

“C’mon, just let me borrow one for a month,” Tony said, following behind me as I walked through the warehouse. “We both know you can make as many of them as you want.”

“Tony, for the last time of course I could, but you know as well as I do that even a hint of a device like the BB’s could drive the economy into a tumble.” I answered, putting down the stack of finalized DMR’s I was carrying. “Once the building is finished, I’ll whip something up that will let you enhance the framework into something strong, maybe an Asgardian alloy and vibranium blend. Until then, your monument to your ego will have to be made the old fashion way.”

Tony, who had returned from his tropical vacation a few days ago, grumped a bit before sitting down on one of my workshop chairs. He watched as I counted and fiddled with the faintly glowing DMR’s, which I was finally satisfied with.

He had been bugging me for a while now about my creatively named building builder. They took and stored raw basic materials like stone, metal and several other things before using them to construct much larger structures. Their ratio of input material and output structures was massively skewed, as the giant garage on the range only required a dozen sheets of metal as well as a few bags of concrete. This warehouse took only a few times that.

The problem was that if Tony started using it to throw up his massive tower, which was already almost halfway done, everyone would see it. I can’t imagine the backlash from the construction unions if they realized that the B.B could throw up an entire warehouse in twenty four hours. If it was for disaster relief or a homeless shelter I wouldn’t hesitate, but for something like Stark Tower? No thanks.

“Fine, I think the market is more stable than you think but whatever. Pepper wanted me to thank you by the way,” Tony said, standing from his seat and walking over, picking up a universal scanner and playing with it. “She rolled her ankle pretty badly while we were on our way to the beach. Your healing amulet cleared it up in a minute.”

“No problem, glad I could help,” I said with a chuckle. “Did you come all the way up here to thank me and beg for something you know I wasn’t going to give in about?”

“No. I wanted to know if you’ve put any thought into my other idea,” Tony said, now leaning on the edge of my workstation as I stepped away, going into the storage shed to grab some other things. “I think that we could do a lot of good together. Not to mention make a shit ton of money.”

“I did spend some time thinking, but I am still sticking with my original plan. Shield already has their first batch of palm cuff healers,” I admitted, getting a scoff and an eye roll from the genius inventor. “But... That doesn’t mean I think your idea for Stark Industries to sell my stuff is bad.”

With a flourish I pushed out something before tossing it to Tony, who caught it easily. It looked, for all intents and purposes, like a six inch wide, completely featureless hockey puck.

“What is it?” Tony asked, turning the inch thick black disk over in his hands.

“That is a one time use car repair puck,” I explained as I stopped and turned to Tony. “They can repair minor problems with all common vehicles. Patch up some cosmetics, fix a carburetor, repair the clutch, stuff like that. If you use it on a car that won’t start it will fix the most pertinent problem first, before tuning up everything before it ‘runs out.’ of energy. It’s basically just a general repair tool. It also won’t work forever, they get less and less efficient the more you use them. Oh and it ignores minor cosmetic damage like scuffs, scratches and dents.”

“Why the restrictions?” Tony asked, looking back up at me from the puck. “I’ve seen you repair a 1969 Mustang from a crushed cube.”

“Because I’m not looking to replace the car repair industry for a few bucks,” I said with a shrug. “Tony I could, with a month and some ingenuity, drag the entire planet into post scarcity by myself. With your helping it would take a week, max. But the world couldn’t handle that, not as it is now. What I *can* do is slowly over time improve the quality of life for the average person.”

“Huh. Smart I guess. It definitely fits the bill for Deck powered bullshit. How many can you make?”

“I figured out how to make a UCM into a SCM, a specific creation machine. Its faster than the original but obviously it can’t make anything you want. The SCM’s can make about a thousand of those every twenty four hours. Give me some time to set everything up and I can ship you as many as you need.”

“I assume you want to keep this affordable, right?”

“Yeah, I was thinking like a hundred and fifty for each one, maybe less.”

“Right. Well I’ll need to pitch it to Pepper, she runs the company these days, but it’s hard to argue with selling something that costs you nothing,” Stark admitted with a shrug before giving me a look. “You realize that people will know something is suspicious, right? I mean an idiot could tell something about this thing is weird, but people will know after this. No more pretending your small time after this hits the table.”

“Yeah, I know. But I can’t hide up here forever.”

“Yeah... fair enough,” Tony said, looking back down at the puck. “Well I’ll be handing this off to Pepper when I get home, you have any more?”

I flicked out an entire box containing around a hundred of the repair pucks. He lifted it up with relative ease, in no small part thanks to the strength enhancing cuff I sold him a while back.

“Great... Now mind giving me a ride home?”

It only took a few minutes for me to travel Tony back to California, the Los Angeles landing pad now neatly integrated to his helicopter landing pad. I returned to find Ema was waiting for me in my workshop. She had spent the previous night painting at the old apartment.

