what would you do (if you had more time)

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Summary

"How did you get here? I'm just asking because we don't usually have people appearing out of nowhere randomly mysteriously formed portals."

Or, a time travel Lams Marvel crossover, featuring Tony the questionably good host and Alexander the questionably good house guest.

Notes

I put an inordinate amount of research into the history of pizza and barstools. I need help.

See the end of the work for more notes.

Hamilton looked at Burr, and in that split second, as he saw the glint in Burr's eyes, he realized what was going to happen, even before Burr himself knew it. Burr was going to shoot. Hamilton knew Burr better than he knew himself sometimes. Hamilton might not understand Burr, but experience taught him quite a few things about Aaron Burr, the foremost of which that he was just as sensitive about his pride as Hamilton himself was.

Thoughts zipped past him at the speed of light. Regrets, missed opportunities, thing he’d never said
but should have, things he had said but shouldn’t have. He had tried to live his life to avoid regrets, but it seemed to be inevitable.

Then pain, searing pain. He had a vague recollection of being moved, of being taken to Bayard’s house by the harbour, of talking to someone — was it Eliza? Angelica? His mouth was moving of its own accord, going thirty words per second because he had so much to tell them and so little time and he needed Eliza to tell Burr that he is forgiven, has been forgiven since the moment he pulled the trigger—

Then nothing.

Voices, indistinct voices, were talking — more like muttering incessantly — around him. Was he dead? Was this afterlife? Where was his son — his mother —Washington — Laurens?

Laurens. His Laurens. Would he see his old friend again? He had so many things he had never written down, never voiced, for fear of discovery. Maybe now—

The chatter stopped. He was suddenly struck with a bout of light and closed his eyes, though he couldn’t recollect ever opening them.

When he opened his eyes again, he found that three people were leaning over him: a brunet, a blond, and a female redhead. Hamilton’s eyes were drawn to the brunet, as he was closest. “What— I thought—”

The brunet offered him a cup of water. Hamilton drank it like a man deprived of water for eternity – which, for all he knew, could well have been the case. As he drank, he cast a look around. His eyes froze on the figure next to him. Dark hair, tanned skin, freckles abound – if the man’s eyes were open, Hamilton would bet his reputation they’d be blue.

“Laurens,” he breathed.

The brunet furrowed his eyebrows. “That guy?” he pointed at Laurens. “He came through the portal right behind you.”

“He’s alive.”

“Well, obviously,” the brunet said condescendingly. He helped Hamilton sit up. "How did you get here? I'm just asking because we don't usually have people appearing out of nowhere randomly mysteriously formed portals," the black-clad brunet rambled. "I mean, it's been known to happen — that sorcerer is an annoyance, by the way — but it's not exactly a common occurrence."

"What are you talking about?" Hamilton sputtered. "Who are you, sir?"

"Funny," the blond behind the brunet interrupted, "we were about to ask you the same thing. See, two people suddenly appearing here is just a mite suspicious."

Hamilton opened his mouth to ask for a clarification because he understood exactly nothing of what was happening, but a coughing sound cut him off. He whipped his head to examine his closest friend, who was slowly regaining consciousness. “What— how—”

“Don’t speak yet, Laurens,” Hamilton advised him. He heard rather than saw the blond disappear, only to return with another cup of water. Hamilton helped Laurens into a sitting position, then offered him the water.
“What is happening?” Laurens asked, drinking the water just as greedily as Hamilton had only moments earlier.

Hamilton shook his head. “I must admit that I do not know.”

“You, not knowing everything? That must be infuriating,” Laurens laughed, then winced, a pained expression on his face.

Hamilton leaned into Laurens, touching their foreheads together, heedless of their audience. They had bigger problems than standing accused of sodomy. “Are you alright?”

Laurens sighed. “No, but I will be. What about you? Your face looked shocked when I woke up.”

Hamilton steadied himself. He knew that he had to reveal this to Laurens eventually, but to do it so soon… “You died,” he said simply, the words still causing his stomach to twist and turn, just as they had twenty-two years ago. They all knew the risks enlistment entailed, but Hamilton never quite expected Laurens to be the one to die.

Laurens closed his eyes. He released a deep breath. “How am I alive, then? Unless this is some kind of afterlife. Is this Heaven?”

The redhead barked a short laugh. “Not quite, handsome.”

“Hey!” the brunet said indignantly. “Rude, Natasha.”

“Who are you?” Laurens unknowingly reiterated his friend's question.

The brunet rolled his eyes. "Really?" he asked with exasperation. "You come into my tower — which has my name on it, I might add, it's not exactly subtle — and you still don't know who I am?" at Hamilton and Laurens' marching looks odd bewilderment, he scoffed. "Fine. I'm Tony Stark. Genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist. You've probably heard of me," he smiled charmingly. He had a very attractive smile, Hamilton conceded grudgingly. Judging from Laurens' attentive stare, he agreed.

Laurens shook his head. "My apologies, dear sir, but I have not heard of a gentleman by your name."

"Aren’t you a dirty liar," Stark waved his finger in front of Laurens' face.

Hamilton saw red. He wasn't about to stand here and observe passively as his Laurens was being insulted by this man. "Excuse me?" he hissed. "Are you accusing my friend of being a deceiver? I can assure you that this is certainly not the case, but I would rather not waste my—"

"Hamilton," Laurens touched his arm gently, the tone of his voice urging him to constrain himself.

Stark grinned. “Ah, Hamilton,” he said the name, then repeated it, testing the sound. “Good last name. It is your last name, isn't it?"

Hamilton frowned. "I have not heard of any person using Hamilton as their Christian name."

Stark shrugged. "People do crazy shit these days. Like, you wouldn’t believe it unless you saw it."

The redhead – Natasha – raised her eyebrows. "You're one to talk, Mr 'I Am Iron Man'."

"What can I say? I'm a diva. Anyway, Hamilton, what's your first name?"
Hamilton exchanged a brief glance with Laurens, who had come to the same conclusion: they wouldn't get any more information unless they shared their identity. Hamilton couldn't keep a grin off his face at the constant reminder that Laurens was alive.

Hamilton then turned back to Stark. He straightened. "My full name is General Alexander Hamilton," he couldn't help preening a little at the title. Of all of his accomplishments, he’d always thought of it as his crowning achievement – after Philip, of course, but he had gotten into the habit of not thinking about or discussing his firstborn because of the sheer pain it brought both him and Eliza.

Laurens mouthed "General?" at Hamilton, who gave him a look that promised to provide an adequate explanation at a later date. God, there was so much Laurens had missed, so much he didn't know.

Stark snorted. "Now I know you're fucking with me," he drawled. "Alexander Hamilton has been dead for over two hundred years, dude. If you want to give me a fake name, at least choose something not so obviously false."

