

Bruce and Betty had both been extremely interested in how I managed to get the Hulk to listen and chat like that. Bruce assumed I had created some sort of charisma charm, Betty asked if I had experience with unwell children. When I pointed out that having a conversation with someone was always difficult when that person knew you thought they were an idiot or an unthinking brute both of them cringed and nodded.

The truth was that in almost all of the examples of Hulk being semi-reasonable in the comics and various animated shows, one of the most prevalent connections between all of them was people talking to him like an actual person, if maybe a person on the lower side of the IQ range. It had worked the first time I met him, so I figured why not try it again? The results spoke for themselves.

When everyone had calmed back down, Bruce was dressed again, and we had all returned to the patio, Tony started going over the business side of the idea. He explained their pay, the benefits, the standard contracts for patients and profits as well as the general structure of the organization. Neither Betty nor Bruce had a real problem with the general structure, though something was clearly in Bruce's mind.

"You still haven't told us where exactly this research center will be based out of," he pointed out. "You mentioned your original idea was going to be based in Stark Tower, but not where this new one would be located. Is that on purpose or..."

Tony sank a bit as Bruce saw right through his planned surprise, but I just chuckled.

"Tony wanted it to be a complete surprise," I explained, before adding with a shrug. "I could ruin the surprise if it makes you uncomfortable... or I can show you?"

I held out my hands, one for each of them. The married couple shared a look, a silent conversation passing between them before they both reached out and took my hand. Tony stepped back into his armor before putting his hand on my shoulder.

"Okay, hold tight," I said, the only warning I gave them before I traveled all of us to the research base.

We landed on the top floor of the research center, in the large park. Looking along the ground you would be hard-pressed to distinguish the area from a random park anywhere in the US. A landing pad was stuck firmly into the super concrete pathway that circled around a large water fountain and curled away in a few different directions. Looking up, however, revealed the crystal clear dome that separated us from the vacuum of space.

"Wha..."

Bruce and Betty made broken, confused sounds as they looked up into the void of space, eyes darting around from the stars and back to the large blue and green sphere that was

Earth. Their mouths opened and closed for a while, no real words coming out for a full two minutes before Betty finally managed to get a strangled “How!” out.

“A few creations of mine made it possible, a life support system, artificial gravity projector, building builder, which I eventually improved massively into my Large Production Machine,” I explained, chuckling as it was clear very little of this was actually making it through to the two stunned scientists. “Everything else sort of just happened. I needed a place that was far away from everyone, someplace I could work in peace and that would be out of everyone else's jurisdiction. Now it's not much of a problem because no one can really force me to do anything I don't want to, but early in my build up I was much more vulnerable, I was terrified that someone would kidnap me and chain me to a workshop somewhere, forcing me to pump out supersoldiers.”

“This is incredible... the first colony on the moon,” Bruce said, looking out of the dome along the horizon, at a mountain range not too far from the base. “What a location for a research center.”

“Want to go for a moonwalk?” I asked, both of them whipping their heads around to look at me. “Steve and Bucky seemed to enjoy it, I have EVA suits already built-”

“Maybe another time,” Tony cuts in, shaking his head. “We have one more stop to make today before we can just hang out and chill.”

“Who else are we seeing today?”

“Jane Foster, who I think you've met before?” Tony asked.

“Yeah, she was there when Thor first came to Earth,” I answered, wincing slightly. “That actually might not be a good thing, especially considering Thor is back at Asgard again.”

“Maybe, but it's certainly not going to endear her to Shield when she learns they didn't tell her he was here at all,” Tony said with a smirk. “She's working for them at the moment and they didn't even drop a word. Nice job with that wormhole research, oh by the way your godly boy toy was here but took off without saying hello...”

“Tony, fucking with people like that is how you make supervillains,” I said, shaking my head.

“Is that something we should be worrying about?” Bruce asked, looking around nervously. “Watching out for our peers in case they go supervillain?”

“I mean... we've already dealt with one,” I pointed out, rubbing my chin contemplatively. “I don't know the details but Thor grew up with Loki, I assume that his most recent actions were

at least surprising for them... Not to mention before he came to his senses, General Ross was only a few steps from being a supervillain himself.”

“What?!” Betty asked with a shout, startling me from my thinking.