“Carson!” She said with a smile, leaning back against my work station and waving. “How was Tony?”

“Good, eager to try out some of my things,” I said with a smile. “Still wants to try the BB’s but I told him no. New York isn’t ready for skyscrapers to pop up overnight.”

“Well... what’s the agenda for today?”

“Tony just started working on the walker design again, so we can’t really work on that.” I explained before gesturing to the pile of DMR’s on the workshop table. “I was about to quintuple stack these and get them into the UCM, then try to finish up the ATV. Bucky and Steve had a few complaints about the ATV not being comfortable.”

I quickly got to work, combining the DMR’s together and adding a selector wheel for their power control and getting it set up on one of the UCMs. Once that was going I pushed out the ATV after clearing some space in the workshop area. The smaller vehicle was a combination of several different types of quads and motorcycles, leaning much heavier to the four wheeled variety.

“Alright. Let’s start off simple.”

I quickly gathered some materials together and got the UCM’s working, using the results to create a chair that was very comfortable, a combination of a computer chair with some down pillows and an expensive recliner. While Ema started to put the extra materials away, I combined the chair with the ATV and pushed the combination out onto the floor. The result was a quad bike, very similar to the original, but was visually weighted a bit too much to the back. It would work, it just looked strange and a bit back heavy. I straddled the seat after a moment, testing and moving it to make sure it was actually comfortable.

“Damn... so I’m on the right track.” I mumbled, quickly carding the new version and combining it with one of the originals before pushing it back out.

The result looked mostly the same as the original quad bike, but with a deeper and more ergonomic looking seat. After trying it out I was satisfied that it had worked out well together.

“Ema, would you mind taking that down to the range? Make sure I didn’t screw it up?” I asked, my companion nodding in return.

“Yeah sure, I’ll be back in five,” She said. “Travel range.”

Ema grabbed and lifted the quad bike, before disappearing in a flash of Bifrost energy. I nodded and started cleaning up, finishing Ema’s task and going over the ATV’s final design in my head.

While my original thought process, way back when I first started flexing my conceptual crafting, had been trying to slam everything into a single item and therefore create the perfect conglomerate version, IE the perfect car or the perfect gun, I had rather quickly realized that specializing an object would allow me to make it much more powerful.

I could still compact an entire arsenal into a handful of weapons, but making a shotgun that shot rockets, could hit a target a mile away and spray down rapid fire would quickly make it inferior to other more specialized versions I could make.

Take for example the original super truck, which was still my primary method of travel when I wasn’t flying. By attempting to make a truck that could go as fast as a race car I was stunting its ability to haul cargo, or tow heavy things. It got fiddly real quick of course, and sometimes it was better to ignore it, but the general rule of keeping things to their roles rather than trying to make one key fit all locks had served me well in the past couple of months.

Around the time that I was done cleaning up Ema returned with the quad, which now had an extra layer of mud on the tires.

“It still worked great,” She said, driving it over to the far corner, where there was running water and a hose. “I couldn’t tell the difference between it and the original.”

After Ema was done cleaning up the quad I got it set up on the larger UCM, wanting a few dozen in total. Due to the larger UCM’s slower speed it was going to take the rest of the week to finish, but that was fine.

“Is the Buggy next?” Ema asked, both of us having made our way back to the workshop area. “What did Steve and Bucky have to say about it anyway?”

“Neither of them had anything negative to say about it so it’s probably fine how it is,” I said with a shrug. “I’m calling it done.”

Before she could respond Ema straightened, her emerald eyes wide. She slowly started to look panicked before settling into a look of anger.

“Tony and Pepper are in trouble,” She said, her body already shifting into its armored form. “Someone has broken into the mansion and is holding everyone at... spear point?”

“What? How?” I asked, mentally activating my own armor. It grew from my chest, encasing me in its familiar protective shell.

“I don’t know. Jarvis says that they somehow spoofed the sensors until the last second. Tony didn’t have a chance to get into a suit,” She explained before continuing. “He says there are thirteen people, seven inside inside and six standing guard around the building. They have a device that is attempting to gain access to the house’s mainframe but he is holding it off easily due to his upgrades.”

“Where is he?” I asked, my holsters deploying around my hips, my revolvers coming with them.

“He is with Pepper and Tony in the workshops. They assumed he was some sort of butler,” She explained. “They are interrogating Tony about the vibranium.”

“Fuck! Alright, looks like Wakanda has come out to play.” I said with a groan. “We need to do this carefully. Wakanda could be a powerful ally if-”

“They are threatening my boyfriend!” She said angrily, as if daring me to continue.

“... Fuck it. Just don’t kill anyone please.” I responded, getting a single nod in return.

