

Ema, Steve, Peggy, Bucky, and I spent quite a while saying goodbye. The people of Asgard were apparently fascinated by us, or more specifically finally meeting people from the planet they had sworn to protect. I had been skipping over this by flying to most places, but apparently, the other three had been getting swamped by people wanting to discuss this or talk about that, or even just shake their hands. When the fact that we were leaving got around, Thor insisted on one last walk through the city, where I finally got the treatment they had been getting the whole time.

It wasn't bad by any means, the Asgardians were all polite and understanding, but as someone who had spent a significant amount of time alone on the moon, the large crowds were surprisingly disconcerting.

"Ema, remind me to spend more time in the city," I said at one point, my partner looking over at me curiously. "These crowds are making me nervous, I need to spend more time around people or I'm going to develop a condition."

"I know that feeling," Bucky, who had overheard me said with a bitter laugh. "I never had any kind of social anxiety before I was the Soldier. I spent so long not talking that I get anxious around people now like my words won't work or something."

It didn't take long for us to get inside the *Void Skipper* after saying goodbye. Thor, Odin, and Frigga were all there to wave us off, as well as Mr. Steiner and Ms. Hartford, who were both staying behind to continue their work. Mr. Steiner was a bit warmer to me after the gifts I had given both of them, but he clearly wasn't my biggest fan.

"He takes his job seriously," Peggy explained as we all climbed into the garage bay. "He wasn't a fan of your joking in the first place, but the fact that we got so much facetime with King Odin while he and Ms. Hartford were relegated to their nobles is what really agitated him."

We headed through the ship, back to the bridge, where Ema sat down in the pilot's chair and quickly started getting the ship ready. I could see the group of Asgardian nobles and royalty, as well as two Earthlings making their way to the protection of the tunnel through the viewscreen. Ema was nice enough to wait for them to get inside before starting the thrusters. A familiar vibration spread through the ship before slowly fading.

"Everyone strapped in?" Ema asked, turning to look and nodding. "Alright then, here we go."

The *Void Skipper* lifted off the ground and rotated, pulling up and away from the ground. We followed three skiffs away, just as we had coming in. Eventually, when we were far enough away, the skiffs peeled off, leaving us alone in the void. Once we were a good distance from Asgard, I opened a portal and we headed through, coming out into space around the moon. Before I could say anything Bucky spoke up.

“Maker... Carson, could we...”

I turned to look at him and he was focused downward, at the surface of the moon. I couldn't help but chuckle and nod.

“Yeah, go look in that box labeled EVA, those are the space suits I made,” I explained.

Bucky nodded and started putting his on, Steve and Peggy right behind him. About ten minutes later the super soldiers were running around on the moon, shouting and whooping as they jumped incredible distances and used the thrusters on the EVA suits to fly around. I sat with Peggy and Ema not too far away, watching them enjoy themselves.

“So is this a new thing or...?” I asked, looking at Peggy.

“Oh very much so,” She answered with a chuckle as Steve stumbled and rolled, bouncing in the moon dust for a few dozen feet. “It's mostly Bucky as well. Apparently, there were times when his conditioning was weak. One of those times was around the moon landing. He really latched onto it.”

“Damn... well I'm glad I was set up here,” I responded.

“You would have made this happen even if you weren't already living up here.” Ema pointed out. “The second you realized he wanted to walk on the moon.”

“Maybe...probably,” I admitted. “I would want to as well.”

We were quiet for a few minutes, save the occasional laugh at the two super soldiers' shenanigans. Eventually, Peggy did bring up the elephant in the room.

“So... about the buildings...?”

“That's the Octopit,” I said, gesturing to the production facility. “It's where I made the *Void Skipper*. Ema is responsible for the name by the way.”

Ema slapped my shoulder, which lifted me off of the ground, forcing me to deploy my wings to get back.

“And the other one?” She asked, referring to the absolutely massive lunar research base. It was looking mostly done at this point, I needed to check to see how long was left soon.