I bit back a curse. I had been thinking of all the things he had done in the comics, and how before the debacle in Harlem he had been slowly making his way closer to that.

“Well... he did a lot of messed up and quasi-illegal stuff in his obsession of catching you Bruce,” I pointed, Tony snorting when I said “quasi-illegal.”

“There was nothing ‘quasi’ about some of the stuff he pulled.” He said, shaking his head.

“Right, well let's just say getting his act together probably saved him as much as it helped you two.” I added vaguely, Betty and Bruce both looking contemplative. “Anyway, it sounds like we need to head off to meet Jane Foster. Are you guys staying or...?”

“We will stay,” Betty said, and Bruce nodded in agreement. “Are we allowed to walk around?”

“Yeah, just stay up here if you could,” I responded. “I can give you guys a tour when we get back.”

We talked a bit more, and I explained what else was in the park, before I traveled Tony and me to California. Jane Foster had been living here for a few months at this point, trying to advance her research while frequently consulting with Shield. Apparently, they had even shipped her off to an isolated observatory to keep her out of trouble when Erik Selvig had been kidnapped.

“You plan on recruiting Erik Selvig right?” I asked as we made our way to the house she was renting, all the while keeping my eyes peeled.

We were trying our best to keep a low profile, as Jane worked for Shield frequently and had connections to Thor, meaning there was a pretty high chance she was being watched. While we weren't doing anything illegal, Tony was pretty determined to make the general revelation of the moon base as impactful as possible, and Shield would never let a secret like that stand without investigating. I was wearing a random face to hide my identity, and Tony had sunglasses on that actually did a decent job of distracting the eyes enough to hide who he was, though the effect faded quickly when you focused fully on him.

“Yes, he is on the list, I'm hoping Dr. Foster can tell us where he is because he dropped off the edge of the Earth after Shield released him,” He explained. “They debriefed him, did a quick evaluation, and then poof, nothing.”

“... That's worrying,” I said, chewing on my cheek, ignoring that Tony all but admitted to hacking Shield again. “If Jane doesn't know where he is I'm going to make a tracker for him and see if I can't find him. Printing out his Wikipedia article should be enough... maybe.”

“You should make a person tracker that you can just feed names to,” Tony suggested, climbing up the front steps of a small duplex, and knocking on the door. “It would save you a lot of time.”

“Yeah, but it would be too easy,” I said. “Breaching someone's privacy like that really shouldn't be my default and if-”

The door opened and Thor of all people stepped out. He looked down at both of us, taller than both of us by half a foot.

“Greetings, who may you be?” He asked. “What do you-”

“Thor, I told you I was expecting guests today,” Jane said, sliding out around the god of thunder and smiling. “Mr. Stark, please come in.”

“Stark? Where is your glorious armor?” Thor asked as we made our way inside. “Surely you have not lost it?”

“We were attempting to lay low,” Tony explained. “And please, call me Tony.”

Jane guided us into the house, and I couldn't help but chuckle when I saw that Mjolnir was hanging up on a coat rack. As we sat down in a small living room, Jane remained standing.

“Is there anything I can get you? Coffee, Tea?” She asked, sitting when Tony and I both said no. “So, Mr... Tony, what can I do for you.”

“First, do you mind if I scan the premise for listening devices?” I asked.

“Oh, of course... I don't think you'll find any but...”

A quick check of the premise showed that there wasn't anything inside the house, but there was a long-distance laser-based listening device focused on the window. I silently took care of that by pulling out my cell phone, pulling up a video podcast and leaning it against the window, pulling the blinds shut over it.

“Alright, you had one focused on your window but that should take care of it,” I explained, Tony wincing. Any hope for staying off shields radar completely was now out the window.

“They eavesdrop on her?!” Thor thundered, standing from his seat, clearly angry.

Jane was equally upset, but she remained sitting.

“Those assholes!” She cursed. “First they ship me off to Tromso and now they are listening in on me!”

“Shield doesn't do personal boundaries very well, trust me,” I said, shaking my head. “They broke into my house to take a DNA sample when Fury was asking me to consult on the New Mexico thing.”

“New Mexico thing...” Jane started, squinting at me, trying to figure out who I was.

