know that Tony Stark is, in fact, the anti-christ. And I know I’ve said that before about Obama, Julian Assange, and that Gangnam style guy, but this time I’m really sure! And tomorrow, I get to demand answers from the very attractive woman himself, Tony Stark!” The crowd roared with delight.

“Maybe Animal Planet will do an interview with Thor.” Darcy suggested.

Jane hit her in the face with a pillow.

Chapter End Notes

AN –The Avengers are a mess aren’t they? I’d still love to live in Avengers Tower though. Eye candy galore! Plus, Jarvis, the most awesome AI in the history of ever.

I mean no insult meant to any Christians, and certainly not to any pagans, especially since I am one. As far as I know in the Marvel universe Christianity has not popped up like the other pantheons have, I may be wrong though, so I left the idea open ended. My explanation of magic is a mix of Marvel, mythology, my own beliefs, and fantasy novels.
The Colbert Report

Chapter Summary

Tony goes on the Colbert Report, and the snark is on overload.

Chapter Notes

For Silver who begged for this. :)

Tony grinned. She was lounging backstage in ‘The Eagle's Nest’, sipping a very girly cocktail (it was pink and had cotton candy in it!), and waiting for her cue. In the mean time she observed the jumbo screen, where Stephen Colbert was giving his usual pre-show introduction.

“Tonight! Will the mutant registration act pass in congress? And will congress ever pass me the croutons? Then! a new device from Hammer Industries! Will it revolutionize the world, or is it the final Hammered nail in the coffin? And my guest tonight Tony Stark is currently a woman! She’ll tell me what it’s like to have to sit down to use the toilet. And finally, news is pouring in about the latest Lindsay Lohan scandal! When did the last one end? This, is the Colbert Report!”

Pepper had arranged for her and some of the other Avengers to do the rounds on the various popular talk shows. After what had happened last time, it was unanimously decided that neither Thor nor Steve did well on the Colbert Report. Both took his character far too seriously. Instead Steve was on the Daily Show, Thor was on Ellen, Clint was still-not-leaving-the-tower-fuck-you-very-much, Natasha was hanging out with her new BFF Sue Storm, and Bruce was on Oprah, as they’d decided it was least stressful, and didn’t interfere with his self-prescribed nap time. Loki of course was also still in the tower. Probably. She wasn’t entirely sure what the god did when she wasn’t around.

Tony fiddled with her phone until she heard her name being called by a professional looking woman with a clipboard. She quickly checked her hair and tugged her dress into place, pausing on the edge of the stage.

“I don’t know what to think of the whole, liberal hero thing. Here to tell me what to think about the whole liberal hero thing is Tony Stark!”

Tony strode out, waving and blowing kisses to the crowd which predictably went wild, before grabbing one of the interviewer's chairs, spinning it around and sitting side saddle. Colbert meanwhile, already sitting across from her, put his fists up to his chin and mimed a girly squeal at the audience. Tony grinned.

After the applause died down Colbert turned to her with a solemn expression. “So Mr. Stark, I’ve got a bone to pick with you. You’re a girl.”

Tony laughed. “I certainly am, and call me Tony.”

“Of course, but only if you call me Stephen,” the comedy news pundit replied. “So how did this
“Oh you know, you wake up one morning, decide, hey, I think I’ll become a girl today, beat the pants off a magically powered super villain, and viola! Revenge vagina.”

The audience erupted yet again. Tony wasn’t sure if they were happy about the vagina or the beating Puck part.

Colbert waved a hand at the crowd, silencing them. “Well you seem to be adapting very well. I must say that’s a lovely dress.”

“Thank you-”

“Would you like to go out later? There’s this really nice café down the block…” Stephen offered, fluttering his eyelashes outrageously.

Tony laughed. “Thanks, but I think Pepper might get mad at me if I took you up on that.”

“Pepper Potts?”

“Yes.”

“The CEO of Stark Industries?”

“Yes.”

“And you’re… gay together?” Colbert finished in a loud horrified whisper.

Tony threw up her arms embracing the crowd, grinning at the hoots and whistles. “Who isn’t gay for Pepper?” More cheers. “But yeah, I’m totally in lesbian with Pepper.”

“How old are you?”

“I’m 35.”

“So, it’s not a college phase thing.”

“Don’t think so. Hey, Stephen, tell me the truth, do you and Stewart do the dance with no pants?”

Stephen looked briefly amused at his guest, before putting on an expression of confusion and in a soft girly voice said, “Jon said it wasn’t gay as long as one of us wore a dress.”

“Well there you go then. Pepper and I both wear dresses, so it can’t be gay.”

The crowd roared with laughter and Stephen nodded sagely.

“So, Tony, tell me about being an Avenger. It must be awesome, and it’s something that seems to be a family tradition. Thank you again for the shield by the way.” He gestured to the Captain America shield hanging on one wall “It’s my pride and joy!” he finished with an exaggerated squeak.

“I couldn’t think of anyone who would appreciate it more than you, Stephen. That was a prototype my Dad made in the forties I found in the basement. Steve has the vibranium one, and it seemed wrong to just leave it gathering dust.” Tony then leaned forward conspiratorially. “And since you were running for president at the time, it only seemed right.”

Stephen crossed his arms and affected a pout. “I won too!”
Tony patted his arm consolingly. “I know you did. How dare the electoral college choose Obama instead?”

“I know! I’m so much prettier!” Stephen whined childishly, then grabbed Tony’s hand and asked in a sad voice, “Is Captain America mad at me?”

Tony laughed. Last time they’d done the rounds Steve had gone on the Colbert Report and been totally thrown by the fast paced comments and had thought the character of Stephen Colbert was a serious journalist. He’d gotten very angry at Stephen and walked out.

“I think you were just too much for him. He wasn’t cool enough for your show,” she replied, giving the audience two thumbs up when they laughed.

“But he chose Jon over me!” Stephen said, head bowed theatrically as the audience went ‘Awww.’

“But you get me this time.”

“That’s true! In the past you always turned down my invitations. Did you not like me either?” he pouted.

“Of course I like you. I sent you the shield remember? The real reason is that Pepper decided if we were on the same stage the universe wouldn’t be able to handle the sheer amount of snark and would explode.”

Colbert fell out of character slightly, laughing. “Really?”

“Oh yeah. She’s convinced we’re actually siblings. Which isn’t impossible, Pop did plant a few wild oats, even after he married my mom.”

“And I could be an oat?” Colbert asked, looking delighted.

“You could be an oat.” She confirmed.

“Yaaaay!” Stephen clapped his hands happily. “So do I get an inheritance too?”

Tony grinned. “There is a sub department in SI’s PR department for things like that. Usually they spend most of their time handling claims of me having sown my own oats, but Dad’s gotten a few too.”

“So what would that entail? Do I have to submit a family tree or..?”

“Well I have at least three blood tests sent out to different labs across the US, and then SI does their own test. If they all come back positive then I do one myself. It hasn’t turned up a sibling for me yet, but it could happen.”

“Have any of your tests come up positive? Is there a Tony Jr. out there?”

Tony laughed. “Not to my knowledge, but is possible. Condoms aren’t one hundred percent effective after all. But back to your earlier question about living with the Avengers.” She gestured dramatically, as if opening the curtains on the scene of a play. “Imagine, if you will, the most awesome Justice League comic book you ever read, where all the biggest super heroes are working together and defeating some huge villain about to take over the world, and there are fireworks and explosions and everyone is super all the time.”

Instantly forgetting his previous question, Stephen leaned forward eagerly. “Yeah?”
“It’s nothing like that.”

Stephens face fell and the audience cracked up.

“You’re rooming together, with very large personalities, who are mostly used to living alone, being unquestioned, some with no knowledge of technology, and one who’s an alien prince, all living together in the most technologically advanced building in the world. We’ve got five men and usually two women, (although now we have three men, a dog and three women) and we don’t always get along. Most of the fights aren’t with super villains, they’re stupid things like who left the toilet seat up, or who gets to choose dinner that night. Steve always wants to listen to Bing Crosby and Glenn Miller, while I prefer AC/DC and Black Sabbath, and Thor likes Wagner and German opera. Everyone fights over who gets to use the washing machine first, and what to watch on tv. Currently the argument is about whose job it is to take Thor for walkies, usually Steve ends up doing it.” Tony gestured as she spoke, enjoying herself thoroughly.

“But there’s super hero stuff too right?” Stephen begged desperately.

“Well sure. Black Widow keeps cleaning her assassin knives in the dish washer. Do you know how hard it is to get alien blood out of the grime trap? Or Hawkeye uses us for target practice with nerf guns from the ceiling, which drives everyone crazy. Thor is always leaving Mjolnir lying around in the living room, and since no one but him can move it, everyone but Natasha trips over it at night.”

“So basically it’s a sit com with super heroes?” Colbert asked.

“Basically.”

“All right, I need to get serious here for a minute.” Stephen said, looking very serious and sober.

Tony smirked. “You do that.”

“You created an AI-“

“Jarvis. Yes.” She was very proud of her baby.

“And that’s an acronym?”

“Yes. For Just A Rather Very Intelligent System.” Okay, Jarvis was actually named after her butler from when she was a kid, but a powerful woman like her didn’t go around revealing things like that. That was the sort of thing terrorists and people like Justin Hammer took advantage of.

“That’s a mouthful.”

“Hence the acronym.”

“Is he going to take over the world?” Stephen demanded.

Tony’s smirk widened. “What makes you think he hasn’t already?”

“If he has, could he help me figure out my Facebook password? I forgot it.” Stephen asked hopefully.

“Ask me again after the show, I’ll see what I can do.” Tony replied, amused.

“Well thank you so much for joining us, Tony Stark everybody!” Stephen announced, he kissed the back of her hand suavely, she waved to the crowd and to thunderous applause Tony exited stage right.
Tony laughed. She should have gone on this show ages ago. Stephen was no Loki or Bruce, but the man could keep up with her with word play, and that was always a treat.

Pepper was waiting for her on the other side of the set. “Tony, did you really have to mention the wild oats thing?” she asked, looking frustrated. “We’re going to get a huge surge of false claims for money from every idiot whose mother told them their daddy was Howard or Tony Stark.”

“Eh, so charge ’em for the tests. They want to inherit billions, they should be willing to back up their claims.” She replied, waving off the problem. “How’s Steve doing downstairs?”

Pepper rolled her eyes at her. “Stewart was prepped beforehand and is being gentle. I think Steve’s still overwhelmed a bit though. Poor guy.” She added, looking like she’d been forced to kick a puppy.

“He has to get used to it eventually.” Tony pointed out. “It’s not like the world’s going to change just because Captain America blushes every time he sees a girl in a bikini.”

Pepper raised an amused eyebrow. “Which is exactly what you were trying to prove when you were prancing around in one this morning weren’t you?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Any news from the X-Men about taking over for us for a while?”

Pepper sighed, but had long since become accustomed to Tony’s rapid topic jumping. “Professor Xavier said he couldn’t put his student’s lives in danger, but that he had several former students who were willing to do a bit of mutant PR by taking over for a week or two.”

“Oh yeah? Any big names?” Tony asked curiously.

“Wolverine and Storm are the only two you’ve heard of I think. We probably won’t actually see them; they’re working through the NYPD instead of Shield, since Shield’s still figuring out their own problems.”

Tony snickered. “I really love magic sometimes.”

Pepper ignored her. “The Fantastic Four have already agreed of course, Spider-Man hasn’t responded yet, and Daredevil and Electra said they were sticking with Hell’s Kitchen.”

Tony sighed. “Well, hopefully we’ll all be up and running again before any big name villains get any ideas. Did Thor pick up his hammer?”

Pepper laughed and pulled up a Tumblr feed on her Starkpad and showed her a gif of the doggified god padding down the street on his stumpy legs holding the hammers leather strap in his mouth, head held high to avoid dragging the weapon on the ground. “He dragged it all the way from Madison Square Garden to the tower. Tumblr is exploding with pictures and video clips. The NYPD is just glad it’s not in the middle of the road anymore. Oh, and Doctor Foster and her assistant called and asked if they could come visit Thor, I assured them we could put them up in the tower and sent the jet to get them.”

“Awesome! I’m tired of being outnumbered by the boys.” Tony replied without the slightest hint of irony.
Pepper shook her head. Her former boyfriend was adapting way too easily, it was slightly unnerving. She’d even managed to do most of her own make up that morning!

Tony offered her a martini glass. “Pink punk cosmo?”

“Is that cotton candy?!” Pepper asked, faintly disgusted.

“I like them. They’re fun and girly.” She pecked Pepper on the mouth and then sashayed off to find Steve, hips swaying provocatively.

Pepper face palmed. “How is this my life?” she muttered.

One of the camera crew grinned at her. “Lady, up until a couple years ago I was a parakeet. Magic makes everything crazy. You get used to it.”

Pepper blinked at him, shocked and then nodded. Maybe she would take that drink after all…
Chapter Summary

The avengers get into a battle with Magneto and Tony almost loses something very important to her. Thankfully, the girls are total bad asses. So... just FEEEELS.

It turned out the Hulk was still full sized when Bruce changed, even if Bruce was not. The clothes he had been wearing however, did not survive the transition between child and eight foot tall green giant. It was all just...hanging out there. Not that the giant had anything to be ashamed of. As one woman in the crowd had said ‘Daaaaaaaym!’

Tony had been playing Mario Kart with Steve, and beating the spangly pants off him by the way, when Coulson had taken over the screen.

“Jarvis! What have I told you about allowing corporate monkeys to hack into my video games?”
Tony demanded.

“My apologies sir, Agent Coulson informed me there was an attack.” Jarvis responded, sounding slightly annoyed at the accusation that he would let just anyone hack into any part of the tower for no reason. And it wasn’t hacking anyway, not when he guided the line of communication exactly where he wanted it to go.

“Well get on with it, Curious George.” Tony said, waving one hand at the screen. Steve had mostly given up saying anything to anyone but Jarvis and Thor, so he just listened attentively.