“A future project I'm collaborating on with Tony Stark,” I explained with a shrug.

“Does it have anything to do with the recent hiring spree Stark Industries has been on?” She asked. “The one where people are informed that they will be starting ‘soon’”

“What?” I asked, looking at her with genuine confusion. “I’m not sure what you’re talking about.”

“Hm... alright,” She said, looking back to Bucky and Steve. “I think we can keep this to ourselves for a while, at least until the diplomats return and spill the beans.”

“Thanks, I think we should be announcing it sooner rather than later.”

About an hour later I traveled all three of my friends down to DC, taking their new equipment to travel back and forth between Asgard with them. Bucky had wanted to stay longer, but their duty to report to Shield and the WSC called them away. I, on the other hand, was finally free to get to work. Hanging out on Asgard had been a fun and incredibly lucrative trip, but now I needed to put that to work. The fact that I had given away my first completely handmade named item was still grinding on me, though I think I did a pretty good job hiding that fact from our hosts.

I needed to make myself armor that was stronger than Odin’s. I was no longer satisfied with being almost as strong as Thor.

Step one in achieving this was, in itself, a two-step process. I needed to start the frankly ridiculous amount of UCM’s I had in my warehouse on printing out an equally ridiculous amount of materials and parts, as I was going to be building this new armor from the ground up. In order to do that, I carded and combined divine essence into every UCM and repair tablet that I could, including those in storage. Technically the UCMs already had one dose of divine essence, but having two only made them better, though to a reduced degree.

Once that was done I started them up, as well as setting up a large corner of the warehouse to make a huge number of Destroyer armors and more. While they were going I sat down in the break area and sent Natasha a text, telling her that I had just gotten back. It took a few minutes for her to respond but we started chatting while Ema and I planned out everything I was going to try and fit into my new armor.

Eventually, Natasha needed to get back to work but promised to call sometime that night or the next morning.

“Did you mention the date?” Ema asked.

“No, she is gonna call later or tomorrow, I’ll bring it up then.”

By then I was satisfied with the materials I had produced to start the first parts of the project. From my cabinet of tricks, I pulled one of the first real armor sets I had made, before I had access to the Destroyer armor or vibranium. I then proceed to jam every single enhancement I could into it. Sorcerous damascus, enhanced by magic wood and sunstone,

layered with ultra metal. I worked in Asgardian materials as well, anything that was strong, tough, lightweight, and protected against elements or magic, all went into the once basic set of armor. I worked more strength and stamina enhancements as well, as well as protection. My final addition was a single crystal of divine essence and one ingot of Uru. When I was done I set the armor up in a UCM, to copy out a dozen times, before leaving to have dinner.

Alfred made Ema and I each a huge plate of steak, mashed potatoes, and asparagus, which we ate eagerly. Ema then left to spend some time with Jarvis, who had promised her some sort of desert.

I spent some time setting up the next step before taking all twelve copies of the new basic enhanced armor and combining them together. The last three combinations were more or less useless but I added them anyway. I then got the max stacked basic armor on a UCM again, set to print out twelve more copies. While those were going I started working on the second part.

Taking the stack of Asgardian armor that had been printed out, I combined what appeared to be a light, heavy, and medium set together, before starting the same process all over again. I combined everything I had gotten up to this point, following a similar enhancement path as I had for the first batch. I held back from adding in Asgardian materials because I was worried about connecting the concepts together too much. I also added in a bar of Uru and two divine essences, before putting the armor back into a UCM and printing out twelve more copies.

By then it was starting to feel late, and the hearty meal Alfred had made was starting to catch up to me. I decided to call it a night, heading to bed a bit earlier than usual.

When I woke up the next morning I immediately got to work, combining the newly printed enhanced Asgardian armors together, ignoring that they didn't make much change after the seventh combination. I then set them up to print another twelve before having breakfast. I was enjoying a slice of bacon, wondering when Ema would be back when my phone rang.