“Ah, Maker, you are wearing a different face again,” Thor, who had been present when I revealed my face to Shield for the first time, and had spent much more time with me than Jane, caught on much more quickly. “It is good to see you again.”

He stood, as did I to trade a warrior's handshake. As I sat back down I pulled off my mask, carding it away.

“Wait, your Maker? Jane asked, smiling a bit, the anger slowly fading. “It's good to see you again.”

“It's good to see you as well, and I'm glad Thor was able to come back and visit,” I said with a smile.

“With the Bifrost down for another month, there is not much for me to do, so father allowed me to travel here to see her,” Thor responded to my unasked question. “I fear I will be busy for quite some time after the Bifrost returns, there are many factions who will have used our isolation as a chance to wreak havoc.”

“How is King Odin enjoying his armor?” I asked, Thor, perking up with a smile at the question.

“Father is greatly enjoying his renewed youth and vigor, he has been more active than ever. And mother has benefited as well, as she has taken to wearing one of your healing amulets.”

We chatted a bit more about our trip to Asgard, Tony listening with surprisingly open interest, though Jane was nearly drooling when I described my portal projector. I had to explain that she would likely not learn anything from studying the actual projector as it was heavily conceptually crafted. When she asked to study the original Tony cut in.

“That actually brings up why we are here,” He explained.

We jumped into an explanation of our offer, explaining exactly what we hoped to achieve and the resources we were hoping to gather and use. The conversation was very different from our pitch to Bruce and Betty, as Jane wasn't worried about actively hurting people, just her research. When Jane started to voice concerns about us embellishing what I was capable of, Thor was actually the one who came to my defense.

"Jane, I know it's hard to fathom magic and the unknown when you have spent your entire life working in the rigors of pure science, but believe me when I say that Maker, Carson, is capable of works of wonder that even Asgard cannot understand. The best enchanters and researchers Asgard has ever produced were unable to decipher how his ability works, and my father's new eye is proof enough that even his greatest of claims ring true."

Jane looked at Thor, a little shocked at his mini-speech. Before she could start with what I'm sure was a barrage of new questions I cut her off.

"I appreciate the vote of confidence Thor, but I didn't expect Jane to just jump up and believe every word I said with nothing to prove myself. Especially not since the last time we met I was very early in my development," I responded, pushing out a singular object from a card and onto the table.

It was a sphere mounted on a pedestal, just slightly larger than an average globe, with topographically carved representations of the Earth's continents and islands. With a tap I turned it on, and a projected hologram appeared around it suddenly, displaying flowing green and yellow lights, black lines highlighting some areas, some glowing and fading, and others pulsing constantly. To me, it looked random, but Jane immediately figured out what it was.

"It's displaying electromagnetic disturbances around the planet..." She said, eyes wide, focused on the globe. "Is... is this real-time?"

"Yup. I made this in fifteen minutes with a few dozen globes, some sensors Tony lent me a while back, a book on the electromagnetic fields around Earth, and a couple of other odds and ends," I explained with a confident smirk. "You give me an hour and I'll give you a handheld version that will answer any metric you care to know about from air temperature and humidity all the way to ground composition."

For a while Jane stared at the globe, biting her lip for a long moment before looking up, first at Tony, then at me.

"I'll have full control over what I research?"

"Of course," I answered. "We wouldn't be trying to recruit you if we thought we would have to shepherd you into doing something useful. Whether your research starts theoretical and eventually transitions into you trying to build mass-producible wormhole travel, or you learn what

you want and pass it off to someone else to use while you move onto your next theoretical project, that's up to you."

She nodded in understanding before looking at Thor, who smiled back.

"I would be lying if I knew or understood the details of what you wish to learn. But I do know that independence in how you work is something that is priceless. I do not believe Maker will lead you wrong," He responded to her silent question. "And perhaps a bit selfishly, I would feel better knowing you were under his protection once I must leave to fulfill my duty to those I am sworn to aid."

"In that case, would you like to see the research center? Unless Tony wants to drag me off to do more recruiting..."

"No, we are done for today, but tomorrow we have a few more appointments,"

"Great... So, wanna check it out?" I asked, standing up. "Bruce and Betty Banner are already there, checking out the park on top of the facility."

Ten minutes later I was traveling everyone back up to the research station.