Coulson began typing on the other side and a computer modulated voice began to speak. “Magneto and the Mutant Brotherhood began attacking the East Side approximately three minutes ago. It seems he took your comment in the press conference as an invitation Stark. The Fantastic Four are dealing with a Doom attack in Newark and so they can’t make it. The X-Men's ETA is thirty minutes.”

Tony rolled her eyes while Steve glared at her accusingly. “Stupid bucket head,” she muttered. “Okay, I’ll go round up the others. Bruce and Clint are going to be cranky though, it’s nap time.”

She enjoyed his blink of surprise before the screen returned to the Mario Kart game which was flashing ‘GAME OVER’ at her. She pouted, before telling Steve, “You go wake Thor up and get Natasha, I'll get the other two.”

Steve raised an incredulous eyebrow. How was Thor, stuck as a dog going to help? Tony was already running down the hall though, and orders were orders he supposed.

“Hey rugrat! Rise and shine!” Tony bellowed into Clint's apartment, the door being unlocked by Jarvis, which was only permitted during emergencies. A suction cup dart attached itself to her forehead from the bedroom. She blinked.

“How the hell did you get it to go that far? That had to be at least forty feet!” She pulled off the dart to examine it. Clint fluttered out of the bedroom, glaring.
“There had better be a reason you’re in my room Stark,” he growled adorably.

Tony shook her head quickly. “Right, forgot, sorry. Magneto attack. Suit up.” Then she darted down the hall toward Bruce’s rooms, ignoring the indignant “In what!!?” that came from behind her.

Bruce was curled up in his large bed, in small blue pajamas with little white lambs on it. Tony paused a moment to take in the cuteness, before striding over and kneeling beside him.

“Brucie! It’s time to wake up!” she whispered, reaching out and shaking the boy gently. “There’s gonna be a big battle and we need youuuuu.”

Bruce’s nose wrinkled, and he gave a small moan.

“Come on Brucie, wakie wakie. If you wake up I’ll give you a cookie!” Cookies in the tower had suddenly reduced greatly in number since the spell, and no one could hide anything from Jarvis’s all seeing eyes.

Bruce blinked and muttered, “Cookie?” before rubbing his eyes and sitting up. “What’s up Tony?” he asked.

“Magneto’s downtown. The Fab four are busy, X-Men are too far away, so we’re up,” she told him.

He groaned. “Yeah, I got it. We’re coming.” He tumbled out of bed, stopping only to put on a pair of slippers – not the Hulk feet one Tony was pleased to see, he seemed to like those and didn't want them getting destroyed or lost during the transformation.

They split up in the hall, Bruce headed toward the roof and the Quinjet while Tony darted down to the workshop. She’d finished Clint’s bow, quiver and new arrows last night around four am (she couldn’t possibly sleep after the catnip revelations the day before) and had planned to present them to the archer after breakfast, which had been a smoothie. After an all nighter Tony wanted nothing to do with solid food. She had hissed at the offer of sausage, Loki happily taking her share.

Speaking of Loki, he was observing Jarvis assembling her new Iron Maiden armor, which she’d started production of right after the spell and had been tinkering with and doing the wire work that only a human could do on and off for the past few days.

“**You don’t actually need breast cups,**” Loki told her as she gathered up the missing pieces spread out over the lab. Jarvis had doubtlessly told the cat what was going on.

“Yeah I know, but they're funny.” She told him, grinning wickedly. “And it'll mess with people’s heads.”

Loki’s eyes half closed in a smile. **“I can hardly argue with that logic.”**

“Nor should you. Any chance you can help me get the suit on? It’s hard to do without the assembly machine upstairs, and I didn’t have time to put it up there.”

Loki obligingly levitated each piece as she needed it, leaving her in all her Iron Maiden glory. She winked at him and snapped the face plate down. “See you after work, darling!” she told him, before shooting out the opened window. Loki looked thoughtfully after her.

Iron Maiden (yes she was going with Iron Maiden, she was Tony Stark, of course she was) found
the battle easily. It was hard to miss the lightning that flew down from the heavens. Seeing Thor with
his armor – presumably through magic – fitted to his tiny corgi body was enough to make her pause
in the air to laugh. The feathered helmet was a nice touch. The cape was a bit much though. He was
holding Mjolnir in his mouth, fighting an annoyed looking Magneto. Mjolnir was near sentient and
apparently did not like the mutant trying to tell her what to do.

Tony was distracted by a fireball thrown her way, dangerously close scorching the armor. “Hey, I
just got this detailed!” she complained, Jarvis already scanning the surrounding buildings until he
pinpointed the source of the attack. On the roof of one of the apartment buildings was a guy
completely surrounded by flames and laughing like a lunatic.

“Okay, I think we can safely put this one in the not sane category,” she muttered to Jarvis.

“Noted sir,” Jarvis replied with his usual sarcasm.

Tony darted toward the kid, dodging several more fireballs along the way.

“I’m afraid you need a license to have a bonfire in this area,” she announced to the kid, hovering
before him.

He giggled and replied with a strong Australian accent, “I don’t need no permit! I’m Pyro, pleasure
to make yer acquaintance, yer ladyship.”

“Yeah, pleasure's all mine,” she answered absently, more interested in the information Jarvis was
feeding her.

“I've a friend who’d really love to meet ya Sheila,” he told her, grinning.

“Friend? And don't call me Sheila.” she added, focusing, only to be slammed from behind into a
building. “Ow?” she quickly broke away from the hole, barely missing the enormous flame monster
the boy had seemingly made. “Okay… Not good. Where’s Dummy and the fire extinguisher when
you need him?”

She darted away from the large, clumsy grabs, the air around her getting hotter. “What is this thing
Jarvis?” she demanded.

“It seems to be a construct made of pure fire sir,” he replied after a second.

“Oh good,” she muttered, and jetted toward a roof top water tower. Pyro seemed to figure out her
intention – it was kind of obvious after all – and suddenly there were two of the bastards, this one
blocking her path to the water tower. She threw a punch at the being, only to have her gauntleted
hand go right through it like it was normal fire, which it wasn’t, cause fire doesn’t feel solid when it
fucking punches you! Which it then proceeded to do.

“Holy fire demons, Batman,” she muttered, head spinning, before being punched by the other one
behind her into another building. “How the hell do I fight these things?” she demanded, mostly to
herself. The majority of her weapons were made for blowing things up, or electrocuting them, or hell
she could even do hand to hand if she had to, but how to you defeat a creature made from an
 elemental force? She had exactly one fire suppression missile full of coolant, but the kid would just
summon up more!

“Perhaps this particular enemy would be suited better to someone else, sir?” Jarvis suggested. “Suit
“Yeah, got that,” she muttered, darting between the two behemoths, which, thankfully, were pretty slow. Jarvis zoomed in on the kid- Pyro, who was watching with manic glee on the roof top. “Oh. Duh. I’m an idiot,” Tony muttered, zooming past thing one and thing two, and bashing the surprised looking kid in the face, knocking him out cold. The flames around his body disappeared, and the two golems faded away into nothing.

“Okay, let’s pretend I figured that out immediately,” Tony ordered. “What’s going on with everyone else Jarvis?”

“Perhaps if you turned on your com, sir?” he suggested. “Mr Barton has been trying to get your attention for the last five minutes.”

“Oh yeah! I forgot he could still talk!” No one else could anymore, making the coms a bit superfluous.

“Stark, where the fuck are you?” Clint demanded through the now open com.

Tony grinned. “Just putting out a little fire. What’s up?”

“Yeah, I saw. Thor’s been trapped in a big metal ball by Magneto, and he’s having problems getting out. The Hulk’s busy with that Quicksilver kid, he’s too fast for him, it’s driving the big guy crazy, and Steve’s dealing with a shape shifter. You’re the only one left, he just reroutes my arrows.”

“Great… Put the woman in a suit of armor against the guy who controls metal. Great idea,” she replied scathingly. But Clint was right. And maybe she could get the guy monologuing long enough to allow Steve, Hulk, or Thor to come to her rescue. She pouted. Being the damsel in distress was gonna suuuuck.

She flew over to where Magneto was bouncing the metal ball containing Thor like a tennis ball, and hid a wince. That couldn’t be pleasant, even for an immortal god.

“Hey Magneto!” She called over her speakers, catching the man’s attention, “I see you got my invitation!”

The mutant smiled. He was rather handsome in an older distinguished sort of way, under the silly helmet. “Indeed,” he purred, turning to look at her and the guy had a voice that reminded her of a shot of whiskey, all warm and smokey and cruel. “I must thank you for your hospitality my dear.”

“Hey no problem, you know me, I love to party,” she quipped.

“Yes, although your guest list could be a bit more exclusive.” He tilted his head admonishingly.

“Sorry, my parties are always getting crashed.” Where were the others? She was a sitting duck!

“I had actually intended to stop by for a visit before,” he told her, his hand slowly rising up in front of him. “I am so very curious about your little suit.”

“Everybody loves the suit,” she muttered, eyes darting around hopefully.

“Let’s have a closer look, shall we?” His fist closed.
Tony held her breath, terrified.

Nothing happened.

Magneto looked down at his hand in confusion, opened it and clenched it again. “That usually works,” he murmured, looking embarrassed.

“You know, I get that a lot,” she replied. What in the world?

The com crackled and a smug sounding “Meow” hit her ears. She grinned wildly. “I owe you one, kitten!” she said, and blasted forward, ready to beat the shit out of this guy.

Magneto seemed to guess her purpose, as various metal projectiles began shooting at her immediately. A piece of rebar managed to pierce through the suit on one of the arms, grazing her skin. It hurt and she could feel warm blood trickling from the wound. She shot the repulsors, blasting through the barrier of metal.

“I’m not sure what you did to protect your suit from me, but you don’t really think I’d come without a backup plan do you?” She heard Magneto ask over the roar of the repulsors. “I’m afraid your CEO and lovely guests did not make it back to your tower.”

For Tony it was like the whole world froze. There was ringing in her ears. She wasn't getting enough air. The tips of her feet and fingers were pins and needles. Pepper had left that morning to pick up Jane Foster and Darcy at the air field earlier. They had been running a little late, but this, this hadn’t occurred to her. Tony's vision narrowed to a single point and every piece of weaponry in her suit readied itself to fire. Every gun, every laser, every missile and bullet and bomb and plasma blaster were ready to wipe the mutant from the face of the earth. “WHERE’S PEPPER?” She screamed, despair, desperation and rage audible even through the computerized voice of her suit.

Magneto’s eyes widened, and for the first time in a very long time, he was afraid. He was no longer facing a hero, but a woman whose whole world, whose very sanity, was tied to one being, one he had taken away, had threatened. He was face to face with the Merchant of Death. And this was really going to hurt.

Darcy had been really psyched about this trip. She was going to New York, in a private jet, to hang out with gods and super heroes and Tony FREAKING Stark. Who wouldn't be psyched? So of course, that meant everything had to go ass over tits wrong. FML.

Their first clue something had gone wrong was that when they arrived at Stark's private landing strip – after drinking champagne on the ride over – it wasn’t Thor who came to meet them, or Thor on a leash and someone else holding said leash, but instead the CEO of Stark Industries Pepper Potts (who was one of Darcy’s heroes and she had to pause to mentally squee). She had smiled warmly and (needlessly) introduced herself.

“I’m afraid Magneto and the Brotherhood of Mutants decided to come challenge the team, so traffic's gridlocked. I hope you don’t mind, but I’ve arranged for us to have lunch at a small restaurant near here until the roads are clear again.” She was completely unruffled. Darcy was utterly impressed and possibly a little in love.
Then of course they’d been abducted by the lamest mutants she’d ever heard of. One was named TOAD. His power? He had sickly pale white green skin, hopped and ate flies and had a really long tongue. Gross. Then there was Blob – and boy was that an accurate description. He was really fat, and his power was that he was strong and unmovable. Darcy was kind of offended. She’d successfully tased Toad, but then she’d been knocked out by some fast talking Draco Malfoy wanna-be with speedster powers, and had woken up in glass cage, with Jane and Pepper AND they’d taken her taser. Rude.

“You’re gonna be sorry girly!” Toad told her, still slightly crispy looking, from outside the cage. He was apparently their guard.

“Did you really just call me ‘girly’?” Darcy demanded incredulously.

“Darcy, please don’t taunt the idiot.” Pepper said calmly, typing away on her Starkphone that they’d apparently not taken away. Morons.

“Because he’ll hurt us?” Darcy asked dryly.

“No, it’s just...” Pepper paused a second searching for the right word. "Tacky."

“Why aren’t yous all scared? You’s been kidnapped! By Magneto!” Toad demanded, confused and annoyed.

“We’re not worried, because we’re awesome. And you’re an idiot. And awesome, capable women don’t worry when a piece of scum like you puts them a closet. They just get out of the closet,” Darcy replied airily. Seriously, after the whole Destroyer thing? Toad was just kind of pathetic.

“You know, I’m allergic to dogs,” Jane told Pepper conversationally.

Pepper looked up at her sympathetically. “That’s unfortunate.”

Jane sighed. “When we told Thor we were coming to visit he danced around in happy little circles. It was so cute. I couldn’t tell him that if I even held him I’d break out in a rash.”

“Hey! Stop talking like I ain’t here!” Toad protested.

“Have you tried Benadryl?” Darcy asked, all three ignoring the mutant outside the cage who was literally hopping mad at being ignored.

“It makes me fall asleep. Half an hour and I’m out like a light,” Jane explained sadly.

“I’m allergic to strawberries,” Pepper told her. “Tony always forgets and brings me strawberry flavored food, because she thinks I like strawberries. She always says it’s a step in the right direction because she knows strawberries are important somehow, but it gets old when they can kill me.”

“I haven’t gotten laid in a year.” Darcy told her, feeling left out. She didn’t have any allergies.

Pepper looked at her pityingly. Jane rolled her eyes. Darcy might have mentioned this to her. A couple times. Maybe a lot.

“I know some very nice Shield agents if you’d like?”
“No jack booted thugs!” Darcy and Jane protested together, making the other woman hide a smile. “Or you might try one of the X-Men, they’re working with us right now, along with the Fantastic Four. Just stay away from Johnny Storm, it’s a well known secret that he’s a bigger man whore than Tony used to be.”