"I highly doubt that Hamilton wants to engage in sexual intercourse with you, sir," Laurens retorted. "Anyway, sodomy is unlawful and a sin before God, which you should be aware—"

"Laurens, cease talking," Hamilton abruptly muttered into his ear. Laurens blinked at him confusedly. "If what I suspect is right—" he turned to Stark. "Dear sir, may I enquire as to the date?" he asked politely.

Stark exchanged an exasperated glance with the blond at his side. "Sure," he said. "It's June the 21st."

"What year of our Lord?" Hamilton prompted.

Stark snickered. "Are you even real?" he mocked.

"Will you answer my inquiry, good man?" Hamilton reminded him impatiently.

Stark smirked. "It's 2017," he said.

Hamilton took a step back. "2017," he repeated faintly. He closed his eyes in order to process the information. He did not doubt the sincerity of this Tony Stark. Certainly, he gave off an air of arrogance, but, as a fellow genius, Hamilton certainly empathize. Stark seemed exasperated by the fact that nobody could keep up with his thought process.

"Yup," Stark popped the P. "And our president is a woman. Close call, there, what with… well, let’s not go into politics."

"No, by all means, let us go into politics," Hamilton said suddenly.

Stark rolled his eyes. “I’ve got to give you one thing, kid: you’re persistent.”

“What do I need to do to convince you of the veracity of my claim?” Hamilton asked, a desperate tone to his voice.

Stark shrugged. “A DNA test would suffice, I suppose.”

Hamilton frowned. “What is DNA?”
Natasha raised an eyebrow. “And where, pray tell, would you find DNA that would serve as a reference to Hamilton’s DNA?” she asked pointedly.

Stark grinned. “Well, I figure he’s got to have a few descendants, right, Nat?”

Natasha glared. “Call me that again and I will castrate you. Or, better yet, leave you at the mercy of Pepper Potts.”

“Duly noted,” Stark said, an unrepentant grin plastered on his face, although his voice was a little unsteady.

“Your great plan has one glaring flaw,” Natasha went on with ruthless efficiency. “Considering that there’s been between nine and ten generations between Hamilton and his current descendants, that DNA would be very diluted.”

“Still, better than nothing, right?”

Natasha crossed her arms. She turned to the blond man. “Steve, what do you think?”

Steve considered this. “If what Mr Hamilton says is true, he would be a great asset—”

“About the DNA,” Natasha clarified.

“I wouldn’t know. I’m not a scientist. Ask Bruce,” Steve shrugged.

“Anyway,” Stark interrupted. “We haven’t introduced ourselves. Well, I have, because I’m fabulous and considerate like that, but these two haven’t. So this is Natasha Romanoff,” he gestured at the redhead, “and that’s Steve Rogers.

“Now, this guy here claims to be Alexander Hamilton, so what does that make you? Thomas Jefferson?” Stark scoffed.

Hamilton made a gagging sound. Laurens smiled, making a reminder to have Hamilton explain that later. “No. My name is John Laurens.”

He watched the three strangers for telltale reactions — surprise, shock, disbelief — but if they recognized his name, they didn't show it. Laurens winced. His legacy had not come to fruition.

At least Alexander's had. Then again, he had always been the more extraordinary of the two of them.

“Nope, sorry. Nothing,” Stark said, shaking his head.

Hamilton opened his mouth to defend Laurens but was silenced by Laurens himself. This was neither the time nor the place, after all. “You mentioned something about DNA?” Laurens said a little desperately in an effort to distract Hamilton.

Hamilton shot him a glance that said that he knew exactly what Laurens was doing but was willing to indulge him — for now.

“Yeah!” Stark exclaimed, his face beaming as he enthusiastically began explaining. “DNA is basically our genetic code,” at his guests’ empty stares, he sighed. “Okay, so you know how people are different? They look differently, behave differently, have different traits? You have reddish hair, while Laurens over there has black hair. That’s what DNA does, in simple terms. It’s kind of like an encryption code to your entire physical being, telling your body what you should look like,
what traits to express. It's what makes you you. DNA also has a bunch of other functions like controlling your body’s responses and chemical processes, but what’s important in this case is that you can tell whether someone is related to someone else by looking at their DNA, since a child inherits half of their mother’s DNA and half of their father’s.”

Laurens whistled in appreciation. “Neat.”

Hamilton’s eyes shone up with understanding as his mind put together the scraps of information he has been bombarded with. “Is that what Romanoff meant when she said that my DNA would be diluted? That, since my children would only inherit half of this DNA of mine, and their children would, in turn, only inherit half of what my children have passed on, there would be very little of my actual DNA to compare against?”

Romanoff raised an eyebrow. “He’s good,” she said quietly to Rogers. “Might even adapt better than you, assuming we don’t figure out a way to send them back.”

Rogers rolled his eyes. “I wasn’t exactly a shining example of good adaptation, Nat.”

Romanoff smiled. “Don’t let Stark hear you call me that. I’d never hear the end of it.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Rogers grinned.

Meanwhile, Stark shrugged. “Yeah. I mean, technically, it’s possible for your descendants to, each generation, inherit the DNA that your children inherited, but the chances of that are infinitesimal.”

“Why make the attempt, then, if we know from the beginning that the results would be questionable at best?” Hamilton persisted.

“Because I’m a scientist. I need empirical proof of what I see, and this is the closest we will come to proof, short of drugging you with psychoactive drugs that would lower your inhibitions and essentially make you incapable of lying.”

“Why do you not want to try that, Mr Stark?” Laurens asked.

Stark’s smile was tight. “Because it’s technically illegal and I’m in enough trouble with Fury as it is.”

“Sir,” said a mechanical voice, coming from somewhere in the ceiling. Hamilton and Laurens jumped. Stark snickered, while Rogers held back a smile. Romanoff stared at them dispassionately.

“I am aware that you have ordered me not to interrupt you without just cause, but I believe that you should be aware of the fact that Thor Odinson has arrived back on Earth.”

“Who– what is that?” Hamilton demanded.

Stark grinned fondly. “My AI. Artificial Intelligence. His name is JARVIS, which stands for Just A Rather Very Intelligent System.”

“Also the name of his butler when he was young,” Romanoff chimed in.

Stark glared at her. “You. You are officially disowned.”

“I wasn’t aware that I was in your will to begin with,” Romanoff retorted. “Why do you assume you're the smartest in the room, like the rest of us mere mortals cannot keep up with you?”

“Because I know for a fact that you can’t,” Stark said cockily. “Nothing to be ashamed of, really.”
Hamilton and Lauren watched the exchange with amusement, still sitting on the floor. Laurens casually leaned his head against Hamilton’s. A few stray auburn hairs tickled Laurens’ face. Hamilton’s attention was diverted from the spectacle in front of them to his lover’s relaxed face.

