

I took the next morning easy, enjoying a nice breakfast with Ema before I got my day started. I had messaged the night before Tony, asking when was the best time to stop by, as well as what side of the US he was on. He told me to stop by New York around noon, and that we would be visiting some of the big names we wanted to join us on the moon in our research center.

Apparently, he had been waiting for me to start meeting with a few individuals because they would need the most convincing and he thought I could do that. After sending me a rather long list of names I recognized, both from the comics and from my experiences in this universe, I quickly put together a list of things I would need to make solid convincing arguments.

The first people on our list would be Bruce Banner and Betty Ross, who were currently taking a break from their traveling and pro-bono doctoring, staying in a small cabin in the woods somewhere in Maine. Tony had already called them to let them know we were coming, a courtesy I honestly hadn't expected. He had reluctantly admitted that Betty reminded him of Pepper and that he didn't feel like starting off on the wrong foot by showing up unannounced.

I spent an hour or so doing some shopping on Earth, doing some shopping before returning to the warehouse to whip up something simple to help get my ideas across, before traveling down to New York. Tony was waiting for me, sipping a drink and looking out over the city through a window with no glass. Next to him was his latest armor, freestanding but open so he could just step right into it. Workers were moving around him, seemingly putting the final touches on the massive room.

"So, do you like it?" He asked, finishing his drink and gesturing around the room. "The portals will go right over there."

He gestured to a set of desks and a series of small raised areas. He was referring to the last project I had put together for the research base, a series of paired doorways combined with sling rings and some Tesseract energy, forming a closable portal that would link the station and the tower together.

"Yeah it looks good... it has got a bit of an airplane security vibe to it though," I pointed out, looking around.

It really did, the space was open but seemed to naturally funnel into what I was realizing were security stations next to where the portal pairs would go. The view was amazing on the other side, but the vibe held.

"I know, that was on purpose," He explained. "I wanted people to get used to it so they will spend less time wandering around. There are going to be about three to four hundred people going through here a day, I don't want traffic on the walk to work."

"As if you're going to use the portals anyway."

“Got me there. Alright, you ready to go?” He asked, stepping into his armor, which whirred softly as it encased him completely. “They should be expecting us any minute.”

“Yeah, I’m good to go.”

I grabbed his shoulder as my own armor formed around me, ignoring his comment about me showing off. I traveled us both to Maine, Tony taking off into the air immediately. I followed him easily, keeping up with him even when he started pushing close to the sound barrier. Thankfully he resisted the urge to push past that despite the fact that both of our suits could.

We arrived at the small cabin after twenty minutes of flying, both of us landing about forty feet from the front door. Before we could do anything Bruce came around the side of the cabin, waving us closer. As we made our way to him Tony stepped out of his armor, which closed back up when he was free, following behind him near silently.

“We were waiting for you around back.” He said as we got closer. “Good to see you two.”

“Good to see you as well.” I said, reaching out and shaking his hand, Tony doing the same right after.

He led us around the side of the house to a small backyard, which was mostly empty save for a stack of wood on one side and a small patio table. Betty was already sitting down, a carafe of coffee on the table with several mugs around it, and a plate of muffins alongside them.

After a brief greeting, all of us sat down and Betty poured us some coffee. I could see Tony visibly flinching when he was handed his cup, but he managed to weather through. When we were all settled, Bruce leaned forward.

“So, I know there is a reason you two are here... But could I ask something first?” Bruce started, looking curious as he leaned forward in his seat. “What happened after we left?”

“When did you leave?” I asked, taking a sip from my mug.

“Before the helicarrier left DC,” Betty answered. “Fury didn’t want Bruce on board when you could have been heading into a warzone, especially not in the middle of the ocean.”

I gestured to Tony, who gave the abridged version of what the fight was like. Both Betty and Bruce seemed shocked, both by some of the things that happened and by what I was capable of creating. When the story was over, including the fact that I had left the solar system, something that both Betty and Bruce were fascinated by, the purpose of our visit was finally revealed.

"I can't uplift the world." I said plainly, leaning back in the comfortable chair. "I want to, desperately, but I can't. Besides the fact that I am only one man, one who isn't okay with dedicating every second of every minute to solving everyone's problems, spreading the things I can make around too much would start to mess with the world. It's too unnatural, too easy and I'm worried about several aspects of it. Long story short, I want to help, but lifting the world up with my ability is not the right way to do it."

"Which is where I come in," Tony cut in. "I have been toying with the idea of putting together a research group for a while. Originally it would work through Stark Industries, but the focus would be humanitarian. The tower, the one I'm building in New York, was going to be Candyland for the most advanced tech researchers on the planet. Then Texas Hold'em over here took that idea and ran with it."

"I want to form a research center unlike anything ever built before. Purely humanitarian, separated from politics, and driven by the desire to help the world and unravel the secrets of the universe. Imagine, the smartest minds in the world, with access to things like this."