“I’ve read the tabloids, that’s kind of amazing?” Darcy asked, slightly shocked.

“He looks a lot like Steve- Captain America.” Pepper explained. “I think that’s a big part of it.”

“And who could say no to Captain America? It’s like, your patriotic duty.” Darcy nodded thoughtfully. “I can see that. Is that Wolverine guy taken? I’m not a fan of huge amounts of facial hair, but he’s gotta be a beast in the sack.”

“He has claws like knives that pop out of his hands.” Pepper noted.

“Eh, I like pointy things.” Darcy replied, waving the concern away airily.

“I thought you were going to do the female solidarity thing with me?” Jane asked, raising an eyebrow at her. “I can’t have sex, so you don’t have sex either?”

“Hey, I have been having solidarity unsexing for months. I was paying it forward.” Darcy protested.

“You women are crazy,” Toad informed them, looking shell shocked.

“I can’t have sex, so you don’t have sex either?” Jane asked, raising an eyebrow at her. “I can’t have sex, so you don’t have sex either?”

“Says the guy who chooses to eat bugs,” Jane shot back immediately.

Darcy beamed at her, pleased. “That’s my girl!”

Jane blushed, “You’re a bad influence.”

“I’m an awesome influence,” Darcy corrected.

“Jarvis says Shield is sending someone to get us out,” Pepper announced after a text message.

“I thought you said they all got turned into monkeys?” Darcy asked, confused.

“They’re outsourcing for the moment,” Pepper nodded. “Someone named Tabitha Smith is coming to get us.”

Toad paled. “Boom Boom? They’re sending Boom Boom?”

“What kind of a name is Boom Boom? Sounds like something from the Flintstones,” Darcy laughed.

“She’s called Boom Boom, cause when she’s around, things go boom. Mostly me,” Toad muttered, eyes darting around like he expected her to walk into the room any minute.

“Huh. Sounds like fun,” Darcy said.

“Yeah, you would like her.” Toad glared at her. “You’d shock me and then she’d blow me up. Why couldn’t Pietro have gotten guard duty?” He hopped around the small room, looking more and more anxious while the three women looked on curiously. “But no, let’s put Toad with the crazy women!”
“Thor’s probably kicking your friends’ butts. Even if he is currently a dog,” Jane pointed out.

Toad paused, considering this. “Yeah, probably. That’s just our luck,” he admitted.

There was the sound of an explosion in the distance. Toad’s eyes widened. “Ferget it, I’m outta here!” he decided and hopped out of the room, leaving the three women to stare at each other.

“Well, that was anticlimactic.” Jane said, looking almost disappointed.

“No, that was psychological warfare.” Darcy countered, feeling proud of herself. “Works better than a gun.”

Pepper laughed. “Even mutant toad men can’t stand to listen to girl talk.”

The door reopened and a girl around Darcy’s age with short spiky blonde hair looked around curiously. “Hey, are you the ones I’m supposed to rescue?” she asked, surprised at the otherwise empty room.

“That’s us. Are you Tabitha?” Pepper asked politely.

“Call me Boom Boom,” she replied, grinning wickedly and cupping her hands together, a small, glowing plasma ball appearing between them. “And you might want to get away from the door.”

The trio backed up into one corner as Boom Boom pushed the ball into the keyhole of the old fashioned padlock that held their cell shut, before turning away and covering her ears. The explosion rocked the small room, but the padlock was definitely history.

“Nice!” Darcy cheered.

Boom Boom laughed. “Let’s go ladies, there was a sweet looking jag in the parking lot that was calling my name.”

Jane looked slightly horrified at the idea of stealing a car. Darcy gave her a pointed look and gestured at their surroundings. Jane gave a sigh of acknowledgement and nodded. Pepper held back a smile and the four women exited the facility, Boom Boom tossing a few more of her explosives into the rooms they passed.

Darcy decided she liked explosions when she wasn’t in the middle of one.

Magneto was broken. His body was bleeding from multiple wounds, his bones pulverized, long ago having fallen unconscious and unable to answer any questions when Tony finally noticed the voice yelling in her ear.

“For fuck’s sake, Stark! They found her! Pepper’s fine!” Clint almost screamed, volume turned up as high and it could get.

Tony halted, dropping Magneto like he was a piece of trash, unbothered when he hit the ground stories below with a crash, looking like a broken doll.

“She’s okay?” she asked shakily, her whole body trembling, afraid she was being lied to.
“Yeah, she’s fine. Apparently she and Thor’s girls freaked out their guard and he ran off. Shield didn’t have to do anything but pick them up.” Clint told her, relaxing slightly now that she was responding.

“Yeah, that’s my girl.” Tony laughed shakily, eyes watering. She didn’t want to be in a world without Pepper Potts. She couldn’t. The entire world would suffer if Magneto or anyone else took her out of it. Tony had known, intellectually, that she’d feel this way if something happened to her. But actually feeling it, the sense of helplessness, the fury that she could not contain – wanting to destroy, to hurt and kill and leave nothing in her path alive, because if Pepper wasn’t alive then no one else deserved to be either. It was why Tony could never really be a super hero. Because she would tear apart anyone who tried to hurt the people she loved. Underneath Iron Man, under Tony Stark, genius, billionaire, playgirl, philanthropist, there was still the part of her that was the Merchant of Death. The part that knew, instinctively, how to destroy an enemy, better and faster and harder than anyone else could. And enjoyed it.

“Look, the X-Men dealt with the other members of the brotherhood. Mystique got away, but Thor managed to get out of his gerbil ball. We’re all going to meet up at the tower and celebrate. You up for it?” Clint asked in what was, for him, a gentle tone.

“Yeah. Yeah, I could use a drink,” she said. And she was not fucking crying. She was a Stark, and Starks are made of iron.

“Me too buddy,” Clint muttered. It was kind of scary, seeing Tony go berserk. It was worse than the Hulk in a way. He made a mental note to advise Fury to make sure Pepper Potts was under protective surveillance whenever she was out of the tower, for everyone’s sake.

Tony landed next to the Hulk, who was sitting utterly naked on top of some silver haired kid who was thankfully out for the count. “What’s up with your chair, big guy?” she asked, raising the face plate. The Hulk would never say anything about her face having tear tracks on it. And if Bruce remembered he’d understand and not say anything to anybody.

“HULK SIT ON STUPID FAST MAN,” he growled, grinding his bare ass demonstratively. “NOW FAST MAN NO RUN.” He paused, his head tilted like he was listening to something and then gave a put upon sigh. “NOW FAST MAN CAN NOT RUN ANYMORE,” he amended, and then looked at Tony hopefully. “HULK GET COOKIE?”

Tony laughed shrilly. “Yeah buddy, you can have all the cookies you want.”

Hulk grinned, tombstone sized teeth somehow managing to look cute in a terrifying kind of way. “CHOCOLATE AND PEANUT BUTTER.”

“You got it.”

It was weird to see the tower filled with so many people, some of them very interesting looking indeed. The Hulk had stuck around long enough to eat a forth of his body weight in cookies before shrinking back to Bruce, who immediately clutched his stomach, said he had a tummy ache and shuffled off to bed. Steve was happily talking to a guy covered entirely in short blue fur with raised designs on his skin and a tail, in rapid fire German. The blue guy was responding in English, because apparently Steve couldn’t understand German, just speak it. Thor was prancing happily around Jane
– whose eyes were red and watery, her skin slowly turning red, but seemed happy to see the canine all the same. Darcy – who turned out to be a spitfire of a brunette with an amazing rack, was hitting on a rather bemused Wolverine, who had speared a bratwurst on one claw and was alternating taking bites from it and smoking a cigar. A beautiful African American(?) woman with white hair named Storm, was poking Mjolnir curiously with one finger, delighted at the sparks of lightning it gave off when she did so. Jean Grey was having a conversation through telepathy with Coulson over the din. And some chick named Boom Boom was arguing with a stiff looking man in red sunglasses, apparently named Cyclops, about the legality of grand theft auto if the victim of said crime was a criminal themselves. Charles Xavier had been invited, but had decided to go with Magneto in the ambulance instead. There was a relationship more fucked up than anything Tony ever tried.

But Tony wasn’t interested in any of that. She was clinging to Pepper like an overly affectionate barnacle. Pepper had accepted her clinginess with good grace, and allowed herself to be dragged to the couch, where Tony had straddled her, one leg on either side of her waist, buried her face in the redhead’s neck, and steadfastly refused to move.

After a time, Loki wandered over; levitating a plate of food from the large buffet Jarvis had ordered. Pepper accepted it with a smile of thanks.

“I am also pleased that you are unharmed.” The cat told her, rubbing up against her legs affectionately. “I have grown most fond of you. I am not ready to lose you to my daughter’s realm just yet.”

Pepper was surprised but pleased. “Thank you.”

Tony glanced at the plate and then, eyes wide, knocked the plate away with one hand. It flew across the room to hit the wall, leaving silence in its wake. Both Pepper and Loki looked at her in shock, Loki with mounting anger and hurt.

“Pepper’s allergic to strawberries!” Tony wailed loudly, looking a little bit hysterical.

Pepper’s confusion slowly bled into a happy smile. “Thank you, Tony. For remembering.” Tony blushed and buried her face in Pepper's hair again. From across the room Darcy winked at the redhead, and Jane gave her a thumbs up.

Loki, now understanding the source of the action, looked amused. “I apologize. I believe that was mentioned in passing the other morning. I had forgotten. I shall get another plate.”

“Thank you, and bring yourself one too. I’d like your company.” Pepper said, smiling at the cat, who gave a pleased purr, and wandered back to the buffet.

“Do you want an Iron Man suit?” Tony asked softly in her ear. “I don’t… I don’t trust people with them. They use them for bad things. Hurt me. But I trust you Pep. More than anybody in the world. Want you to be safe.”

Pepper smiled, threading her fingers through Tony’s hair, tugging her back until she could see her tear stained face clearly. She leaned in and kissed her, lips gently molding to Tony’s, comforting and reassuring the other woman to her continued presence before pulling back to press their foreheads together gently. “Thank you, Tony. But I don’t want to be a super hero. I just want to be me. And I learned today I can handle myself.” She then grinned. “I wouldn’t say no to a very sneaky taser though. Darcy showed me how helpful they can be.”
Tony gave a hiccuping laugh, and said, “I’ll build you the best tasers ever, and I’ll put them in all your shoes.”

Pepper mock glared at her. “You stay away from my shoes, Tony Stark, or you’ll be sleeping on the couch for a month.”

Tony considered this and then offered, “Lipstick taser?”

Pepper laughed. “You’ve been watching too many kids’ movies with Bruce and Clint. But yes. Lipstick taser. And maybe some disguised as tampons. No one would ever think to check those.”

“Sounds good.” Tony nodded, returning to her previous position.

“I was going to kill them, Pep,” she confessed quietly into the other woman’s ear. “I was going to kill them all for hurting you. I don’t think I could have stopped.”

Pepper gave a soft sigh and mirrored Tony’s position, whispering back, “I know. It’s okay. We’re okay. If anything ever did happen to me, Loki would take care of you. And so would Bruce and the others. You wouldn’t be alone.”

“Loki would help me. He’d understand,” Tony replied, eyes falling on the cat who had returned and had been sitting next to them during their whispered conversation, sharp ears picking up every word. Loki paused for a long moment and then he closed his eyes and nodded his head.

“I would aid you in destroying those who hurt you, who took away your lover,” he agreed, his words small and for their eyes alone.

Tony noticed that he did not say he’d help her do more than that. He’d stop her before she burned herself to nothing. Would not let the flames consume Tony. Not because he gave a shit about anyone else, but because he cared about her. About what that would do to her. She took a shuddering breath, before looking between Pepper and Loki pleadingly. “Can we, can we just go to bed? I just, I don’t want to deal with…” She gestured around the room. “Anything. Everything. That.”

Pepper nodded, picked up Loki and took Tony’s hand. The three made their way out of the crowded room, to their own bedroom on the floor above, finding comfort and peace in each other.

Thor watched them leave from his position on Darcy’s lap, and wagged his tail. Even if his brother no longer loved him, at least he loved, and was loved in return. The battle was won, his Jane was here, and Lady Darcy was feeding him poptarts. Life, despite everything, was good.
Damage control and Spider-kids

Chapter Summary

Where in Tony deals with having almost lost Pepper by building a cleverly disguised weapon of mass destruction that thinks Pepper's it's mommy, Loki eats Tony's soup, Thor sulks, and Spiderman stops by to watch silly 80s movies.

Chapter Notes

Oh my god, this chapter kicked my butt... I must have re-written it at least four times. This is what I finally ended up with, and I'm really happy with it.

Several ideas were snatched from Kellifer_fic, who was kind enough to give me permission to use her ideas, so long as I give her credit, and a link to her story, which is here -- http://archiveofourown.org/works/441442/chapters/753153?show_comments=true#comment_4113845 You should give it a read, because it's awesome. There's also a podfic of it. If anyone ever wants to do a podfic of this story, I will say yes. Because that would be the best thing ever. Just a hint. ;)

Beta'd as always by Cassidy, who is awesome and puts up with my crap at like, midnight. Including my wailing about how I can't write Spiderman, cause he's a kid, and writing him as SpiderMAN just makes me go "Nuuuuu!". In the end she helped me do it anyway. lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

After getting out of bed the next morning, Tony locked herself up in her lab and didn’t come out for the next four days. She locked the doors and Jarvis was told not to let anyone in, except Loki, only it wasn’t so much that she let Loki in, as Loki just sort of phased through the walls. Sometimes with food, so that was alright. Loki also took to pretending that he was an actual cat. Tony didn’t mind the company of an actual cat right now. But she needed to be alone for a while, to just lose herself in building.