*He had been reckless,* Hamilton thought with affection. In the army, they weren’t open about their relationship, but he suspected that a great deal of high-ranking officers knew about them, and simply chose to overlook it. Willful ignorance on their part, really. Laurens had clearly become used to it — maybe too used. For Hamilton, who had risen up to the ranks of high society, prudence had become a necessity, even in regards to his relationship with his own wife. That one time he slipped—

Well. There was no use thinking about it now. Let bygones be bygones, and all that.

Hamilton looked back at the trio. Stark and Romanoff were engaged in some form of a staring contest, while Rogers tried to negotiate a truce. Stark finally broke away, much to Romanoff’s triumphant smirk; his eyes focused back on Hamilton and Laurens, and he took in their proximity to each other. He raised an eyebrow. “You’re dating. I see.”

“Dating?” Hamilton tilted his head, puzzled.


“Stark,” Steve said reprovingly.

Laurens sputtered. Hamilton bit his lip. “I wouldn’t describe us as ‘dating’, per your terms, as we aren’t allowed to—”

Stark waved a hand, cutting him off, mid-sentence. “Quick history lesson, dinosaurs: being gay is okay. Or at least no longer punishable by death. I mean, there are still some assholes who would judge you for it, but you’re free to be yourself in public. Like Steve here,” he indicated the blond. “He’s bisexual. It means that he’s attracted to both men and women. Gay, for the record, means that you only want to fuck your own gender.”

Laurens watched Stark with wide eyes. “Is it socially acceptable to speak of such matters out loud?” he wondered.

Natasha snorted. “Stark doesn’t have a brain-to-mouth filter – not unlike you, General Hamilton – so he’s a bad example, but generally yes. People tend to talk fairly openly about sexualities.”

“Which means that you’ll be able to enjoy the concept of going on dates,” Stark grinned. “I’ll even pay for them, just to see your reactions.”

Rogers blinked. “Does that mean we’re keeping them?”

Hamilton scowled. “We are not pets to be kept,” he said plaintively.

Stark ignored Hamilton. “Yeah. I mean, either they aren’t who they say they are, in which case we’re looking at two people with abilities that include creating weird portals – like Cap said, *assets* – or they are who they say they are, and we are looking at a Founding Father. Either way, shorty here—”

“You are not much taller than myself, good sir,” Hamilton interjected sharply.

“—seems capable of keeping up with me, and I’ve always wanted a proper Padawan to my Jedi Master. We’re keeping them. Either way, I want to run the DNA test. Jesus, I haven’t had this
much fun in ages,” he grinned excitedly.

Romanoff rolled her eyes at that.

"That’s all good and well, but how do we explain to Fury that we’ve somehow managed to find a Founding Father?” asked a man hiding up in a hole in the wall, and woah, how had Hamilton not seen him before? He was slipping.

The redhead glared. "Clint, get down from the vents."

Clint rolled his eyes but obliged her, hopping down from the hole. What did the redhead call it? Vent? Hamilton absentmindedly pondered on its purpose. It seemed to be constructed as to only let air pass, so that was in all probability a part of its function.

Stark saw his wandering gaze. He laughed in delight. “That’s part of our ventilation system. It keeps the air clean, so to speak,” he explained.

“Assuming that this is the future,” Laurens said carefully, “which I am still not fully convinced of, we do not have the funds to care for ourselves.”

Stark made a dismissive gesture. “In case you missed my brilliant introduction – which you shouldn’t have, but under the circumstances, I don’t blame you – I’m a billionaire. That’s code for ‘I have more money than my friends and I can ever spend’. You’re more than welcome to it.”

“Mr Stark, I cannot speak for Laurens but I am not altogether comfortable exploiting your goodwill, or plundering your finances, endless though they might be,” Hamilton informed him.

“Well, think of it this way: I wouldn’t have that money if you had not founded this country and our fiscal system. Think of it as repayment until— if you manage to get back on your feet and wants to do something with your life.”

“Well, Stark, harsh,” Clint murmured.

Stark shrugged. “But true. Anyway, you loquacious dinosaur, I’ll get you and your… friend,” he wagged his eyebrows suggestively, “keyed into JARVIS, and then I’ll show you your room. JARVIS, can you find every descendant of Alexander Hamilton currently alive?”

“Yes, sir. Would you like me to forward the list of phone numbers to your workshop?” the AI inquired politely.

“JARVIS, you are a godsend.”

Hamilton blinked. “What is a phone?”

Clint snickered. “This is going to be so much fun.”

Stark showed Hamilton and Laurens to their room, then left them there to ‘process everything’, as he put it.

As soon as the door closed behind them, Hamilton had Laurens in a tight embrace. “You had died,” he murmured, holding Laurens tightly. “You were dead.”

Laurens reciprocated the gesture. “Did you die as well?” he spoke softly.
Hamilton nodded. “I was involved in a duel with Burr. It is quite a story, but I would rather not recount it at this moment, as it is lengthy even by my standards. Suffice to say that Burr shot me, and though I do not believe he had the intention of terminating my life, I expired several hours later.”

“Burr,” Laurens growled.

“I forgive him, John,” Hamilton quieted him, then took a step back, only to capture Laurens’ lips in a kiss. Laurens made a surprised sound, then melted into the kiss.

It would have evolved into something else, but, just as Hamilton’s hand began to undo the buttons on Laurens’ uniform – there were really too many – there was a knock on the door, followed by Stark barging through. Hamilton and Laurens yelped, attempting to jump apart and create a little space between them, but it was futile: Stark had a glint in his eyes that said that he knew exactly what they had been doing (though Hamilton did concede that it wasn’t exactly hard to figure out) but simply didn’t care.

“Sorry to be a cockblocker,” Stark said cheerfully; Hamilton blinked at the unfamiliar term, though he could guess its meaning without much difficulty, “but I’ve managed to contact one of Hamilton’s descendants and asked whether he could visit and take a sample of her DNA, to which she had readily agreed. I’m going to need some hairs from Carrot over there.”

Hamilton was briefly puzzled as to how his hair would facilitate Stark in figuring out whether he was indeed related to his own descendant – God, he had descendants – but concluded that it must also contain some of this DNA business (which he really ought to read up on, like everything else they had heard of so far, since he was determined to gain all possible knowledge from this time period while they were here).

He pulled out a few hairs and handed them to Stark, who genially placed them in a transparent bag. “I’ll be gone for a bit. If you need anything, simply call for JARVIS, and he will provide you with anything you need. Steve, Nat, and Clint are in the kitchen, if you feel like talking. Other than that, have fun. Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do, kids,” he winked, then left.

Hamilton looked at Laurens, who looked right back at Hamilton. “That gentleman is rather unique, I would say,” Laurens finally said.

“He is also finally gone,” Hamilton grinned lasciviously, resuming his work on Laurens’ buttons.