I pushed out one of the items I had made this morning. It was a tablet, about the same size as a piece of printer paper, connected by a cord to a small scanner. It was a combination of magic, divine essence, twelve of the most powerful microscopes I could buy, and four monocular digital microscopes. The result was something that could zoom in to the point where you could easily see the cells in your hand.

"I built this in an hour and a half, and most of that time was buying the actual equipment I needed," I explained. "Imagine having access to this and more, anything you could possibly need to further your research."

Betty picked up the device, clearly familiar with the handheld scanning digital microscope that it heavily pulled from. She ran it along her hand and gasped as she zoomed in, the cells of her skin clearly on display.

"I can build incredibly, impossible tools, and I want you and your contemporaries to use them to make the world a better place," I explained.

Betty was focused on the microscope, looking at her arm and watching the blood cells in her skin move and flow in her veins. While his wife look fascinated, Bruce looked heart broken. After a moment Betty seemed to come back to herself and she focused on her husband. When she saw her face she shook her head.

"You have been working on this," She said, putting her hand on his. "You can do this."

"It's too dangerous. But you-"

“I will not leave you alone anywhere,” She said definitively, cutting Bruce off. “I think you can do this... I mean isn't this our dreams come true? What we were trying to do before all of this?”

“If I could... what have you been working on?” I asked, leaning forward.

“How much do you know about my... condition?”

“I'm a big fan.” Stark said, and I shot him a look.

“We know the general idea,” I added, looking back to the other two.

“Right... Well, I've always considered the Hulk as a separate entity, doing my best to push him down, keep him suppressed,” He explained. “But with Betty's help, I've come to realize it might not be that simple. I'm beginning to make progress in communicating with him, mostly through meditation. And I let him out to relax, burn off some steam and even spend time with Betty. But... I'm nowhere near ready to be around people yet, I mean you saw what he...we... I did to Harlem. The wrong thing setting me off and I could do that to your think tank.”

“Sorry Bruce, I saw what *Abomination* did to Harlem. As far as I could tell you were the reason he didn't do the same thing to the rest of New York,” I corrected, shaking my head. “I could have come up with something eventually, but I was early enough in my build-up phase that it would have taken a while for me to pin him down enough to take him on my own. And as impressive as Tony is, his armor isn't rated for Hulk levels of strength, not yet anyway.”

“Your arrow...”

“There was a reason I was aiming for his eye,” I explained. “He also clearly had the ability to regenerate. If you hadn't been around to hold him down, I would have never been able to make that shot, and aiming center of mass would have done nothing. At this point, I could take him down, especially if I knew he was coming, but at that point, I would have been scrambling and a lot of people would have died in the process. You did good work.”

For a long moment, Bruce was quiet, Betty still holding his hand. After a moment, Tony leaned forward.

“It sounds to me like this is a good opportunity for Carson to prove himself. He likes to brag that there isn't much he can't do at this point, so why not let him make something to help?”

Bruce and Betty looked at me, suddenly looking very hopeful. Internally I was panicking, cursing myself for not seeing this coming. There were dozens of different versions of the Hulk that existed throughout the many Marvel universe, and fucking with their connection with Bruce was how many of the worst versions came into being. The big green behemoth was known for eventually being able to shrug off *anything* that fucked with him.

"I... could come up with several things that would force you to stay small and human Bruce. There is even a chance my healing amulet might even heal the ability for you to change right out of you," I admitted, unwilling to lie to him. "But by the sound of it that would involve messing around with your head. I'm... not comfortable with that, at least not long term. I could make a device that calms you down, even from range, but I'm not going to make something that you wear and constantly fucks with your emotions. A long-range calming device is the best I feel comfortable with. That way if you transform unwillingly we can bring you back, and we don't have to worry about the effects of long-term exposure of suppressing him. "

"I... I do want to see where this goes. I feel more at peace with him, that part of me than I ever have before," Bruce explained, giving Betty's hand a squeeze. "It wouldn't feel right to fully suppress him at this point anyway... like cutting away an aspect of myself, even if it was a part of me I would like to work on. But the ability to calm me down at range, just in case? If it works on me then I would consider joining up."

"Alright, give me five minutes." I said, standing up from my chair and walking away from the table. "Feel free to watch, a sneak peek of what my process is like."

I flicked out a card, and suddenly my storage shed was sitting in the yard, quickly followed by a workstation and my cabinet of tricks. I spent a minute or so grabbing stuff and laying it on the workstation. In the end, I grabbed a few low-powered laser pointers and a dozen different things that were all about calmness and relaxation.

"Alright, so, all this stuff carries concepts of calming, soothing, and relaxation," I explained, gesturing to an array of crystals, teas, a stress ball, and a vial of Jasmine essential oils. "The laser pointers will hopefully allow me to apply this calming effect at range. If that doesn't work I can try working something into a liquid, putting that into a spray bottle, and then mixing that with something."