Almost losing Pepper or thinking she had lost Pepper? That had almost shattered her. It had certainly shattered Magneto, who was apparently in a special hospital and wrapped up like a mummy. At his age he might never walk properly again. It would take months, if not a year, to heal properly unless someone gave him some super-powered help. Professor Xavier was not pleased with her. Well fuck him. Magneto took Pepper. He’d asked for it. Charles could suck it. She loved Pepper. Like REALLY loved Pepper. She was getting to the point where she really loved Loki too, but even as a cat Loki could take care of himself. Of course it turned out Pepper could take care of herself too, but what if she couldn’t? What if she got in a situation where she couldn’t talk her way out of it? It could happen. It happened to Tony a lot.

So Tony designed the lipstick taser and then the tampon taser, and then began making a whole line of weaponized make up. Mascara whips, blush powder bombs, liquid eyeliner that formed into a
shell around anything you poured it on that was as hard as steel – which would make a great instant steel glove. But none of it was enough. What if Pepper was unconscious? She couldn’t protect herself if she was unconscious.

Loki purred in agreement.

Tony blinked and looked down. She hadn’t realized she’d been talking out loud. She also hadn’t realized she’d been petting Loki for at least half an hour. There was also a plate of (probably magically heated) pizza on her right. She grabbed a slice and ate it absently, lines of code, ideas, and designs running though her mind like wildfire. Finishing the slice, she pulled up a new window.

“Jarvis, create file, designation pepper pot.” She ordered. “We’re making a new bot.”

“Yes sir.”

Dummy, You, and Butterfingers looked at her curiously and made little chirping noises that only Tony could translate from the binary.

“Yes boys, you’re getting a new little brother. Loki, I'll need to stand for a lot of this,” she added, looking down at the cat, who obligingly hopped down and onto a file cabinet to watch.

Over the next 30 hours Tony just wrote code. Primary function: protection and aid of Virginia ‘Pepper’ Potts. How to understand a threat. How to deal with threats based on level of threat posed. How to not exterminate board members when they got pissy and uppity. How to understand vocal commands. That he had AI capabilities went without question. Being able to learn, to understand, to adapt was essential. Weapons recognition, access to Shield profile database, police databases, Quantico and the CIA and every DMV in America, MI5 and 6 in England, and every other damn online database in the world.

It wasn’t enough.

Laser beams and plasma beams and vaporizers and machine guns.

Not enough.

She began digging through the Shield files on the Hydra weapons they’d been reverse engineering into the phase two weapons. Weapons she could recreate better than anyone, even without the tesseract because the arc reactor technology was based on it, in a better, less ‘door to another dimension’ type of power source. The bot would be able to vaporize its enemies, and the code to designate who it was appropriate to fire on took another four hours. An arc reactor inside the casing. Optical camouflage similar to what she’d designed for the helicarrier. Each sensor pod picking up every type of energy he could think of, optical input, audio input picking up the smallest sounds and processing them, knowing what they meant. Orders would only be followed if given by Pepper Potts or Tony Stark, override codes for that in case Tony switched forms again, or Pepper did, a link to Jarvis. Still not enough. Repulsor tech so that it could fly and follow Pepper everywhere. What the hell was the point of being stopped by stairs?

“Loki, what if the attack is magical? Or like Magneto? Can you help me make it impervious to those kinds of attacks?”

“I was beginning to think you’d never ask,” Loki replied, looking pleased. ”Once you finish the construction I will begin layering on my own spells. They can easily be made self sustaining by the
“arc reactor.”

“Make sure you can remove them, just in case. Always have a back door. Always.” She told him, pacing back and forth. Loki looked like he wanted to make a caustic reply, but looking at her, all furious manic energy, all based on fear, he subsided.

“Of course.” He said instead.

Actual construction began then, with Tony eventually passing out at her lab bench, head pillowed on a mass of wires and metal. Loki levitated her to the small couch against the wall for just such occasions, and turned off the still on blow torch.

“Jarvis?”

“Yes Mr. Liesmith?”

“Are you capable of reading computer code?”

“Naturally.” Jarvis sniffed.

“And Tony’s calculations, her code, it is flawless? There are no errors?”

There was a pause. “There are one or two errors sir made, I fixed them however. I was created to watch out for him, to protect him and his interests. This more than qualifies.”

Loki nodded, turning to observe Tony thoughtfully. “She really is the most fascinating mortal….”

“May I ask what your intentions are for my creator?” Jarvis asked politely but with an edge of steel to his voice.

“I am not sure, not entirely. One of the side effects of the spell is the urge to be around others affected by the spell, as I told the others. However… she gained my attention, my respect and interest even during that first battle, when I was not entirely in control of myself. The tesseract and the scepter were like a slow moving poison. It snakes its way into the minds of those it touches, sometimes obviously in the case of Barton, but sometimes subtly. I did not even notice my mind was no longer my own, until the Hulk used me as a rag doll. The injuries jarred me, allowing me to push the foreign presence out. However, I was still the man who had let go of my brother’s hand, expecting death, desiring it, for what did I have to live for? And then, waking up, I was even more alone, and now had gone from a man trying to destroy a threat to my world, to a man who had attacked an innocent planet with an enemy to Asgard. My adopted kin. Are you aware of my story Jarvis?”

“I do have access to all Shield files and the Eddas sir.”

Loki’s tail twitched in amusement, though he still looked wary. “I was imprisoned, my only chance to defend myself was immediately after my return to Asgard, still torn inside as to what had happened. I argued with my father, and was locked away until Thor came for my aid with the Dark Elves. After that I escaped, and made my way to Midgard. I am not a very healthy man Jarvis. But this, here? Tony is … I do not have the words to describe it. She’s clever and manic and laughter and pain and resilience and brilliance and both a creator and destroyer. She should have been a god you know. If the universe was fair. I still do not care for most mortals. Why should I care for those I’ve never met? Filthy creatures who spend their entire lives scuttling
about shitting and breeding and dying like vermin? But those here, Tony and Pepper and Bruce? And even Thor’s lover and her assistant. They are not vermin. They are people apart. I am quite sure they have the blood of some Æsir, Vanir or light elf in their veins.”

“Is that common?” Jarvis asked, not bothered by the gods description of mankind. His creator did not care for mankind either, except in the abstract sense, in making a legacy. She cared only for those she loved. Her family. Those under her care in Stark Industries. Everyone else could solve their own problems.

“It is the source of what Midgardians call the X gene. Mutants are those who have had those genes activated. The mutant who calls himself Magneto has blood from the Dwarves of Nidavellir, whose talents with metal are renown throughout the nine realms. Professor Xavier is descended from the light elves. And I could clearly see signs of Jötun heritage in the one called Nightcrawler. The blue skin and raised lines and designs show it. Some are true mutations in that the powers of the other races have interacted with the genes of mortals and evolved to whatever gift is present now. The strongest ones I have come across thus far however, are those with dominant alien blood.”

“Fascinating,” Jarvis said honestly. “But you have yet to state your intentions for Sir.”

“I give you my word, on my magic, I will not intentionally harm her even after the spell ends, should it do so,” Loki promised solemnly. “Beyond that… I am unsure. I feel things for her that… I have not felt for anyone in millennia.”

“I will accept that. But know this, Loki Liesmith, that if you renege on that promise, there will be no where on Earth you can hide from me,” Jarvis swore, reminding Loki that he was in fact, the heir to Starks genius and able to access every weapons cache, every nuclear silo, every government in the world. And he was as capable of cruelty and remorselessness as his creator when those he loved were threatened.

Loki’s eyes closed in a smile. “I would expect nothing less from her child.”

Tony woke up with a start four hours later, most likely from a nightmare, and returned to work. The shape and design was alien to Loki, although Tony seemed to have a very specific idea in mind. The shell was cylindrical, with a flat bottom and various sensors distributed evenly on the lower half under the, for lack of a better term, head, which could swivel. Small arms issued from panels, which were located throughout the body, allowing whatever sort of weapon the situation required to be fired at the target.

Finally on the fourth day she pulled back and whipped a forearm over her sweaty forehead leaving a streak of grease behind. She sighed, and turned to Loki, who had been waiting patiently.

"I am most impressed. Did you still want my aid and magic?” he asked curiously.

“Of course I do. Tell me what you have in mind.” she replied, leaning one hip against a table.

If Loki had been in human form he would have cackled with glee at the opportunity. As it was, all he could do was purr loudly.
“Some things are similar to what I did on your suit-“

“Yeah, and don’t think we’re not going to talk about your messing with my suit without my permission,” Tony interrupted.

“You may talk. I will ignore you,” Loki replied, amused. “As I was saying, the spells I used prevented the manipulation of the spelled object through all non-magical means, although Mjolnir still would have caused a great deal of damage, being magical in origin. It also contains a teleportation spell which is activated under certain circumstances, allowing the object and anyone tied to it to be moved somewhere the spell deems safe. I also added one that enables faster energy restoration and repair.”

“But when I was fighting Pyro, my suit went down 13% fairly easily,” Tony pointed out, perplexed.

“Yes, well, I hadn’t added that particular spell until afterwards.” Loki’s words looked faintly embarrassed. “It’s a rather obscure spell, and it takes most of the energy out of the caster, which is why I did not aid you in your attack against the mutant, but I had felt it necessary while watching your battle with the fire golems. I cast it on your suit during your discussion with Magneto. I’m sure Jarvis would tell you it regained power much faster than usual, and you surely noticed the damage done to your suit was less than you’d thought?” He raised a whiskered eyebrow.

Now it was Tony’s turn to feel embarrassed. “I haven’t actually looked at the suit since I took it off.”

“Understandable. By now it will have fixed itself entirely.” Loki looked her, amusement dancing in his eyes. “Even the paint job.”

Tony laughed and offered a fist bump, which Loki, after a second to figure out exactly what Tony was offering, returned with one small paw. Tony then sobered. “So it’ll repair itself?” she repeated. “Pepper’s bot I mean?”

Loki nodded.

“Well, let’s do it then. Any chance of force fields?” she added.

Loki frowned. “I am not sure what those are.”

An energy field that keeps out attacks?” Tony explained.

“Ah. A shield. Certainly. That would not be at all difficult.” Loki nodded as he padded his way to the oddly shaped machine. Tony slumped into a chair. Pepper would be safe now. Safer than any non-super powered person on the planet. This would never happen again. Together Loki and her had made the ultimate weapon and it would defend the woman they loved. She was pretty sure Loki loved Pepper. It was hard not to love Pepper. Even if he didn’t yet he would. And then it would be him and Tony and Pepper and they would be fucking happy together, screw you world and Asgard and Odin and whoever the fuck else tried to tear them apart. It wouldn’t work. Because together they were more powerful than anyone else ever. Loki had his magic and his silver tongue and genius mind and Tony had her robots and her computers and her weapons and her own brilliant mind and Pepper would keep them grounded, would be their moral center, and make sure they ate once in a while because, well, brilliance and discovering new universes and re-writing the laws of physics of said universes was distracting and they sometimes forgot to eat.

It was around noon on the fifth day when they finally left the lab, the new bot (which Tony had named Oops) in tow. After a stop for a shower – her extensions had been ruined by her lack of care
and a couple accidents with a blow torch during her bender. Loki had given the impression of rolling his eyes, and Tony had found her extensions removed, and her hair growing at an accelerated rate until it had reached a similar length to what the extensions had given her, much curlier in it's natural state. She had declared it awesome and gave the cat a kiss, still very wet from her shower. Loki had hissed at her, but hadn’t really minded.

They made their way to the kitchen, where Tony stopped and leaned against the door frame to take in the scene. Clint was once again wearing his ‘Fuck the Chef’ apron and was flipping grilled cheese sandwiches, flitting casually between stove and table to deliver said cheesy goodness. Natasha was casually tossing a couple of table knives up in the air, basically juggling, only scarier. Darcy was slipping Thor pieces of sandwich under the table, while Jane sniffled next to her, sipping some tomato soup from a coffee mug. Steve was doodling in a notebook (paper, eww…), and Bruce was curled up next to Pepper, his smaller frame sideways on the bench, a tablet balanced on his knees, working on an equation for something. Pepper absently playing with his hair while she discussed trade opportunities for Stark Industries on her Starkphone. This was hers. This was her family. These weird, crazy people were the people she would die for, would kill for. It gave her a warm possessive feeling, and tears threatened to fall. Again! Were all women this weepy? She felt like she was crying a lot lately.

“Tony!” Bruce beamed, honestly delighted with her reappearance. The others looked up and smiled a welcome (except Natasha, although for all she knew, Natasha might have smiled. Maybe with no one to see her she’d loosened up a little with the facial expressions.)

Tony smiled in greeting and entered the room, grabbing one of the sandwiches and her own mug of soup, before sitting on Pepper's other side. Loki promptly relocated himself to her lap, stuck his furry head in her mug and began lapping up her soup. Tony pouted. “That wasn’t meant for you,” she told the cat.

The god didn’t look up but the words nonetheless formed before her. “I do what I want.”

Tony shrugged. That was pretty much her life’s motto, so who was she to judge? She accepted a second mug from one of the bots.

“Is that a… miniature floating dalek?” Clint asked with mixed horror and delight, looking at Oops, who was hovering patiently in the door way.

It was indeed a dalek. Tony had thought long and hard (in her usual fevered maniac way) over a way to hide the bodyguard she'd made that was capable of taking down all of Shield without being stopped. It was Clint, and his Doctor Who fanboyishness that had given her the idea. Hide it in plain sight. No one would look twice at Tony Stark's girlfriend being followed around by a high tech toy, even if it could talk. Tony's reputation as an eccentric was more than enough to give a satisfactory cover story. She'd even had Jarvis send a royalty check to the BBC for the use of their image. She'd been sent back a very politely written thank you note, and an invitation to use their trademarked looks any time, in exchange for further checks of course, and an open invitation to appear on a Doctor Who episode if she was interested.

“Yep,” Tony replied through a mouth full of grilled cheese.

“Tony, why did you make a dalek?” Pepper asked with patient amusement.

“What better to watch over Pepper Potts than a floating arsenal shaped like a pepper pot?” Tony asked rhetorically before waving a hand at Oops. “Pepper, this is Oops, your new bodyguard. It
would take Loki at full strength to get through him, and even he would have some trouble," she turned to the small floating robot. "Oops, this is Pepper. Say hi."