They eventually made their way to the kitchen, already occupied by Rogers, Clint, and Romanoff. The interaction was awkward at first, but the vent man – whose full name was Clint Barton – soon realized that neither Hamilton nor Laurens knew of the existence or the workings of a coffee machine, which incited an impromptu lesson on the basic modern apparatus. Hamilton glowed with delight at the thought of a machine that could make a drink that could sustain him for an even longer period of time than his body managed to, and was doubly so when Romanoff informed him that Stark, too, operated mainly on caffeine and sheer willpower when working, disregarding food or sleep or even common sense. Finally, a kindred spirit. He could practically feel Laurens’ resignation as he absorbed the information like a sponge.

Another thing he wanted to make a closer acquaintance with was the telephone, not only for its ability to communicate messages over great distances – though he wanted to study that, too; it would have been so very useful during the Revolution, and, judging by Laurens’ faraway gaze, he agreed with Hamilton’s opinion – but also for its capacity to retrieve information from around the
world, then communicating it back to the user, all within a few seconds. Laurens, on the other hand, was fascinated by photography. “Good man, do you mean that I no longer have to stand still for hours to have my portrait done?” he had exclaimed, mirth in his eyes. Technology truly was wondrous.

The session was interrupted by a high-pitched sound coming from behind them, startling Hamilton and Laurens. The trio remained unruffled, which went a long way to calming Hamilton’s nerves; from what he had gleaned so far, all three were very capable of defending themselves, as well as of assessing threats. If they did not deem the sound dangerous, neither should he. The sound of footsteps grew louder, as if approaching them. Hamilton made as if to turn around in his chair – a bar stool, he had been reliably informed by Barton – but he needn’t have bothered.

“They’re a match,” Stark said, dropping unceremoniously into a stool by the kitchen counter, seizing the coffee pot and pouring himself a generous cup, then drinking half of it in one swallow. Hamilton sipped at his own deliciously bitter drink. “Well, as much of a match as they can be, considering the generation gap, but roughly ten percent of their DNA shares identical genes, which, to be honest, was way more than I expected.”

“So what do we do?” Barton said in the silence that followed.

Rogers straightened his back. “We explain to Fury that, due to an accident, we are playing host to two people from the eighteenth century until further notice. We don’t need to inform him that one of them is a Founding Father.”

Stark grinned. “Wow, I never thought I’d live to see this moment. Captain America saying that we should lie? You’re learning, Cap,” he said gleefully.

Rogers bit his lip. “I’m not saying we should lie, just… omit to inform Fury of certain facts.”

“That’s lie by omission, Steve,” Natasha felt the need to point out. “I trust that I don’t need to remind you of how pissed you were at SHIELD when they withheld information from us.”

“What would you have me do, then?” Rogers demanded. “Snitch to Fury? That would greatly limit their personal freedom—”

“We are still present,” Hamilton spoke up. “There is no need to talk about us in the third person.”

“–to the point at which they’d be like dogs on a leash, and that’s not fun,” he concluded. “Believe me, I’ve been there, and I don’t want anyone else to have to live with that feeling of helplessness.”

Barton shrugged. “If Steve says lie to SHIELD, I say let’s do that.”

Stark leaned on his arm, absentmindedly knocking his fingers into the counter. “I’d need to create entirely new identities for them. JARVIS,” he addressed the empty air, “call up the bios I had you compile on Alexander Hamilton and John Laurens.”

Hamilton watched in amazement as the air before Stark shimmered, before letters and pictures simply appeared in front of his eyes. His breath hitched.

Stark skimmed through the text, occasionally frowning. “Let’s see. You’ll need names. Let’s start with that. JARVIS, create two new files, name ‘Alex’ and ‘John’. I think you can keep your first names, they’re common enough, though Alexander should be shortened to just Alex. As for last names… Faucette?”

Romanoff grimaced. “Too obvious.”
“Do we get a say in this?” Laurens spoke sharply.

“Let’s see…” Stark pretended to think. “You are completely ignorant about modern ways of ascertaining the veracity of an identity,” he rolled his eyes. “No, you don’t get a say.”

“Hale?” Rogers pitched.

“Too common. Too suspicious.”

“Andre,” Romanoff said unexpectedly.

Stark bit his lip. “Does it mean anything?”

“It means ‘the other’ in several Scandinavian languages.”

“Like Alex two point oh – Alex the second,” Stark snickered. “I like it. Alex Andre. JARVIS, you keeping up?”

“Yes, sir,” the mechanical voice sounded almost amused, though it escaped Hamilton how a machine could have emotions. Then again, before today, he hadn’t believed time travel to be possible, yet here he was. “Anything else you would like me to add?”


“I was going to say Lynn,” Romanoff replied.

“John Lynn,” Stark tasted the name. “John Lewis. Laurens, which one would you prefer?” he addressed John.

Hamilton pouted. “How come John gets to choose, but I don’t?”

Romanoff snorted. “Life isn’t fair. Get used to it.”

Laurens thought for a moment. “Lewis sounds better,” he finally declared.

“Lewis it is,” Stark said. “Alex Andre and John Lewis. Pleased to make your acquaintance.”

Rogers and Romanoff undertook the arduous task of informing Fury, whoever that was, of Hamilton and Laurens’ existence and future stay at Stark Tower – informally nicknamed Avengers Tower, but Stark insisted on keeping his name on the building because he was a drama queen who thrived on attention – while Stark and Barton all but dragged Hamilton and Laurens off to shopping. “We have to replace your entire wardrobe,” Barton explained with an enthusiasm Hamilton had hitherto only seen in Eliza and Angelica.

Hamilton borrowed a shirt and breeches – “Jeans, Alex. May I call you Alex? I think I’ll call you Alex.” – Stark, being of roughly the same height and stature, while Laurens borrowed Rogers’ clothes which, while matching his height, hung loosely around his body. Laurens kept eyeing them with distaste, in much the same way he also inspected the modern version of New York City. “It’s much too noisy,” he commented. “Everything keeps moving, never staying still. It’s unsettling.”

Hamilton grinned lazily. “I know. Isn’t it lovely?”

Laurens simply shook his head.
Stark seemed to have found what he was looking for, paving the way to a shop with an incomplete horizontal eight as a symbol. So began an adventure through high-end New Yorkian boutiques.

By the time Stark declared, to Hamilton and Laurens’ immense joy, that they were finished, Hamilton had gained far more clothes than he ever knew what to do with – and some articles whose existence he had hitherto been blissfully unaware of, and whose function still escaped him. Among the jackets was a emerald-green one he could already tell he would be very fond of. Laurens was likewise laden with bags upon bags of clothes, accessories, and shoes, including a pair of sunglasses that Hamilton, having thought suited him, slipped into his merchandise when he wasn’t looking.