I reach out and put my hand on her shoulder, traveling us both to the Malibu mansion. I carefully carded the Bifrost energy as we landed, in an attempt to hide our arrival. Unfortunately we were almost immediately spotted, two women armed with metallic spears whirling around, bringing their weapons up and pointed at us.

Ema, still understandably angry, wasted no time. Her arm extended out, wrapping around the nearest woman's spear and tearing it out of her grasp, whipping it around to hurl it back at her. The clearly well trained warrior, despite being shocked that she was so easily disarmed, still managed to dodge the weapon. It hurtled past her and buried itself in the concrete that made up the helicopter pad. Before the first woman could recover Ema lashed out, her fist growing to three times its normal size before it swung out, crossing the gap and slamming the woman into the ground.

The second warrior woman immediately charged me, calling out to her distant compatriots in a language I didn’t understand as she thrust out her own weapon. The spear tip, aimed straight for my stomach, glinted in the setting sun, even as I shifted to the right. The weapon sparked off my armor, leaving the barest of scratches as it skittered off. I reached out and grabbed the spear between the warrior's hands, holding it tightly as my other hand grabbed her arm, pulling both of them in separate directions. Once her hands were yanked from the

weapon I threw her across the well landscaped yard, the armored woman tumbling across the grass a dozen feet away.

The armor on my hand rescinded, allowing me to card the spear, mostly to remove it from play. I oriented myself to the mansion, both Ema and I making a beeline for the front door, where four more women stood, weapons at the ready. Not wishing to reduce them to a splatter on the wall I slow down to a walk.

Two of them came after me, jabbing at me with spears as I continued to walk forward, forcing them to step back. None of their attacks did anything save send sparks dancing away from their strikes, even as they whirled their spears around and jabbed at me with the butt end, sparks of electricity dancing as they attempted to taze me. I grabbed both of the spears, one in each hand, and yanked them away. One of them was thrown to the side, rolling to her feet immediately while the other released her spear before I could use it to throw her. Instead she pulled out two curved daggers, lunging at me as soon as her feet touched the ground. Again, while the weapons scratched the surface of my armor they could not penetrate, skittering off in a spray of sparks.

“Stand down!” I shouted, reaching out to grab the woman, who rolled back out of the way.

Distracted by the dagger wielding woman I was caught off guard by the warrior I had thrown earlier, who bashed into my side with some sort of glowing blue shield, projected from a device along her wrist. I stepped back, focusing on my opponents even as I could hear Ema fighting hers. Once again my armor rescinded, this time to reach out and touch the projected shield, feeling the concussive barrier knock my hand to the side. Despite that I still pulled, unable to hold back a chuckle as the barrier disappeared into the Deck.

The woman cursed, even as the shield popped up again, quickly trying to shove me back once more. I was ready this time however and simply carded the barrier again, taking a step towards the woman. I forced her back, stepping into the mansion as her compatriots, the second one I had been fighting and the last standing fighter from Ema’s pair tried to stop us, holding up flickering shields. When I had carded eighteen projected shields Ema stepped forward and slammed her massive engorged fists into the shields, two of them sputtering out and failing, the third disappearing as the woman holding it was sent flying back. With the opening I lashed out and smacked both of the warriors, knocking them off their feet and into the walls of the mansion, where they slumped, unmoving.

“They are down stairs!” Ema shouted, already making her way to the staircase.

I followed my companion closely, reaching the workshop quickly, the glass barrier between the stairs and the workshop broken and open, the door showing signs of being cut. Ema and I both stepped into the familiar room, greeted by five more armed women, all of them dressed in the same african style armor that the other women had been wearing. They held

their spears out at the ready, pointed at Ema and I. Behind them was another person, a man slightly older than myself, standing in a combat pose, low and ready to attack.

Behind them were Tony Pepper and Jarvis, all sitting in chairs. None of them looked happy but they didn't appear to be injured.

"What the hell is going on here?" I asked, taking a step forward, ignoring the spears now tapping my chest. "What right do you have to come barging into this man's home? This is not Wakanda, you have no authority here."

"You will not sp-" One of the warriors started to say before I cut them off.

"I'll speak however the fuck I want!" I shouted. "You come barging into my friend's home, poking at me with toothpicks and then have the balls to demand I stop talking? Get off your high horse and STAND DOWN BEFORE I STOP HOLDING BACK!"

My yell echoed through the workshop, somehow amplified by my armor. After a long moment the man spoke in a language I didn't understand, repeating himself after a moment, this time speaking into a series of small spheres around his wrist. One of the bald women spoke back, sounding frustrated but was silent after he repeated himself. The women slowly stepped back, their eyes locked onto me even as they pulled back their spears. They fell back into a defensive position around the two men, standing at the ready. After another moment the man stepped forward.

"My name is T'Challa, Prince of Wakanda." He explained. "I think there has been a slight misunderstanding."