"Mommy!" the small bot chirped in a childlike voice, and nuzzled against the redhead happily. Darcy cooed at it, delighted.

“What happened to the lipstick taser?” Pepper asked, amused.

“Oops is back up. I also made you a whole make up bag of weapons,” she assured her.

Clint looked more than a little jealous. “Why does Pepper get a dalek? Can I have a dalek?”

“NO.” Most of the table shouted.

“Tony, is he going to follow me to work? Because I don’t think…” she trailed off as Oops seemed to look up at her sadly with his optical sensor.

“He’ll be fine. He’ll just play while you have your boring meetings.” Tony replied and then looked at Pepper seriously. “I won’t let you get hurt again, Pepper. Never.”

Pepper sighed. “Is he an AI?”

“Of course!” Tony looked insulted.

“Okay then. Oops, it’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance.” She held out a hand and shook the little dalek’s plunger hand. “Can you say more than Mommy?”

“EXTERMINATE!” answered the dalek proudly.

“Really Tony?” she asked, raising an eyebrow.

Tony laughed. “He can say other things, but it does seem to be his favorite word. He’s a little shy.”

“Have you considered lightsabers?” Bruce asked Tony seriously.

Tony’s eyes gleamed. “I tried when I was at MIT but couldn’t figure out the primary crystal power source. But now that I miniaturized the arc reactor…”

“Bitchin’,” Darcy breathed. “I want a purple one. Please? I’ll make you my world famous lasagna if you do.”

Jane’s head shot up from where she was looking sadly down at Thor, unhappy she couldn’t pet her adorable puppy boyfriend. “Oh-my-god-do-it. Darcy makes the best lasagna ever. Her one of her grandmothers was Italian, and it’s the best I’ve ever had anywhere.”

Tony laughed. “Works for me. I’d have given it to you anyway, since you’re a member of our new BAMF Girls.”

Pepper looked amused. “BAMF Girls?”

“Hey, you took out a mutant by talking him into submission and then basically rescued yourselves from a kidnapping. That’s pretty BAMF.”

“We could be Tony’s Angels!” Darcy suggested, getting into the spirit of things.

“I’m not Tony’s angel, I’m Thor’s. And we’re not angels. You are definitely not an angel, Darce.”
Jane added, looking at Pepper as though she wasn’t quite sure Pepper wasn’t one.

“Tony doesn’t need angels. She has Avengers,” Pepper replied absently, poking her dalek curiously with a spoon. Oops chirped, happy with the attention.

Tony ignored Jane. “I made you a lipstick taser too,” Tony told Darcy who squee’d. “You also get one of my make up kits of awesome. Standard issue for the BAMF girls.”

“We should totally have dolls.” Darcy grinned. “It’d be awesome. Every kid in America should have an Avengers doll and a BAMF girls doll.”

“Action figures.” Clint corrected, patting one of the kitchen bots fondly as he passed Darcy a sandwich.

“Whatever.” Darcy rolled her eyes. “But I’m saying, merchandising. You could raise money for charities or something,” she added, noticing Steve’s frown.

“Das ist ...eigentlich eine gute Idee.” he said thoughtfully.

“I want mine to be a transformer,” Bruce said, looking up from his tablet. “That way I get to have an action figure too.”

Bruce ducked his head, hiding a grin as Tony ruffled his hair fondly. Bruce had really come a long way in the few months he’d been staying with them. Before he would have said to leave him out of it, that the Hulk wasn’t a hero and didn’t deserve an action figure. Now though…

“I’m pretty sure I have a Hot Toys figure or two.” Tony told Darcy, who sighed dramatically.

“Those things are like, one hundred to four hundred dollars. I mean ones that sell for twenty bucks at Walmart.”

“But the quality will be crappy!” Tony whined.

“So fix it! Figure out how to make a cheap, quality action figure. You’re a genius. You figure it out. For humanity! For Christmas! For puppies! And for me, so I can get an autographed set and lord it over my old classmates at the next high school reunion.” Darcy replied with an impressive deadpan expression.

“Well, how can I say no to that?” Tony replied, amused.

“You can’t,” Darcy said firmly, before chomping down on a goldfish cracker. “So why did you name him Oops?” she asked

“You give your bots such odd names. You, Butterfingers, Dummy… what did this poor bot do to you to deserve the name Oops?” Bruce asked, amused.

“At this point I’m naming in expectation of later chaos,” Tony replied tartly, ignoring the laughter this gained.

Pepper laughed and rose, carefully shifting Bruce to Tony’s side instead, caught Tony’s tomato-y mouth in a kiss, pressed a kiss to Loki’s furry head, waved at the others, and headed off to a meeting, having every intention of having them copyright Avenger action figures. Normally you couldn’t copyright an idea or concept so broad as this, but she was Pepper Potts. Scarily efficient, amazingly beautiful, and always on top. Except when Tony was. Oops followed her, floating behind her like a mechanical duckling.
“So, is everyone okay after the battle?” Tony asked, looking around the table.

“Tasha and I are fine.” Clint replied for the two spies. “Fury was pissed you didn’t show up to debrief though. He tried to force his way into your lab. Jarvis told him no primates were allowed in the lab without prior authorization. I thought he was going to fling his poo at you for a while. OW!” He winced, rubbing the back of his head. Tony was pretty sure Natasha had just whacked him.

Steve rolled his eyes but nodded.

Bruce grinned wryly. “Aside from a stomach ache after the other guy ate so many cookies to celebrate, I’m fine.”

“I’m good too. Just a scratch on my arm,” Tony said, tugging at her t-shirt to show off the new wound. Loki raised his head to look at it carefully before deciding it was not a mortal wound and Tony would live to fight another day, and returned to his mug of soup, looking mournfully at the soup at the bottom of the mug out of his reach.

“How did you manage to avoid so much damage?” Clint asked, mind turning back to the battle. “I mean, not that I wanted you dead or anything, but you were fighting Magneto. In a metal suit.”

Tony grinned and looked down at Loki pointedly, who raised his head, closed his eyes in a cats smile and purred.

“I guess I had an Asgardian angel,” Tony replied, pressing a soft kiss to Loki’s nose.

Clint gagged dramatically, falling off the bench onto the floor with a thud.

“So if you’re an Avenger… why are you kissing the god of mischief?” Darcy asked lips twitching.

“Oh my god, Darcy! You can’t just ask someone why they’re kissing gods!” Jane protested wide eyed.

Tony snickered, and both women laughed.

“I’m missing something.” Clint muttered. Steve gave him a ‘welcome to my world’ look. Bruce laughed and explained. “It’s a Mean Girls meme.”

“I’m kissing the god of mischief because that’s a thing I do now,” Tony replied lightly.

Thor wagged his tail and yipped his approval. Loki looked startled and lowered his head to glance under the table at him. Thor seemed to say something, all yips and barks and whines. Loki blinked, and he seemed to regard his brother thoughtfully. He didn’t say anything though, through meows or his magic writing, instead returning his attention to the conversation. Under the table Thor just looked overjoyed at not having been hissed at or scratched.

“So Ms. Lewis, why do you have a taser? What was that about?” Tony asked curiously.

Darcy beamed, and Jane muttered an, “Oh no. Not the taser.”

“Shut up, Jane,” Darcy grinned, “You wish you had my tasering skills.” She turned back to Tony and told her proudly, “My list of people I’ve tased now includes four football jocks, a fratboy, a mutant, and a god of thunder.”

Tony’s face lit up like a little kid's at Christmas. “You tased THOR?”

“After I hit him with a car,” Darcy said, waving a hand airily as though she did something like that
every week.

“I HAVE to hear this. The Norse god of **lightning** getting knocked on his ass by a college student with a **taser**. That’s almost as good as Loki’s masturbation story!” she grinned, her 12% evil showing.

“What masturbation story?” Jane asked, looking puzzled.

Tony started to answer but yelped instead. Thor had decided enough was enough and had bitten Tony’s ankle. “Right. Guess I won’t be telling that story. Maybe Loki will tell you later.” She glared down at Thor. “If you have rabies, I will kill you, stuff you, and mount your head on the wall,” she said in the same tone of voice she used when she told her unruly bots that she’d donate them to a community college. Thor looked unimpressed and growled at her.

Loki hissed warningly at him, and Thor gave a sigh of annoyance before flopping onto Darcy’s feet, looking up at her with enormous blue puppy dog eyes.

“What? You want more food?” Darcy asked, confused.

**“He wants you to not tell the tale of his tasing. I must insist on hearing it however. It sounds most amusing,”** Loki purred, looking surprisingly persuasive for a cat. The others chimed in, eager for the story.

When Darcy laughed and began the story, Thor huffed and padded out of the room sulkily. ‘Stupid Midgardians with their stupid lightning boxes,’ he thought uncharitably. Being stuck as a dog and unable to counter such stories with tales of his glory in battle was most frustrating.

Jane, having heard the story multiple times, ducked under the table and followed her boyfriend, keeping a safe distance to avoid tripping her allergies.

They ended up in the living room watching Labyrinth (Darcy’s choice) with Clint and Tony both making cracks about David Bowie’s very tight pants. Darcy argued for said tight pants and declared they were an international treasure that should be commemorated with songs and statues. Clint argued it was a sock. Tony said it was creepy that he perved on a fourteen year old girl. Their lively discussion (argument), was interrupted by a timid knocking on the door to the balcony.

“Is that the pizza?” Darcy asked hopefully, glancing over only to pout. “Aw, it’s just Spider-Man.”

Tony laughed. “Since when does pizza get delivered to the 93rd floor? Jarvis, be a darling and let the poor bug in would you?”

"Of course sir. Always happy to be of service."

“Glad you could make it kid! Did you find it ok?” Tony joked, untangling herself from Bruce and Loki, both of whom had been leaning on or lying on her, and walking over to the rather nervous looking young man.

“Uh, yeah. Kind of hard to miss,” he muttered and looked around at them in starstruck awe.

Tony wrapped a friendly arm around his shoulders and steered him over into the center of the couches. “So, Spider-Kid, allow me to introduce everyone! Going from right to left, this is Captain America, call him Steve. Don’t feel bad if he doesn’t talk to you, at the moment he’s only speaking in German. Do you know German?”
Spiderman shook his head.

"Damn. Oh well." Tony shrugged. "The empty space next to him is Black Widow, or Natasha Romanoff, don’t get on her bad side. You won’t see her coming, literally. Right now she’s probably rolling her eyes at me, but she might be deciding on the best way to kill me, we’ll find out in the next few minutes. The toddler next to her is Hawkeye, he’s Clint Barton. Do yourself a favor; don’t ask him about the wing thing. It’s a sensitive subject."

“Screw you, Tony,” Clint replied, rolling his eyes.

“Right… no wings,” the boy said, nodding, very carefully not staring at said appendages.

“Next to Hawkeye is Darcy Lewis, taserer of Gods, evil mutants, and the occasional handsy frat boy. She’s a lab assistant for Dr. Foster who’s on her other side. Dr. Jane Foster is an astrophysicist, whose ground breaking work on the Einstein-Rosen Bridge lead her to discover her boyfriend and current lap dog, Thor – also known as the God of Thunder, wielder of Mjolnir, and all around beef cake.” Darcy and Jane waved their hellos, and Thor gave what was probably meant to be a manly bark but ended up being more of a cheerful yip.

“Next to Thor – who shouldn’t be on the couch by the way- is Dr. Bruce Banner, nuclear physicist, bio-chemist, MD, and the guy who has a body time share with the Hulk: whose dream date includes smashing things and eating a bakery. Give the kid a wave, Brucie!” Bruce raised a hand and waved it once, giving Tony a look.

“He’s not as young as he looks,” Tony stage whispered, sensing confusion in the boy next to her. “The space next to Brucie is my spot, you know me obviously, everyone knows me. Next to me or on me, depending on the situation, is Loki, God of mischief, Lord of Lies, Master of Magic and Mayhem, Thor’s little brother- according to Thor- and drinker of soup.”

Spider-Man somehow managed to looked a little horrified, despite the lack of facial movement through the mask. “Drinker of soup?” he asked faintly.

“He stole my soup earlier,” Tony replied as though that explained everything, which to her, it did. “Missing is my girlfriend Pepper Potts, wrangler of me and everyone else’s adopted Mommy, don’t insult her shoes, or you will die faster than you can blink, and her dalek Oops. So, tell us about yourself, kid.” She finished, flopping back onto the couch and running long fingers through Loki’s fur, leaving the kid in the middle of the room being stared at.

“Uh…” he squeaked, his voice cracking. “I’m Spider-Man?”

Tony nodded encouragingly.

“And um, I’m not really sure what I’m doing here? But you asked me to come so…I came?”

“Right. So, basically, we’re experiencing technical difficulties, as you can see, but rather than suddenly drop out of the super heroing biz and dump all the work on one or two heroes until we get back to what passes for normal around here, I figured it would be better to coordinate a bit, make sure no one’s ending up with all the work. Capiche?” Tony asked, sensing the boys awkwardness and rescuing him a bit.

Clint snorted. "What do you mean you figured? Pepper was the one to suggest it."

Tony waved a hand. "Semantics."
“Ok, sounds good. Better than what happens at school anyway,” the teen muttered.

“Aw, they try to stick you with all the work in group projects?” Darcy asked, grinning. “I can lend you my old taser. It works wonders on jerks who don’t do their share of the homework.”

Spider-Man grinned. It was very hard not to like Darcy. “I’ll take that into consideration.”

“So where do you go to school?” Darcy asked. “You’re obviously in the area. Metro? Bard? Or are you one of the X-Men? I mean you’re a mutant right? I just finished up my degree at Culver, Bruce taught there, and Jane is on their research staff.”

“Err… I’m not in college,” he mumbled.

“Oh! Sorry, no big deal, college isn’t for everyone!” She waved her hands, concerned she’d embarrassed him. “So a trade school then?”

“Um, no? I’m still in high school.” He put a hand behind his head, embarrassed.

Tony glanced at Clint. “Are we allowed to work with someone too young to be drafted? Is that a thing? Is Fury going to get so mad he tries to throw his feces at me me again?” They both ignored Spider-Man's widened eyes.