Stark had also decided that both Hamilton and Laurens needed StarkPhones. He handed them a pair of shiny, flat boxes, and guided them through the basic functions as Barton was sent to get food. He returned with four cartons of pizza; Hamilton vaguely recalled Jefferson once mentioning a similar dish, having heard about it from an Italian friend of his, but he didn’t pay that much attention to Jefferson’s words, being of the opinion that whatever Jefferson approved of was inherently bad. He changed his opinion after tasting it, and marveled at the mouth-watering taste of the flatbread. Stark chattered away about some technology or other while Clinton rolled his eyes every few seconds at Stark’s antics. It was surprisingly relaxing.

Upon their return to Stark Tower – which was one of the tallest buildings in the city, and certainly matched its owner’s ego – they found a bald man wearing a black coat and an eyepatch waiting for them. Stark groaned. “Fury.”

So this was the legendary Fury, Hamilton thought. He gave the man a thorough examination, assessing him as he would a threat. He didn’t like what he found. Fury gave off the impression of being a man not to be trifled with.

Fury rose from where he had been seated on the sofa. Stark gestured back at the furniture. “No, by all means, do make yourself at home, Director Fury. Don’t let me stop you,” there was enough venom in his words to fell a honey badger.

“Stark,” Fury said neutrally, “I heard that you’re having guests.”

Stark glowered, going over to the bar and pouring himself an alcoholic beverage of some sort, then another after he drank the first one. “I wasn’t aware that my guest list had to be vetted by SHIELD.”

“It does when said guests appear from a magic portal.”

“Really, now?” Stark challenged. “Then you should put Strange on that list, since portals are his preferred mode of transport. He likes to open them in my workshop,” he grimaced with distaste.

“Who are you?” Fury asked Laurens, who was still holding his shopping bags.

Hamilton put his down and stepped in front of Laurens. It must have looked ridiculous – him at 5’7 protecting his friend at 5’11 – because Stark snorted and Romanoff smirked, while Rogers bit his cheek to refrain from smiling. Fury’s expression remained impenetrably detached. “My name is Alexa– Alex Andre,” he said, sending a mental thanks to Stark for picking a name that made room for any slip-ups, “and my friend goes by John Lewis.”

“I see,” Fury said.

Stark sighed dramatically. “Lovely to have you here and all, but now that you’ve ascertained that
Alex and John aren’t aliens, can you leave? I’ll even say please,” he cajoled, his voice practically dripping with sarcasm.

“I would like it if Andre and Lewis returned with me to SHIELD. I’d like for my people to run a few tests,” he said in a tone implying this wasn’t a suggestion.

“Yeah, right,” Stark said sardonically. “Not happening.”

“Luckily, that’s not up to you,” Fury said smoothly. He ignored Stark’s sulk, turning to address Hamilton. “Mr Andre, you heard me.”

Hamilton wrinkled his nose. He had never been one to take orders lying down, and, to be truthful, no matter how intimidating Fury attempted to be, he had nothing on George Washington during one of his fits. “With all due respect, sir,” he said laconically, tone saying that he meant anything but, “we have no interest whatsoever in following you to this SHIELD, whatever that is.”

There was a brief silence, with most of the room’s occupants looking stunned at Hamilton’s outburst, while Laurens gazed at Hamilton with fondly. Despite not knowing Stark for an extended period of time, Hamilton would, if he had any money, bet that the man was smirking like the cat that got the cream.

Fury, in a rare moment of emotion, gave Hamilton a dirty look. “You’ve spent too much time around Stark already, Andre,” he took a step forward. Hamilton didn’t budge, determined to win this battle of wills. Fury then withdrew a card of sorts from one of his pockets. “If you change your mind, you’ll be able to contact me on this number.”

With that, he swirled around, breaking eye contact with Hamilton, and stalked off to the elevator. As soon as the door closed behind him. Stark whirled on Rogers and Romanoff. “Why did you let him in?” he demanded.

Romanoff snorted. “Fury isn’t exactly a person one has the power to decline entrance to, especially not if one works for him,” she said. “Besides, even if we had managed to keep Fury out of here, he’d find a different way to contact our guests.”

Stark seemed to mull it over. “True enough. Thank God that’s over. Now,” he said to Hamilton, “I know of a few people who’d simply love to meet you,” he smirked, bad mood dissipating as quickly as smoke.

Tony went on to explain that there were technically six of them living permanently in Stark Tower – seven if one included Phil Coulson, who was visiting so often that he might as well be living there too. Tony, Steve, Natasha, and Clint, they had already met, and the remaining two were Bruce Banner and Thor – who, Clint explained with a shit-eating grin, was an honest-to-god alien. An alien of a race of demigods. Bruce, Tony said, had once been in an accident that resulted in him gaining the questionably beneficial ability to transform into a big, green ball of rage. This prompted a discussion of what it was that the Avengers actually did, which then led to a brief explanation of superheroes, which led to a passionate discussion about vigilantism, with Hamilton arguing vigorously that if everybody went off to mete out their own form of justice, the world wouldn’t be able to function, to which Steve began his self-righteous tirade about how he had been given these abilities for a reason.

Unseen by others, Natasha exchanged a faintly amused glance with Clint. Alexander Hamilton appeared before them six hours ago, and already, he has assimilated and started Asking Questions
and forming his own Opinions (Clint felt that the actions deserved capitalization, if only for the sheer amount of energy and thoroughness Hamilton put into them). Natasha momentarily wondered how the hell they had thought when they postulated that Hamilton would like to lay low at first, then shrugged because honestly? Not her problem. She already had too much to worry about, without adding in a Founding Father that refused to shut up.

Luckily for everyone involved, the elevator chimed, and JARVIS announced that one Bruce Banner was about to enter. Tony shone up at the prospect of introducing his self-proclaimed young protégé to his friend. At that, Hamilton retorted that he was older than Tony, thank you very much, looking so adorably ruffled that, had Natasha’s self-control been anything but stalwart, she would have cooed. As it was, she saw, out of the corner of her eye, as Steve practically melted.

“Brucie!” Tony bounced over to the man. Natasha envied Bruce his patience when dealing with Tony: he grated even her nerves at times, yet Bruce seemed unaffected. “So good of you to drop by!”

Bruce tilted his head. “You texted me. Seventeen times.”

“Only to ascertain that you’d show up,” Tony said, still bouncing. “C’mon, I’ve got someone to show you,” he grabbed Bruce’s sleeve, leading him to where Hamilton and Laurens were seated on the couch. Natasha noted with amusement that, while Hamilton was trying to keep a respectable distance in a last half-ditched effort at keeping their relationship a secret from any newcomers, Laurens had taken to draping his arm over Hamilton’s shoulders. Hamilton didn’t seem to mind overly much. “Now, Fury doesn’t know about this,” Tony continued, “and we’d like to keep it that way. I trust that won’t be a problem?”