I looked up at my audience, who had made their way from their chairs to watch me work. Bruce and Betty looked skeptical, while Tony just looked bored.

I started the process by combining the calming materials into two groups, then adding both of them into separate laser pointers, before combining those together as well. I resisted the urge to try it out on Tony, instead placing it on the workbench. My armor appeared on my arm, growing from my fingertips all the way to my shoulder before I activated the universal scanner built in.

When the scan was done I frowned. It was basically what I wanted, but I didn't think it was quite powerful enough. I grabbed a magic rod and a divine essence and combined them in, the laser pointer changing into a thick, baton-like device that was covered with decorative copper lines. When I was done I put it back on the table and scanned it again.

“Alright, seems like this is a functional calming laser,” I said after reading the description. “No negative effects, though you'll probably feel sleepy as well. Unfortunately, there is only one way to really check if it works on you...”

Bruce let out a sigh and looked at Betty, who nodded and stepped away from him. Bruce began taking off his clothes, stripping off his jacket, shirt, and glasses before handing them to Betty.

“Not your pants?” Tony asked. “Not that I’m looking for a show.”

“They are stretchy.” He assured him, before closing his eyes and focusing

After only a short pause his eyes flew open, his iris glowing green as his body grew, his muscle bulging out. I could hear the sound of his bones creaking, shifting as the green spread through his body, first through his veins, growing out through the rest of his body. It looked like he was in massive amounts of pain as he clenched his teeth and his bones settled back into place. When his transformation was finally done, he stood in front of me, breathing heavily. Watching me closely.

“Hey big guy, thanks for stopping by.” I said, reaching out my hand.

Hulk looked at me, eyes trailing down to my hand before reaching out to shake it. This time it didn't quite feel like he was grinding my bones together, though I could still feel his inhuman strength. He was clearly confused by my nonchalant nature.

“So here is the deal Hulk. Bruce wants to join me and a lot of other people to help the world.” I explained, nodding as he scoffed. “I know, what has the world done for you? But it's important to Bruce, and keeping him from being a grumpy bastard means you'll get to come out and play more often. The problem is you make him nervous when he is around people.”

“Banner hate hulk, Hulk hate Banner!” He said, scowling and shifting his massive body.

“You both have a lot of bad experiences with each other, a lot of them bad. But Betty just wants you both to be happy, which means working together to put aside your differences,” I explained, gesturing to Betty.

Hulk turned to see Betty, waving shyly to her as if he hadn't realized she was there. I let him focus on her for a few seconds before I continued.

“You make Banner nervous,” I repeated, getting his attention. “When you get angry you tend to break stuff, sometimes even hurt people. It's not usually your fault, people just won't leave you alone, I get that. But Banner needs to know that if something happens to set you off, someone will be able to help you calm down.”

“Don’t want to hurt anyone.” Hulk admitted, his graveling voice actually sounding apologetic. “Too angry, lose Hulk.”

I could see Betty, her eyes wide as she listened to Hulk talk. She hadn't been surprised earlier when he spoke, but they must have not gotten this far before.

“I know, and this will hopefully help with that.”

“Banner just use to stop me!” He shouted, starting to look agitated. “Never let me OUT!

“At one point, that might have been true, but he has been meditating, trying to connect to you, right?” I asked, the massive green humanoid nodding reluctantly. “He knows something else is going on. He knows it's not right to keep you locked up like that. He has been letting you out to stretch your legs, right?”

Again he nodded reluctantly, before looking over at Betty again. This time she stepped forward, smiling up at him and holding his arm. It took a minute for him to turn back and focus on me.

“I think Betty understands that too.” I pointed out, Betty nodding in confirmation.

“I do Hulk. Bruce wants to understand what you are, and what your connection is. You just need to give him a chance.”

After a long time of looking down at his kind-of-sort-of wife, Hulk looks back at me again.

“What Hulk do?”

“Just let me try this out on you. It will make you calm and change you back into Banner. I promise it will only be used to keep you from hurting anyone if your anger gets the best of you,” I explained, the muscle-bound behemoth looking suspiciously at the laser pointer on the table. “If Banner starts using it to keep you locked away I’ll take it away from him and kick his ass until you pop back out.”

Betty gave me a strong look, but Hulk just chuckled. After a long moment he reluctantly nodded, stepping back a bit from the workbench, Betty stepping back from Hulk as well. I took the laser pointer and waited for a moment, Hulk finally nodding again.

I aimed the laser pointer at Hulk's foot, activating it with a single press. The effect was instantaneous, as the Hulk started to shrink. Slowly getting smaller and smaller, the green changing into his normally pale skin. There were more than a few pops and groans before Bruce Banner was standing in front of us.

“... Alright, when do we start?”