“Why are you asking me?” Clint asked, raising an eyebrow, which by the way, looked ridiculous on the face of a two year old.

“Well Natashaie can’t tell me and Coulson’s not here, so you’re the next best choice,” Tony reminded him.

Clint rolled his eyes. “It’s frowned upon, but we do have programs for teens and kids with special abilities. Mutants tend to get sent to Xavier's, but those with special skills or who can’t deal with a school like that are taken on, yes.”

“So there you go, you’re fine.” Jane smiled at him encouragingly.

“I really question the ethics in allowing a child to fight in battles between gods and monsters.” Loki wrote, and then catching the surprised looks sent his way, added. “Do not look at me in such a manner, I never intentionally involve children. No child has ever been injured in a battle I caused.”

Clint looked surprised. “I wasn’t sure you knew that. I wouldn’t have guessed that it was on purpose.”

“Wait, so the cat’s really Loki?” Spider-Man asked “But my spider senses didn’t go off!”

“Spider senses?” Tony giggled, resting her chin on one palm. “That’s adorable. What’s your spider sense?”

“It tells me when there’s danger around…but he’s not setting it off.” He looked at Loki like he wasn’t sure they were telling the truth.

“Oh, he’s Loki. He’s just currently involved with Tony, and maybe Pepper, I’m not entirely sure,” Darcy told him absently. "It's a thing."

“Wait, involved-involved? Like, they’re dating?” His legs collapsed under him in shock.
“What, you don’t think I’m good enough for a god?” Tony pouted.

“Um… yes? No? What?” the boy sputtered, looking completely overwhelmed.

“Stop taunting the kid, Stark,” Clint ordered him, ignoring Tony’s response of, “He looks older than you Barton!” “It’s best not to worry about what Tony gets up to in his spare time. The amount of explosions alone would give you a nervous breakdown if you let yourself worry about that sort of thing.”

“Uh-huh,” Spider-Man replied faintly.

“So are you going to tell us your name, kid?” Darcy asked leaning forward curiously.

His eyes widened comically despite the mask. “I can’t tell you that! It’s my secret identity!”

Tony snorted. “Secret identities aren’t a thing anymore. Didn’t you see my press conference? Actually maybe you didn’t, how old are you? You could have been like, twelve when that came out. Brucie, I’m old!” she wailed dramatically at the tiny scientist next to her who rolled his eyes and patted her head reassuringly, and said sarcastically, “There there.”

“But, I have enemies… if they found out who I was…” the boy argued weakly.

“They’re idiots.” Darcy told him calmly. “I figured it out ages ago. And by ages ago I mean just now.”

Every head in the room turned to look at her in confusion.

“You did?” Clint and Jane asked together, shocked.

Darcy glared. “I’m not stupid you know! Just because I spend my time around geniuses who are great at science doesn’t mean I’m not smart. I graduated third in my class!” She turned back to Spider-Man who looked panicked. “Every single decent picture of Spiderman was taken by the same person. Every single one. Peter Parker, a kid in high school who sells his pictures to the Daily Bugle – by the way, you should really switch employers, Jameson’s an ass clown. At first I thought you were a relative or something, but when you said you were in high school, it only made sense. Delayed camera shots.” She looked smug when she finished. Spider-Man, who had already fallen to his knees from shock earlier, now flopped backward, arms folded, staring up at the ceiling, looking defeated and sulky through his mask.

“How did you not figure this out Jarvis? Have you been slacking?” Tony demanded, glaring at the ceiling.

“Of course not sir. I was perfectly aware who Mr. Parker was.” Jarvis replied, sounding insulted at the accusation.

“Then why didn’t you tell me?” she asked with forced patience.

“You didn’t ask sir,” Jarvis replied tartly.

Tony pouted while Darcy, Bruce, Jane, Steve, Clint, and probably Natasha laughed at her. Thor barked his amusement, and Loki just purred and butted his head against Tony’s chin affectionately.

“Well, I believe the idiom is, welcome to the asylum,” Loki told Peter, who gave a sigh, sat up and nodded, pulling off his mask to reveal an innocent looking boy with fluffy brown hair. He quirked an eyebrow and said, “So, can I have some popcorn too? Or is this 80’s movie night for the grown ups
and ex-grown ups only?” he asked.

Clint laughed and handed him the bowl. Darcy asked Jarvis to restart the movie, and after a while they all joined in on the chorus, “Dance Magic Dance!”

Over all, not a bad day, Tony decided.

German –

Das ist ... eigentlich eine gute Idee. – That’s... actually a good idea.

Chapter End Notes

Please leave me a note, telling me what you like, what you didn't like, what you thought was cute, if I made a mistake, whatever. Just let me know something! ;)
A Normal Day in New York

Chapter Summary

In which Shield are turned back to human, Darcy and Thor go to the zoo, and Coulson and Doctor Doom have bad days and Oops has a good day.

Chapter Notes

A cameo or two from non-Marvel characters so you might not recognize them, but you should look them up if you don't, they're funny.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Did you have to turn the delivery boy into a monkey?" Tony asked Loki, who looked annoyed. "They wouldn't have figured it out if you had chosen something else."

"He attempted to kick me!" the cat protested, fur on end. "I panicked!"

"So you turn him into a monkey? What is it with you and monkeys anyway?" Tony asked quizzically.

"They are disgusting creatures that fling their own excrement at one another. In some cases I feel it is quite an apt description of mortals. Present company mostly excluded of course." The cat added graciously, glancing around the conference table where the other inhabitants of the tower were, well, assembled, along with the now human Shield director.

"Enough!" Fury barked at them from the head of the room, his coat swirling dramatically, his single eye trained on Loki who was perched on the table. "Did you REALLY think you would get away with this!!?" he demanded. "Turning me and my men into monkeys?!

"Well it would be stupid to say yes now." Loki replied, utterly unapologetic.

Darcy snickered, then beamed angelically at Fury when he turned his glare on her.

"I should put your furry ass in the brig right now!" Fury began only to be cut off.

"But you can't, cause he'd just pop right out again. And then maybe turn you and your agents into cockroaches this time for your audacity." Tony interrupted smoothly.

"I hadn't considered cockroaches," Loki tilted his head to the side thoughtfully. "An excellent idea, my love."

Fury's eye twitched spastically.

"Thank you, darling. I have lots of ideas for you," Tony told the cat flirtatiously, subtly observing Fury out of the corner of her eye, immediately catching onto her god's new game.
"You shall have to show me every one of them, when we're alone."

The cat purred suggestively, winding his way sinuously through the super-heroine's arms, allowing his tail to caress her face.

"ENOUGH!" Fury barked. "WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU STARK?! And why exactly did NONE OF MY AGENTS tell me this was Loki's spell and not Puck's?! Rogers informed me it's been common knowledge in the tower since the first day!" he bellowed angrily, turning his attention on Natasha's empty chair and Clint's high chair.

"Why does it not surprise me that Fury speaks German?" Tony asked Loki rhetorically, who did his little cat shrug in response.

"I've got maimouphobia. I don't do monkeys. It's in my file." Clint said, not bothering to look at the director, more interested in preening his wings, which had gotten a little ruffled during the pizza boy kerfuffle.

Natasha's floating Stark-tablet typed out – I assumed Clint informed you. Sorry. Communication has been spotty lately.

Fury threw his hands up in the air. He was furious and annoyed at the fact that no one seemed to care.

"Are you behind the rest of the spells too!?!" he demanded, looking to Loki who began washing one paw, utterly unconcerned.

"I was behind the lady of liberties make over, which you've already had reversed by your mortal sorcerer, and the flying cars, which I made sure landed in a safe area. I was also behind the giant poodle, and the anvil chorus. Your Midgardian animation is most amusing. I am fond of the anthropomorphic rabbit and the cat and mouse who attempt to kill one another with household objects."

Fury's single eye twitched again. "You got ideas from TOM AND JERRY AND BUGS BUNNY?!"

"Indeed. The lady Darcy also introduced me to the tales of friendship between the small, oddly colored talking horses. I enjoy them greatly, even though their concepts of magic are inaccurate. Also the small yellow sponge that dwells in a fruit on the ocean floor. The star shaped creature he is friends with reminds me of Thor," Loki continued, enjoying watching the large throbbing vein on the man's forehead.

"Where'd you get the idea for the flying cars?" Darcy asked curiously.

"I learned that they were referred to as 'bugs' and decided to make the name a bit more accurate," he replied innocently.

Tony had buried her face in her arms and was shaking from silent laughter.

Bruce munched contentedly on a cookie one of the agents had given him. No one wanted the Hulk to make a visit because Fury pissed off a five year old by not giving him a cookie. Now the diminutive scientist glanced at the director and gave him a bland, cookie crumb framed smile.

Fury paled at the unspoken threat, and seemed to decide Bruce hulking out over his anger at the scientists newly adopted family was not worth the satisfaction of yelling about something he could not change, and instead he stormed out of the room yelling to Natasha and Clint that he wanted daily
reports on his desk at '08 hundred sharp!

"Well, that went well." Darcy mused. "Think we can hunt down my iPod while we're here?"

Jane face palmed and Clint gave a little snore from his high chair, having fallen asleep some time earlier.

After stealing back Darcy's iPod from a storage area, they decided to walk home, enjoying the crisp fall weather. Tony insisted on stopping by a pet boutique on the way home, after having seen a doggy shirt that said "Hammer Time" on it. Between Darcy, Clint, and Tony's begging, pleading, and bribes of poptarts, Thor ended up promising to wear it for at least an hour.

Tony, as easily distracted as ever, grabbed Darcy, Jane, and (somehow) Natasha and pulled them into Amour 24, a very expensive salon to get mani-pedis and facials. Natasha ended up with a facial mask that seemed to float in midair. She was not entirely sure how the billionaire had managed to convince her to do that. It did feel nice though, and being paid attention to as a non-threat from someone other than Coulson, Sue or Clint was a pleasant change.

"So what colors do you like on your nails Jane? Darce? I used to get a manicure and clear nail polish when I was a guy, and last time Pepper let me get Iron Man themed colors, but that seems a bit cliché, don't you think?" Tony asked from behind her own facial mask and cucumbers (they didn't generally use them, as they don't actually do anything, but Tony had wanted the full experience, and had given one of the attendants on break enough money to bribe her into heading to a nearby grocery store to pick some up for her).

"I don't really do this sort of thing. YOWCH!" Jane protested at one of the attendants, who looked very put out at the state of her feet, which were calloused and still slightly dirty from her habit of walking around a dusty desert in bare feet at night watching the stars.

"I can see that," the attendant muttered, looking longingly at Darcy's attendant. Darcy, a firm believer in layers, even in New Mexico, had perfectly normal feet, if a little pale.

"I didn't do them much either. Most of my foster mothers either just wanted the government money that came with a foster kid, were more interested in alcohol, or both. I usually did my own nails if I did it at all." She frowned thoughtfully before perking up. "I did go through a Goth phase in high school and painted my nails black all the time."

Every single nail artist and assistant in the boutique immediately yelled as one, "NO BLACK!"

Jane blinked. "Isn't that our choice?"

"No," her attendant told her firmly, returning to soap stoning away her calluses.

"Huh." Jane looked at Tony for clarification.

Tony shrugged. "Black makes your fingers look fat. Black's only slimming in clothing, not nails."

"I want sparkles on mine," Darcy said happily, glancing over several sealed jars of glittry things.

"Gemstones or precious metals?" her hand stylist asked.
"I want purple, so what would go well with that?" Darcy asked, politely differing to the woman.

"I believe if you went with a dark plum purple base coat garnets would look nice, or fire opal chips." The woman said, looking almost weepy from joy that at least one of them had a modicum of sense.

"Go ahead, I can afford it." Tony waved the hand not currently occupied.

Darcy blinked. "Wait, these are REAL opals and diamonds and stuff?" she asked, looking shell shocked.

Now it was Tony's turn to blink. "Well yeah, what else would you use?"

"Uh, plastic glitter, or small pieces of colored foil sometimes. Or rhinestones?" Darcy answered faintly.

"Why on earth would you put plastic on your finger nails? Gross. Don't worry, I offered, I'm paying. No need to get sticker shock. You can make that lasagna you were talking about if you wanna make it up to me."

"I think I will…"

"I could buy so much equipment with this sort of money…" Jane muttered, glaring at her nails accusingly, as though they'd betrayed her.

"Stick around, I give labs to all my favorite scientists." Tony grinned, amused. "No need to take it out on the poor keratin."

"Stupid expensive keratin." Jane pouted as her night sky blue polish was studded with tiny diamond stars, and set about lecturing the long suffering attendant on star constellation positioning.

Tony rolled her eyes, and amused herself with quizzing the gemologist (yes, the store had a gemologist) on the source of each tiny gem, and its color, clarity and carat. She may have grown up hating her father, but Howard Stark had not allowed his only child to leave the cradle without knowing how to get his money's worth. Thankfully for the staff, Tony herself had also learned that tipping well was a very good idea if you wanted to be allowed back in nice places after acting like a jackass.

The boys (and animals) lounged outside, Thor and Loki both sprawled in a sunbeam. Thor absolutely thrilled because Loki decided the bench was too hard and decided to use his brother as a couch. Loki wasn't entirely sure of what he wanted from his relationship with his would be brother at the moment, but he was always one for milking a situation for all it was worth. And the dog was warm and fluffy, even with the silly t-shirt.

"Think they're talking about us?" Clint asked curiously. He was wearing a small baggy hoodie over his wings, and kept shifting uncomfortably at the sensation of having his wings flattened.

"Why would they?" Bruce asked, thinking of the Bechdel test. Surely Tony of all people could have a conversation about something other than boys with the girls.

"I think that's what girls are supposed to do during these things," Clint replied, frowning thoughtfully. "At least, that's what the trapeze walkers, the magician's assistants, and the dancing
girls did when I was growing up. But that was a long time ago I guess. And they did each others nails, not go to a place like this.” He gestured at the extremely expensive store before them.