“Tony, you know Fury isn’t on my list of favourite people.”

“I thought so,” Tony said smugly. “Anyway, this is Alexander Hamilton and John Laurens, but they go by Alex Andre and John Lewis.”

Bruce closed his eyes. He opened them again. Natasha could see the hundreds of questions swirling in his mind. In the end, he settled on a, “That’s a terrible name choice. Who let Tony choose the names?” he asked the room at large.

“We did object,” Hamilton protested. “Vociferously.”

“Not loudly enough,” Bruce replied.

“Alex, that’s Bruce Banner,” Tony cut in. “Bruce, meet Alexander Hamilton.”

“Yes, about that,” Bruce said slowly. “Explain to me how you managed to find yourself a Founding Father. As far as I knew, those were only available two hundred years ago.”

Tony shrugged nonchalantly. “Glowing portal,” he said lightly, as though it explained everything. Bruce snorted. “Strange,” he said succinctly.

“Indeed,” Hamilton confirmed, trying to keep up with the conversation.

Bruce smiled. “No, not like that,” he corrected gently. “Well, yes, like that too, but that’s not what I meant. There is a sorcerer by the name of Stephen Strange who seems to specialize in the kind of portals you describe. You should have given him a call,” he admonished Tony.

“JARVIS, remind me to call Strange,” Tony echoed. “But tomorrow. Today, you and I are going to
answer Alex’s questions, and let me tell you, he has a lot,” the lazy grin he gave Bruce wasn’t exactly reassuring.

Natasha decided that this was the time to withdraw, before she was sucked into the big, black hole that was Science with a capital S. She caught Clint’s eye and indicated the door. He nodded, then whispered something into Steve’s ear. Steve nodded.

“Well,” Natasha said loudly, “we are going to leave you three to discuss science. We’ll be at the gym if you need anything,” she made as if to leave the room, then turned back to fix Laurens with a look. “You coming, soldier boy?”

Laurens threw a reluctant look at Hamilton but came to the same conclusion Natasha had, and fled the room with as much dignity as possible.

“I researched Hillary Clinton,” Alex declared the next morning to the room at large. Which, considering that it was bloody six in the morning, meant merely Clint, and that was only because he had been called away to SHIELD the night before, and had returned in the wee hours of morning.

He had decided to forego his old name in favour of his new one, and since calling himself Andre was too bizarre a concept to contemplate, Alex it was.

Clint groaned, letting his head fall on the table with a thud. “It’s six in the morning, Hamilton. How much sleep did you get?”

Alex grinned maniacally. “Fortunately, this coffee of yours allows me to stay awake without the need for sleep. I spent the night acquiring knowledge about modern politics,” he said enthusiastically.


“I fail to understand why I would crash anywhere, as I have no intention of traveling anywhere. Is this another slang I should familiarize myself with?” he asked, already taking out his StarkPhone and typing away at it with a speed that spoke volumes about how much he had used the phone already. He frowned at something on his screen.

Clint waved away his inquiry. “Never mind. If Tony and Bruce didn’t see fit to inform you, you’re just going to have to learn that lesson yourself. I suppose that’s the best way to do it, anyway. Just one question: how many cups have you had?”

Alex blinked owlishly. “I stopped counting after the first dozen.”

Clint stared. “That’s over four times the recommended daily dose. How are you not dead?” he asked rhetorically.

“Years of practice at staying awake,” Alex shrugged, finding the coffee machine and pressing a few buttons with movements that already bespoke practiced ease.

Dear God.

Steve was never this bad. Then again, Steve didn’t have what either amounted to ADHD or some sort of bipolar disorder, so Steve was probably a bad reference point.
Clint listened as Alex chattered away about politics and the finances and something-or-other, watching with fascination as he drank two consecutive cups of coffee in a matter of minutes. He felt a headache coming on.

Clint frankly dreaded the moment when Alex would inevitably discover Twitter. Judging by the pace at which he was going, it would either happen this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

“Hey, what’s Twitter?” Alex suddenly asked.

Then again, he didn’t exactly earn the highest marks in math.

Alex actually goes another twenty-seven hours (not that Clint has been counting or anything) before crashing, which was more than Clint had been expecting. His shoulders slumped as he handed Natasha a ten dollar bill. Hamilton’s face seemed to mock him mercilessly from the banknote.

“Hey,” he said unexpectedly, watching as John and Steve carried Alex to the elevator, “has someone told Alex that he’s on currency yet?”

Tony shook his head. “I don’t think so. If anyone does, make sure I’m there.”

“You’re never there,” Clint complained. “Dragging you out of your workshop is harder than beating Nat at Candy Crush.

Tony squinted at him. “Why do you still play Candy Crush? Also, why do you get to call her ‘Nat’?”

“Partner privileges, and because I want to beat her record,” Clint stated simply.

Bruce entered the room, a notebook in hand, and headed straight for the coffee jug. He sat down next to Clint and opened it, jotting something down, then crossed out a few numbers. Clint tilted his head to see if he could understand what Bruce was working on, but it all looked like gibberish to him.

“A alex researched Hillary Clinton two nights ago,” he declared.

Tony raised an eyebrow. “And?” he prompted.

“He discovered Twitter, and said something about Trump that I didn’t quite catch,” Clint admitted. The panicked look in Bruce’s eyes was worth the headache.

Three days after Alex and John arrived, Stephen Strange popped up. In the interest of accuracy, he didn’t pop up, per se, as much as casually waltzed through one of his portals into Tony’s workshop, which Tony really shouldn't be as used to as he is.

He put away his tools. “What's going on?”

Strange winced. He looked worn, in a way that he hasn’t a mere month ago. “This might sound weird but have you seen a portal appear around here a few – say, four – days ago? I've been practicing some experimental magic and may have accidentally opened up a portal, except I'm not
exactly sure of its location on either side. The magical residue led me here.”

Tony snorted. “Yeah, you could say that we’ve seen a portal.”

Strange perked up. “Did anything happen?”

“Well,” Tony drawled, “apart from the fact that we have accidentally gained ourselves a Founding Father, along his boyfriend… No, not really,” he shrugged.

“What the hell are you talking about, Stark?” Strange barked.

“You've managed to snatch Alexander Hamilton from the moment right before his death, John Laurens from right before his death, healed them both, and physically deaged Alex. Colour me impressed.”

“Alex?” Strange echoed incredulously.

Tony grinned. “I'm on first-name terms with a Founding Father these days. Business as usual.”

Strange began pacing fervently. “Where are they, then? Have you showed them anything? No, don’t answer that, of course you have – you’re Tony Stark, the only thing you're good at is showing off.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “If you’re going to stand here and insult me, I’m going to have to ask you to leave.”