Steve muttered something in German that sounded unhappy about the money being spent. Bruce looked like he wanted to ask where on earth Clint had grown up, but refrained, instead pointing out, "I can't believe they got Natasha in there with them. Her nails are going to look like they're floating."

"Not to mention her toes." Clint grinned, the image in his mind resembling a human Cheshire cat, floating smile and all.

"Those would probably be covered by her invisible shoes Clint," Bruce reminded him, amused.

Down the street the enormous poodle lumbered by, a man in a red and black outfit and a sombrero singing Lady Gaga at the top of his lungs while strumming a guitar on its back.

Clint and Bruce exchanged sidelong glances.

"You see that?"

"Nope. Didn't see a thing."

"Good. Me neither."

"Ich kann euch beide nicht verstehen. Was wenn er jemanden umbringt? Ich werde nicht einfach vor einem Frisörsalon herumliegen, wenn Menschen Hilfe benötigen." Steve yelled, glaring at them, with his hands on his hips, before racing down the street. Bruce and Clint looked unconcerned.

"He can handle it. He's Captain America," Clint pointed out wisely, leaning back on the bench and tilting his head up to bask in the warm sunlight.

Bruce nodded sagely. "And what could two adorable kids like us possibly do against a giant poodle riding assassin?"

"Not a damn thing, my dear doctor. Not a damn thing."

On the ground, Loki and Thor both wrinkled their noses, and smoky words of "What IS that horrid stench?" appeared, only to be blown away in the wind.

Pepper made her way through Stark Industries in her usual pants suit, hair up in a tidy bun and high heels click clacking on the floors, Oops hovering along behind her like a duckling. No one gave the floating robot a second glance, it was just another odd thing about working in Stark Industries. She accepted various reports, assured several department heads that the meeting would take place this afternoon on schedule, and no, Tony would not be there, the former SI CEO had not even been told about it. If several looked relieved at that information, Pepper politely pretended not to notice. She finally got up to her own office, where her secretary Elsie glanced up from her phone and looked close to weeping, her face flushed and angry. Pepper was surprised. Elsie was usually extremely efficient and unflappable. What could have caused the older woman such distress?

Elsie covered the speaker end with one hand and hissed, "Justin Hammer is in your office and he is driving. Me. Crazy!" widening her eyes for emphasis.

Ah. That would do it. Pepper could feel her own migraine starting. Hammer had managed to bribe his way out of prison, claiming of all things, PTSD from watching footage of Tony's incarceration in
Afghanistan on the news. The whole thing was a complete farce, an insult to those who actually had PTSD, and the jury had been so obviously paid off it was disgusting. But as a result Hammer was free, and Hammer Industries and Stark Industries had been asked to work together on a fundraiser to raise money for people left homeless from the various attacks on New York, and to a smaller extent, Newark. Which meant she had to put up with the CEO himself in her office. Touching her things. Ugh.

She nodded to the woman, carefully straightened her suit (Tony called it her corporate armor) and strode into the office, Oops hovering over her shoulder, head swiveling around curiously, scanning the office for potential threats.

Hammer was sprawled in one of the two guest chairs, his feet up and resting next to her kinetic sculpture, getting dirt on her nice clean desk. Pepper had to consciously keep herself from grinding her teeth.

"Justin! How are you?" she asked with carefully constructed warmth, clicking her way to her desk in a way she knew was intimidating. Natasha had given her lessons on their last girls' night before the spell.

He stood and smiled insolently, his eyes sliding up and down to her figure before returning to her face. "Pepper, so nice to see you, I was so concerned after I heard about what happened to Tony! It must be such a hardship for you." His voice dripped with false sympathy.

"We're both doing wonderfully, thank you for your concern. I hope the trauma of seeing the news hasn't caused any relapses in your mental health?" she asked with a bright smile.

Justin's smile became slightly fixed. "Oh no, just fine, thank you." Looking to change the subject he noticed Oops who had settled down on the desk, observing the kinetic sculpture curiously.

"And who might this little fellow be? Not a very original design, but I suppose with Tony's change you'd need a few toys around." He smirked, the double entendre very much intended.

"Oh, Tony and I have no need for toys to keep ourselves entertained. Tony's mind could keep me entertained for decades. This is Oops. Tony made him for me after my kidnapping incident a week or so ago. She worries. I'm sure your…" She trailed off significantly, looking at him as though waiting for the name of his significant other, who of course did not exist.

Justin hid a poorly concealed sneer.

Oops chirped and swiveled to look at her and asked in his innocent, childish voice, "Mommy, this man is designation Justin Douche-Canoe Hammer. My data states that he should be buried up to his neck in excrement and locked away until the next ice age. Why is he here?"

Justin's eye twitched.

Pepper smiled serenely at the little bot. "He's here because the American legal system found him not guilty of any crimes against the American people. And it's not nice to call people douche-canoes, sweetheart."

"But that is his designation? Should I alter the designation?" Oops asked curiously.

"No sweetie, we'll talk to your Momma about it when we get home." She smiled and patted him gently on the head. Oops gave a happy whistle and began puttering around the desk, pulling a small vacuum hose out of somewhere in his body and cleaned up the dust Hammer's shoes had left behind.
Pepper turned her serene smile to Hammer. "You'll have to forgive him. He takes after Tony."

Hammer gritted his teeth angrily and bit out, "Oh, please, don't trouble yourself. I suppose you can't have children of your own, too busy doing a man's job, and with Tony running around pretending to be a woman himself, well, I suppose this is the only way you could have a child. Pity."

Pepper tensed. That was a low blow. A VERY low blow. Hammer didn't know it, but after her encounter with the Extremis she was actually unable to bare children. And while she'd never particularly wanted children, having the option taken away hurt more than she'd thought it would. She was about to counter with a scathing retort when Oops darted forward on the desk, a small panel opened and two darts shot forward, attaching to Hammer's ears with pin point accuracy, and a loud ZZZZZZT! noise was followed by Hammer jerking like a puppet on a string. He collapsed onto the floor, wisps of smoke rising gently from his charred hair gel.

Oops turned to her and zoomed over to land in her lap, her arms automatically coming up to hug him. "Mommy is a good mommy! Justin Douche-Canoe Hammer is mean and bad. Oops tased him. Okay?" he asked, his main optical sensor swiveling up to look at her inquiringly.

Pepper couldn't help but laugh. She hugged the little bot to her chest and replied. "Yes, Oops did very good. Mommy's very proud. But you are definitely your Momma's son."

"Exterminate!" Oops replied cheerfully, and emptied the contents of his little vacuum on Hammer's unconscious form, while Pepper picked up the phone and paged Elsie, who entered the room a moment later, glanced at Hammer, and smiled pleasantly at Pepper, eyes twinkling, awaiting instructions.

"Elsie, can you please have Mr. Hammer removed from the premises? Inform his driver he may schedule a re-appointment once his burns have healed and he learns some manners."

Elsie grinned wickedly. "Of course, I'll call Happy to dispose of the garbage right away. Will that be all, Ms. Potts?"

"Yes, thank you, Elsie." Pepper didn't realize that she was petting Oops on her lap like a Bond villain stroking a cat, but she wouldn't have been terribly unhappy with the comparison.

Oops gave a contented little whirring noise. Mommy was safe, Justin Douche-Canoe Hammer was neutralized, and now he was getting cuddled. Life, as much as a foot tall dalek could have, was good.

In retrospect, it was probably a bad idea to let Darcy and Thor go off for a walk around New York by themselves. But Darcy had excellent puppy eyes, and Thor (for obvious reasons) had even better ones. And so while the rest of the crew (minus Steve who had run off somewhere while they were in the salon) headed back to the Tower, Darcy and Thor ended up wandering around the large city, a tourist map in one hand, and a sparkly pink and rhinestone encrusted leash in the other.

After having walked around for several hours, Darcy was thirsty, and judging by Thor's panting, he was too. She directed them over to a street café, and was quickly seated by a boy her age that fell all over himself to sit the pretty girl with the cute little dog. The problem came when the manager wandered out and saw Thor.

"Miss, I'm afraid we don't allow animals," he told her firmly.
"Oh, he's not a dog. He's a Norse god." She told him calmly, lowering the menu she'd been perusing to observe him over the top.

He blinked. "I'm sorry?"

Most people in New York, if they were inclined to feel anything was their business at all, had been desensitized to the craziness by now. Flying pigs out the window? Better get the Windex and the ladders in case they poop on the sky lights. Got turned into a guinea pig? There's a form for that at the Police Station. Have to evacuate into the subways because there's a giant dragon on the loose downtown? Damn it, that's the fourth time this year, and the boss is getting pissy about it. But the manager had only just moved to New York last week to take over for his cousin (who coincidentally had suffered a nervous breakdown), and was unused to the unbridled chaos New York had become since the Chitauri invasion, so no one could blame him for being skeptical about her statement.

"This is Thor. You know, he has a big hammer, beats up evil villains with a single blow, L'Oreal commercial hair and biceps the size of my head? He's on the news all the time," she explained calmly.

"The Avenger. And he's your dog?" he clarified and looked around surreptitiously, hoping someone with a straight jacket was coming for the strange girl in his shop.

"Currently. He'd like some pop tarts if you have any," she told him, amused at his utter confusion.

"We don't carry pop tarts. We have Danishes and croissants," he replied, looking insulted.

Darcy looked down at Thor questioningly. He yipped twice. She nodded and told the man, "He'll have two of each. I'll have a cup of iced hazelnut coffee and a chocolate croissant please. You take Stark cards, right?" she asked, offering Tony's credit card politely.

"Yes, of course, right away," the manager said, looking dazed at having been handed Tony Stark's credit card, handed it back, and wandered back to the kitchen to put in the order.

"Poor guy. Well, he'll get used to it eventually," Darcy murmured to the dog, who wagged his tail.

Thor liked Midgardian pastries.

"So, we've hit the Chrysler building, Radio City Music Hall, Broadway, and the Met, none of which we could go in, because apparently even god-dogs can't go in, which is lame, but oh well, I've figured out where we CAN go," Darcy told her companion, ignoring the raised eyebrows of tourists around her.

Thor yipped curiously, as Darcy wound her way through the crowded sidewalks to a large clock tower topped stand, where she bought a ticket from an apathetic zoo attendant with a name tag that said "Alice" on it.

"This," she explained to the small dog as they wandered through the various exhibits, "is a zoo. I'm not sure if you have those in Asgard. From what you've said you tend to just kill any animals you can't eat. We did that for a long time, but then those species started dying out, and some went extinct."

Thor's eyes widened. Such a thing had never occurred to him. Would there be a day when they had slain all the dragons in the nine realms and there would be none left for his future children to slay in glorious battle?
"So, to preserve those species, and also to share them with the public, humans created zoos. I think menageries existed before then, but those were generally birds I think. Anyway, London had the first modern zoo that I know of, but New York's is pretty good too. Just don't go to Hoboken's," she told him seriously. The god-dog nodded gravely.

They wandered past otters, a lion who seemed to enjoy attention more than Tony did, a hippo Darcy incorrectly identified as male, a rather shaky looking giraffe, and two monkeys that could do sign language, which made Darcy and Thor wonder if they had previously been someone who annoyed Loki. Darcy bought them some snow cones despite the crispness of the air, and the two sat on a bench in front of a penguin exhibit, the four inhabitants waving at them adorably.

"So, not to be, you know, a nosy bitch or anything, but, what's up with you and Loki? After you left in a giant lightning tornado all of us did some reading, cause suddenly those myths weren't myths anymore, you know? And Jane missed you a LOT, so reading about you guys before bed seemed like a fun way to make her actually want to go to bed. You better not really be married to Sif by the way, or I will test out my lipstick taser on you." She glared down at the dog, whose ears swiveled backward in horror and he shook his head rapidly. "Well good. Anyway, it sounds like you guys seemed to blame EVERYTHING on your brother. I even made a flow chart for it. I mean, he got you that wall built, and then you made him do that thing with the horse to fix it cause you were all cheapskates, and then there was that thing with Baldr, and if the stuff about his kids is true your godly ass should be in jail 'till you're a couple billion years old."

Thor gave a weary sigh and buried his nose in his paws. He really needed to read these books the mortals kept referencing. He was not entirely sure what was in them, and if what was written was correct, and if some was, what, and if not what was, because they influenced human's perceptions of him and his people. He technically had been engaged to Sif, because by doing so, as her fiancé, could allow her to learn fighting as a man did. It had been strictly an engagement of convenience and friendship, there had been no intention to actually wed. As for his niece and nephews… perhaps he deserved to be punished for it. If nothing else it might ease his mind, and Loki's. And the fact that he still categorized them as his niece and nephews showed that he, at least on some level, considering them as beings worthy of the title.

He thought guiltily of Fenrir who was essentially stapled to the ground with a giant sword spearing his mouth shut, kicked out of Asgard when he was only a puppy. Of Sleipnir who his father rode as nothing more than a horse, thought Thor knew the steed to be much smarter than any mere pack animal. Of Jörmungandr, who had been thrown off the Bifrost for being a monster, who'd landed in Midgard and still dwelt in the depths of the oceans. Of Hela, who had scared him with her appearance and affinity for the dead even when she was a baby, before she was exiled Niflheim to rule over the dead, barely a handful of decades old. And of Vali and Nari, whom the Allfather had used to punish Loki. He’d turned Vali into a mindless wolf that had been goaded into attacking and killing his helpless twin brother Nari, before punishing Vali for the crime of kin slaying. Odin had then used Vali's entrails to tie a heartbroken Loki to boulders. Thor wasn't sure if that was the time they had bound a snake above him so that its venom had poured into Loki's eyes, blinding him or not. At the time it had seemed… not right, but wrong for him to question? Coming to Midgard had made him question many of his father's actions, and his own participation in them.