“I've got to send these people back.”

Tony stilled mid-movement, his hand in the process of reaching for a key. “Strange– Stephen. By sending them back, you're dooming them to death. You don't have the right to decide who lives and who dies.”

“I can't just mess with history however I like,” Strange insisted. “If history says that they're going to die at the time, then they're going to die at that time. Trust me, nothing good come from manipulating with time.”

“Well, luckily for you, JARVIS and I did some research, and it turns out that Alexander Hamilton's body disappeared under mysterious circumstances right after the duel, which is part of the mystery behind the Hamilton-Burr duel. It just disappeared. They held a memorial service, but without the body, which apparently caused his wife endless amount of grief. Furthermore, John Laurens’ – that’s Alex’s boyfriend, not that he’ll admit it yet – body was charred beyond recognition, so the people in charge of calculating the death toll simply assumed it was him, but it was never quite proven,” Tony talked at a speed that would leave most people dizzy. “What I want to say is this: Strange, for once, just let it go and let them be happy. They're two people in love, and they've never had the chance to express that love openly. Even you should appreciate something like that.”

Strange sighed. “I have a feeling I will regret this.”

In retrospect, getting Alex a laptop was a Bad Idea. Tony had forgotten to factor in the fact that Alex had written over twenty-six books in as many years, all while using a quill and ink. His writing speed only improved when he switched writing mediums, because it turned out that Alex was one of those insanely fast typists, capable of inciting absolute terror in anyone stupid enough to watch him because God what was happening why was he typing like that.
By the time Thor finally showed up at the Tower, John had taken up residence in the living room with a sketching book, while Alex had ploughed through what felt like half of Wikipedia, and written as much. Bruce’s current theory was that Alex was trying to cram the entire internet into his brain.

And he still had Questions. What does the atom really look like? Why did Prop 8 pass? How does the plumbing system work? Could it work at another pressure? What changes would have to be done? Why can one not simply use two separate machines to independently ascertain the location and the speed of an electron? Why was Gimli allowed to go to Aman? Why do people use Snapchat where they only send pictures of floors, when a chat would be much more efficient and require significantly less data usage?

Bruce has had about enough of questions which, while completely legitimate, he had before assumed were so obvious as to be unnecessary. Alex was chipping away at his patience, a feat Tony had never been able to accomplish.

Bruce was about ready to throttle Alex when Thor made his appearance. He suddenly realized why the Asgardians were regarded as gods: he had never worshiped a person as much as he had Thor in that moment.

“Hello, Thor!” he said cheerfully, watching in satisfaction as Alex’s head whipped around.

“Hello, friend Banner!” Thor boomed, crossing the room in four strides. He enveloped Bruce in a surprisingly gentle hug. He had probably recently been subjected to another of Jane Foster’s rants about human fragility.

Alex’s eyes were as wide as saucers. He took in Thor, his eyes bordering on worship. “Are you Thor Odinson?” he said a little breathlessly.

Thor laughed. “Indeed I am,” he confirmed. “Who might you be, friend of my friend?”

Alex offered him his hand. “My name is Alexan–” at Bruce’s glare, he changed his mind. “Alex Andre. It is truly a pleasure to meet a man as renowned as yourself.”

Thor dropped his hammer—dammit, they’ve had this conversation before—and went for a full embrace, just as he had with Bruce. “Chivalry is not dead in your world, then.”

Bruce left Alex and Thor to talk. Thor didn’t seem to mind that Alex had more questions than he knew what to do with, answering each one to the best of his knowledge.

Steve and John returned from their morning run. Steve made a beeline for the kitchen, opening the fridge and digging in it before finding whatever yoghurt he had, while John was peering at something on his phone. He stumbled on something, dropped his phone, and swore. He lifted Thor’s hammer, annoyance painted on his face. “Who put this here?” he demanded, completely oblivious to Bruce and Steve’s speechless faces.

Thor reached out for Mjolnir. “I did, and I apologize if I caused you any undue pain,” he said sincerely.

John quirked his lips into a smile. “It’s okay. Just don’t do it again.”

At that, Bruce and Steve exchanged exasperated looks, but decided to keep John blissfully ignorant for the time being.
At lunchtime, Tony emerged from his workshop. He smiled upon seeing Thor, and was, like the rest of them, swept up in a hug. “Hi, big guy,” he said softly.

“Good day to you, son of Stark.”

Tony finally managed to extricate himself from Thor, and took a seat at the counter. He tapped the counter a few times. “So, I’ve been thinking,” he began.

“Wow,” Clint said, his voice practically dripping with sarcasm. “That must have been hard.”

Tony glared. “Shut up, bird brain,” he retorted. “Anyway, I’ve been thinking that there’s the pride thing this month, right?”

Natasha nodded slowly, unsure as to where he was going with this. “But you said that you didn’t want to go,” she reminded him.

“Yeah, but that was before we found ourselves playing host to one bisexual Founding Father and his gay boyfriend, who would both benefit from validation,” Tony explained.

Natasha blinked. “That’s… almost considerate of you. Who are you and what have you done with Tony Stark?”


Alex and John conferred quietly. Alex then turned back to Tony. “I had not initially planned to attend the pride parade, but after conferring with John, I now see that it would be a rare opportunity and that we ought not to miss it.”

Bruce didn’t bother to ask how Alex knew when the pride parade was going to take place, let alone what a pride parade was. Alex had, by now, figured out online shopping, so Bruce guessed that he would be browsing pride-appropriate clothes at his earliest opportunity.

Tony beamed. “Excellent! Thor, you in?”

“Of course! I am always willing to show my pride!” Thor exclaimed with his unique brand of enthusiasm. Then, “Do inform me, however: what are we proud of?”

“Fury went to seek help from Holmes,” Tony informed them cheerfully one day. “Apparently, SHIELD can’t figure out the correlation between von Doom’s Doombots and the conspicuous lack of electric cables.”

There was a thud as Clint’s head fell on the table. Alex made as if to examine him for injuries, but something in Tony’s smirk told him it was a ruse. A modern habit, then, probably used to express annoyance, judging from the sound coming from Clint. "Not him," Clint whined.

Alex frowned. "Who is this 'Holmes'?” he asked.

“British guy. Insanely smart. Class A jerk. A bit like you and Tony, actually," Clint mused. "All three of you forget to eat and sleep when you’re working, and generally neglect your health. You’ll get on like a house on fire.”

Bruce didn’t doubt that for one second. The only thing he was uncertain about was whether that metaphor would stay metaphorical only.
“John,” Sherlock demanded ten seconds after laying his eye on Alex, “who was the first money
guy in America?”

Watson blinked at the non-sequitur. “What?”

“The money guy,” Sherlock repeated impatiently, gesturing for John to please keep up. “In charge
of a nation’s economy. They have those, don't they?”

Watson made a sound of understanding. “You mean the Chancellor of the Exchequer.”

“We call them Treasury Secretary,” Tony chimed in.

“Don’t need to know, don’t care,” Sherlock dismissed him. “John,” he turned back to his partner,
“who was the first Treasury Secretary?” Sherlock asked again, then scowled. “This is taking far
too long,” he whipped out his phone and typed something in, then looked back up at Alex, fixing
the time traveler with a calculating look. “You are far out of your time, Mr Hamilton.”

Alex blinked. “How did you know that?” When Sherlock didn’t answer, too focused on Watson’s
reaction, he turned to Tony. “How did he know that?”

Tony grinned. “That’s the brilliant part.”

Meanwhile, Watson was looking at Sherlock in confusion. “What are you talking about,
Sherlock?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Sherlock said dismissively.

Watson fought the impulse to roll his eyes. Clint could empathize. “Not to me. Please elaborate.”

“Stiff posture, looks highly uncomfortable. Clearly not from around here. Where, then, or when?”

“When?” Watson echoed, frowning. “Are you seriously proposing—”

“Don’t interrupt me,” Sherlock said sharply. “But yes, when. When you eliminate the impossible,
whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. Now, these two gentlemen are
obviously romantically entangled, judging by the lack of personal space between them as well as
the looks the second one keeps giving the first, but not open about it. Shy? Don't think so,
considering the fact that they are both wearing bright clothes, which means they don't mind being
in the spotlight. Apprehension, then, or fear of discovery. Probably both. Now, this could
theoretically originate from growing up in homophobic homes, but notice how their clothes are
brand new, down to the smell of new clothes — their entire wardrobe gives off the impression of
having been bought very recently. Of course, they could have gone on a massive shopping trip —
God only knows why one would want to subject oneself to that level of torture — but if one adds in
the fact that, on our way in, I saw an old outfit — very old, the style indicating sometime late
eighteenth century, clearly not vintage or a new trend but a genuine old outfit from that time period
— hang in one of the doorways. Now, considering that the outfit did not show any signs of
deterioration or being afflicted with time's inevitable curse, it had to have been transported directly
from the eighteenth century. Furthermore, they are both war veterans. Look at the scars on their
bodies — they have seen battle, though Hamilton's lover more than Hamilton himself. Hamilton
has ink stains on his fingers, and, judging from the fact that they have been here for at least a few
days and the ink stains are still visible, handled mostly correspondence and orders, and was more
of a writer than a soldier — not for the lack of trying on his part, considering the offended
expression currently adorning his face. Clearly dissatisfied with his past position. A soldier and a
glorified war secretary, then. Finally, your accent suggests America, though your speech patterns are outdated by several centuries. There was only one war of significance in the late seventeen-hundreds in America: the Revolutionary War,” he rattled off quickly and dispassionately, as a doctor would list the different symptoms of an illness.

Watson rolled his eyes. “Of course you wouldn’t remember that the Earth revolves around the Sun but you’d remember the Revolution.”

“It is not a conscious choice, let me assure you,” Sherlock said flatly, a derisive tone underneath. “I have simply never been able to delete that knowledge. It’s infuriating, really.”

Alex grinned energetically. “How did you know I used to work for the Treasury?”

Sherlock smirked. “That was easy. Behind you, there is a copy of Postlethwayt’s *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, as well as some modern equivalents. Knowing what I do, the logical conclusion is that you're trying to educate yourself on the subject of modern finances — dreadfully boring, by the way, clearly a waste of your talent — which implies an inherent interest in economy. A man like you, someone who has risen up from nothing, wouldn't stop at being a civilian. I can read your ambition as though you were a book. If given a chance, you would like to change the future of a nation, and you would educate yourself to ensure that you would be competent enough. As I said: obvious.”

“I want to punch him,” John growled.

Alex laughed. “I want to keep him. Dig around in his brain, see what makes him tick. He’s an interesting specimen.”

Watson groaned. “You talk just like him,” he told Alex.

“Considering the fact that Mr Holmes is, beyond any doubt, my intellectual superior, I am going to take that as a compliment,” Alex replied.

Tony held up a hand. “All this is dandy and fine, but could you keep this from Fury? We don’t want him to know. It would create all sorts of complications that we, quite honestly, just don’t have the energy to deal with.”

“And why should I do that?” Sherlock challenged.

Tony gave him a contemplative look. “Fury is— Imagine— Have you ever come into contact with an omnipresent, omnipotent authoritarian figure that seems to know everything and wants everything done their way, and you just feel powerless to stop them?”

“I know the feeling,” Holmes said dryly.

“I thought you might,” Tony agreed. “Now, what’s this about the Doombots?”

“Tony, did you know that there is an entire musical about me?” Alex said as soon as he had stepped through the door to Tony’s workshop.

Tony nodded, his attention on the arm of his latest suit. The propulsor wasn’t working, and he couldn’t figure out why. He gritted his teeth when the arm moved involuntarily.

Alex didn’t seem to need verbal validation. “I have take the liberty of purchasing it on iTunes — I
“Good for you,” Tony said absentmindedly, sticking out his tongue in concentration.

“And I have since listened to the musical by myself, then again with John, and have made a list of both accuracies and inaccuracies perpetrated by the playwright, although I must admit that the former far outweighs the latter. Furthermore, I have read Ron Chernow’s biography of myself, which, while it goes into great detail about certain aspects of my life, is glaringly lacking in references to my Laurens—”

“Mm-hmmm,” Tony hummed.

“–which I consider outrageous, considering that you yourself said that people are far more open about such matters in this century than in my time,” Alex took a deep breath. “It continues to astonish me that, for such a well-read man on the subject of my life, Mr Chernow has failed to grasp the true relationship between myself and John, despite having read our letters – well, the ones my son hasn’t burned, something for which he should be ashamed of himself. I know I taught him better than to manipulate written records—”

“Truly terrible of him.”

“I have also educated myself on the genres of music called ‘hip-hop’ and ‘rap’ and can say with certainty that it is truly an astonishing—”

“Wonderful,” Tony said. He groaned as he heard Alex draw in another breath. “Not to be rude, Alex, but why are you here?” he demanded.

Alex stopped. Tony breathed a sigh of relief. Then Alex spoke again. “I need tickets to Hamilton.”

Tony hit his head on the arm. The subsequent cursing only partially stemmed from the physical pain.

Life at the Tower had its ups and downs, but Tony Stark found that, for all that Alexander Hamilton was a major pain in the ass most of the time, with John Laurens filling in for Alex the remaining time, he never regretted taking either of them in.

“And I’m still not through. I ask myself, ‘What would you do if you had more time?’”

– Eliza Schuyler Hamilton

End Notes

I wrote this and now I’m crying

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