His beloved Jane would probably murder him if he even considered punishing any of their future children in such a manner, if Darcy or one of the other Avengers did not do so first. The punishments had certainly not seemed to do his brother much good. Why HAD the Allfather chosen such harsh punishments for his adopted son? Thor had explained, shortly after the Chitauri battle the circumstances of his own casting out. Tony had translated them as "He grounded you, because you were acting like a whiny little brat." Thor supposed, in retrospect that was basically what had occurred, by Asgardian standards. Loki's punishments were disproportionate to his crimes.
And he'd stood by and done nothing. Perhaps telling Loki that his slights were imagined after Stuttgart had been cruel and stupid, and he'd indeed deserved it when Loki had stabbed him with that dagger on top of Avengers Tower. Still, it might not be too late. Hela, Sleipnir, Jörmungandr, and Fenrir still lived. There might yet be time to make amends. And his brother seemed to be finding happiness here on Midgard. Thor silently promised himself to protect this small piece of joy Loki had made for himself, from their father, from enemies, and from those within, like Fury.

And perhaps someday his brother would view him as a brother again.

Darcy watched the god, noting his thoughtful, unhappy air. She turned her gaze to the penguins, whose happy expressions had become slightly forced looking at their continued presence. Grumpy penguins. Only in New York, she figured.

She liked Thor. Really, the guy had been like a happy puppy even before he was turned into one. But seriously, Asgard had to be one fucked up place. And having now met him on the other side of the killer evil robot, she kind of liked Loki. It was hard not to. He was always playing small pranks on the others, like when he switched the salt and the sugar when Clint was cooking, or when he kept changing Natasha's invisible outfits visibly pink. And he watched cartoons with her, and they chatted, or rather she chatted and he magically texted her, about the subplots and deeper meanings in My Little Pony, and about comedic theory. And Darcy didn't mind when he turned her hair a rainbow of colors when she wasn't looking. And the Eddas made her cry damn it! If she ever met Odin, even if it was the last thing she would do alive, she was going to tase his ass. If Tony hadn't already given her a shiny new purple lightsaber. Then she'd totally go all Anakin vs Dooku on his stupid one eyed head. Maybe she should ask for two lightsabers, she thought, making a mental note. And maybe get some lessons on how to use a sword. That'd probably be a good idea before going head to head with the king of a group of immortal warrior gods.

At that point the universe must have decided it had been too angsty for too long, because she heard a loud, metallic clanging and that noise hydraulic cylinders make when they go up and down. She turned her head to stare, as what looked like an army of gremlins (the cute looking one, not the ugly ones) on top of robotic velociraptors began swarming over the walls of the zoo like the wildebeests in the Lion King.

"Seriously?!!" she demanded incredulously, as the various zoo goers screamed and ran in panic from the sudden onslaught. She whipped out her Starkphone and shot off a text to Jarvis (who was much more reliable then Tony when it came to answering texts) telling him the Central Park Zoo was under attack and could he send some help please? She never got a chance to read his response, as she was too busy whipping out her BAMF girl mascara whip. She hadn't actually gotten a chance to practice with it, but how hard could it be? Tony had made it for them, and she knew they had no experience with fighting.

The small mascara container clicked as she unscrewed it, then it expanded and lengthened until it formed into a good sized handle. The sinuous black liquid inside attached to the wand and the container pulled out between the two in a stretchy continuous stream that firmed as it came into contact with the air. By the time it had finished it was a good six feet long, and made a satisfying snap when she tested it. Cool.

Thor had already summoned Mjolnir from somewhere, and had changed into his doggy armor in bolt
of lighting, a method that reminded her of the Sailor Moon henshin sequence, and was gleefully beating the crap out of a couple of the gremlins. The gremlins seemed baffled at this unexpected, and highly effective, resistance to… whatever their plan was, and were shrieking to one another in what seemed to be Portuguese.

Darcy's whip abruptly started sparking with bolts of electricity, and she barred her teeth in a vicious grin. "FOR NARNIA!" she screamed and dove into the fray.

Phil Coulson had been having a fairly good day. For one thing, he was no longer a monkey. That was a definite improvement, although he would miss his prehensile tail.

He was also happy because a side effect of the monkey-fication was that all the agents had had nothing but paperwork to do for almost two weeks. As a result, the back paperwork was almost entirely turned in. As far as the Avengers went, Stark was wrapped up in his new god boyfriend/pet, who'd had the good grace to turn Shield back after being caught, and was also not currently attempting to take over the world, always a good thing in Phil's book. Doctor Banner was now easily bribed with sugary pastries, and he could still speak to Steve, having taken German as his foreign language in college. Clint and Natasha were fairly happy, all things considered. And Thor had Dr Foster visiting, so he had to be happy too.

So yes, over all a very good day.

Until the call of a battle between Hipster Girl (whoever the hell that was), Thor and an army of robot dinosaurs and living furbys came in. Had he been anyone else Phil would have facepalmed. As it was, he sent a memo to Fury alerting him of the battle, did the same for the Avengers (who were apparently were already in route according to Jarvis' response), selected a squad of Agents for the inevitable clean up, called medical and arranged for an ambulance (and a vet) to meet at the Zoo just in case, and as an afterthought, cc-ed the Shield PR department in the memo. If any of the zoo animals were injured the ASPCA would be on the warpath.

Doctor Doom was also having a good day.

He could not fail this time. He'd thought of everything! He'd carefully locked down Baxter Tower with a new spell he'd created (i.e. found on the internet), trapping the Fantastic Four and the Black Widow inside. He'd chosen a location away from Hell's Kitchen, so Daredevil was not likely to come to the rescue. The X-men were on a team building conference in Wisconsin, learning to make their own cheese (with the exception of Professor X who was apparently caring for a grumpy, bed ridden Magneto who had indeed been mostly healed by a mutant named Hourglass.) It was well known in the villain chat rooms that Shield had been turned into monkeys and as such was outsourcing to inferior groups. Of the Avengers, his sources (also known as a SI employee in accounting who had a grudge against Stark for stealing his red stapler) had informed him that Tony Stark had crashed a Stark Industries Department Head meeting with her cat and was enjoying tormenting her staff by flicking sugar packets at their heads. A scan of the tower told him that the Hulk was taking a nap, as was Agent Barton. And he'd scryed in the ancient crystal ball he'd bought
last month on ebay and discovered Thor was currently a small lap dog and out in the city on a walk with a helpless nubile twenty something year old girl that functioned as Dr. Fosters lab assistant. None were in his way.

He'd even created a new army, as his usual Doom Bots were unionizing, campaigning for better treatment, and a dental plan. His small (and unfortunately adorable) minions of hell were riding proudly on their newly constructed robot mounts – all fierce, fast and possessing mouths full of razor sharp teeth.

Doom was clever. Doom was prepared. Doom was ready for anything.

Except perhaps for his combination robotic/demonic minion army having their collective asses handed to them by a nubile lab assistant armed with an electric whip, an armored dog with a magical hammer, and four penguins, one of whom kept hacking up pieces of lit dynamite.

Doom did in fact, facepalm. It made an annoying clanging sound, and did not help his growing headache. He floated down in front of his enemies dramatically and demanded "Who are you to fight Doom?"

He was summarily ignored.

He cleared his throat and said louder, "Doom said, WHO ARE YOU TO FIGHT DOOM?!"

Still nothing, although the woman did flick her whip in just such a way that a thrown stick of dynamite landed at his feet. It then exploded, knocking the super villain back against a brick wall and causing his cloak to catch fire. After a rather undignified stop, drop and roll, Doom sprang (stumbled) to his feet, and reached out with his mind, ordering his demon horde to destroy the interlopers! Said hordes responded that they were a little busy right now thanks, the bird with the exploding sticks was obviously a Duke of Hell in disguise, and that was NOT in the contract!

Several of the small hell spawn got sat on by a smug looking hippopotamus; several more were cowering in the otter exhibit in terror. If Doom did not know better he would have thought the otter was laughing at them. The lightning wielding dog had melted several of the raptors into hot silvery puddles, and the girl had deftly cut off several of their heads, before throwing what looked like an open makeup compact into a group of them, which proceeded to explode with such force the ground shook. The penguins were even worse. This was no good, he wasn't killing anybody!

He swept his singed cape dramatically over one shoulder and strode forward, ducking under the girls whip to grab her wrist tightly with one gauntlet-ed hand, tearing the whip from her other hand and tossing it aside. "Cease this nonsense at once girl!" he demanded imperiously, waiting expectantly for her to cower before his might.

The girl blinked up at him through thick black glasses. "Can you hang on a second? I need to check my make up."

Doom rolled his eyes, and waited patiently while she rifled through her purse. Obviously the girl was overcome by his natural charisma. It was tiring being so handsome and desirable to the opposite sex, even when all they could see were his eyes through the metal of his mask. It was his curse in life he supposed.

So he was a bit surprised when she pulled out a bottle of pepper spray and got him directly in said baby blues. And then electrocuted him with what looked like a feminine hygiene product. He was still technically organic under his mask, even though he preferred to think of himself as a being above such petty things as flesh and blood. It turned out whatever his body had changed into after
the space cloud, it still conducted electricity perfectly. Even better than a normal humans in fact, metal and liquid being excellent conductors of electricity.

Oh and it hurt.

A lot.

He passed out.

When he came to, he was in a pair of green glowing silver chains, which judging by his sudden inability to call on his magic, were sorcerous in origin. Curses. The girl who had defeated him, obviously a warrior goddess of Asgard in disguise, was chatting with a black cat, probably another god in disguise (surprisingly he was correct in this). Tony Stark was casually tearing apart one of his robot dinosaurs, looking disgusted about something. Obviously she was angry to be beaten at her own game by his genius. (She was actually horrified at the shoddy craftsmanship).

Over in the penguin exhibit, a mild looking agent in a rather nice suit, was speaking to the disguised Dukes of Hell, shaking the head ones flipper solemnly. Fool. Doom would laugh when they revealed themselves. Which would doubtlessly be any minute now.

Any minute now.

Yup.

Any time...

He was distracted by one of the smaller hell spawn he'd summoned limping its way over to him and knocking his small fist on one of Dooms metal boots to get his attention.

"What?!" he demanded imperiously, sneering down at the lower being.

"Yeah, hi. Listen, we've got an appointment down below, it's Pizza Monday, so we're just gonna go. You can deliver the offerings you still owe us and any future supplications to the usual portal at the DMV," it told him, in Portuguese.

"What do you mean you're leaving?! I paid for a month's work! And it's Tuesday, not Monday," Doom protested.

"You really need to check those contracts before you sign them. It said a month as of 29 days and 12 hours ago. You had us for the afternoon. And it's always Monday in hell. Duh." With that there was a small pop! and his army of hell was gone.

"Curses," he swore again under his breath.

To add insult to injury, the warrior goddess from before gestured at him to the cat, and his cloak turned a very girly shade of baby pink.
"How you doing, champ?" one of the Agents asked him cheerfully.

"Doom demands Doom's lawyer, a doctor, and a grilled cheese sandwich!" he informed the man imperiously. It had been a long day, and his mother had always made him grilled cheese when he'd had a bad day at school as a child. The other two were self explanatory.

"That's up to Director Fury. I am authorized to inform you that Loki, God of Mischief, Magic and Lies has claimed New York as his own territory, and any further acts against the city or its people will result in your being turned into a cockroach."

"A cockroach?" Doom repeated thoughtfully, digesting this new information.

"Yup. He got mad after the Magneto incident last week."

"Hmm…Doom has decided this city is unworthy of his leadership. Doom shall go back to Latveria," he decided after a few minutes of thought.

"Good idea," the agent agreed amicably.

"But before Doom's departure, he wishes to know the identity of the warrior goddess he was… inconvenienced by."

The agent blinked in confusion. "What warrior goddess?"

"The one speaking to the cat. You cannot fool Doctor Doom with such a pitiful disguise. She is obviously of divine origins, to be able to hold her own against one of Doom's power," Doom snapped, the uncomfortable thought that she might be a normal human slowly dawning on him.

"Oh, you mean Darcy Lewis? I don't think she's a goddess. She's definitely not human though. Fury says she's a menace to all mankind. I heard she put Thor in the hospital with a single blow and last week she escaped from a kidnapping attempt by Magneto without breaking a sweat. I don't know what she is. There's a betting pool going, odds are on her being Loki's daughter, Hel, but I put my money on her being an immortal sorceress from Atlantis."

"Ah." This made perfect sense to Doctor Doom. All was once again right with the world. He had not been beaten by a puny human girl, but rather an ancient immortal sorceress or a goddess of the underworld. Any mortal, even one as mighty as he, would have difficulty with such a foe.

"Is Doom able to get in on this pool? Doom thinks she is Hel also," he told the chatty agent as he was lead into the waiting criminal transport vehicle.

"You'd have to ask Coulson when he's done talking to Special Agents Skipper, Rico, Kowalski, and Private. He's in charge of the pool. Watch your head," he added kindly.

"They're not really penguins you know," Doom told him conversationally as he sat down on one of the benches. "They are secretly Dukes of Hell."

"I believe it. Those penguins are psychotic. You want a coke?"

"Are you attempting to slip Doom a truth serum, or vile poison?" he demanded, attempting to look intimidating and failing. To be fair, it's very difficult to be frightening in a pink cloak, especially when your hands are chained together.

The agent shrugged. "It's diet. Does that count as poison?"
"Yes." Doom replied firmly, then paused and said, "Doom accepts your offering of soda."

"Cool. Uh... how do you drink with the mask on?"

"Doom requires a crazy straw."

The agent blinked. "Uh... don't think I have one of those."

"Doom carries one in his cloak pocket, so that after a successful battle he might go to Jamba Juice to celebrate."

"Ah," the agent politely said nothing, and he dug through the pocket before finding and pulling out the straw. "Nice color. Matches your cloak."

"Thank you."

Doom was not allowed in the betting pool. He pouted for most of the boat ride back to Latvaria. All in all, it had been a normal day in New York.

Chapter End Notes

German translated by Lokia

Ich kann euch beide nicht verstehen. Was wenn er jemanden umbringt? Ich werde nicht einfach vor einem Frisörsalon herumliegen, wenn Menschen Hilfe benötigen. - "I can't believe you two. What if he kills someone?! I'm not going to lie around in front of a hair salon when people need help!"

Next chapter, Puck's sinister punishment is made known to Tony... the horror! The horror!!!

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