"Good morning Nat," I said, unable to keep from smiling. "How are you?"

"Morning Carson, I'm doing alright. Sorry for calling so early," She apologized. "I have a busy day today and won't have much time until much later tonight. How are you?"

"It's fine, I've been up for a while. And I'm doing great, working on some new armor," I responded. "So... would you prefer something simple for a date, or something... more complicated? I'm all for dinner and a movie, if that sounds like something you would be interested in. Or I could come up with some... out there and exciting."

I could almost hear her thinking, and could easily picture what she looked like, chewing her lip slightly.

“Would simple be okay?” She asked, sounding almost apologetic.

“Yeah, absolutely,” I agreed with a smile. “How about this, we both take a look at what's out right now, and then we can talk about what we would like to see. Maybe tomorrow afternoon? I have no clue what's out right now so...”

“That sounds good Carson,” She said, her smile audible. “I’ll talk to you tomorrow then? I would hang around and talk more but I’ve got a plane to catch.”

“Alright, that's fine, good luck with your super spy stuff. And if you need support don't hesitate to call.”

“Thanks, Carson, Talk to you soon.”

I sat in my kitchen for a while, smiling and finishing my breakfast.

When I was finally done enjoying the good vibes I went back out into the workshop. The Destroyer armors I needed were already done, having finished their repairs overnight. This would be the most material-intensive part of this build, as the armors were too large to fit into a UCM. That meant that in order to stack it properly, I would need to make the duplicates by hand. Or by card rather. I would be making thirty-six copies of this stage, which was only made more difficult by the fact that this was also where I would be attaching all of the gadgets I wanted my armor to have.

It would be a long process, but I was determined to make my armor a named item.

The first step was simple reinforcement, strengthening, and enhancement. Hundreds of plates of ultra metal, sorcerous damascus, some other Asgardian materials, extra plates of vibranium, sunstone enhanced ultra metal, a dozen max stacked energy cells, four max stacked arc reactors, extra strength enhancers, elemental resistors to mitigate damage from as many sources as possible, three healing amulets, two bars of Uru and three divine essence crystals all got combined into *each* set of Destroyer armor.

By the time I was done with that the twelve copies of the max stacked, enhanced Asgardian armor were done. I took all twelve and combined each one to a max stacked basic armor I had finished the day before, before setting them aside. I wouldn't be using them until the last step.

By now it was early afternoon. Ema had returned while I was working on combining the two max stacked batches, but had set out pretty quickly to work on the nurse stone project. She was hoping to get most population centers done by the end of the day, which would let her start on global saturation.

I on the other hand focused on adding to the armors, starting with flight. I was pretty sure at this point I could manage a flight system that didn't rely on wings if I worked at it but... I kind of liked them. They gave my flying weight and in the end, didn't really detract from anything. If I managed to find a way to get Superman-style flight I would probably take it, but as long as my flying concept was even vaguely attached to thrust and lift, I would keep the wings. Besides, this version of my wings was leagues above the ones I was currently using, having added a bar of Uru and two crystals of divine essence to them before feeding them to the UCM the day before.

I waffled a bit on how to attach the wings to the armor but settled on cutting a chunk off of the armors back, combining it to the new enhanced wings, and then using a repair tablet, now with extra divine essence, to quickly reattach it. Any issues would get smoothed over in the layering process anyway. I quickly attached the wings to the entire lot, before repeating a similar process with the right-handed scanner and the shield on my left arm.

While the scanner was basically exactly the same as the one I had added to the armor I was currently using, the shield had gone through the same process as I had the wings, namely enhancing them, adding Uru, divine essence, and a shield projector, as well as sorcerous damascus, energy cells, and sunstone enhanced ultra metal.

With what I considered the basics set in, I worked in full EVA suits to the armor on top of the visual enhancements for the helmet. I put a healing flashlight in the left palm of all the destroyer armors, then cut off the thumb and the pointer finger of both hands, working in a variable version of my lighting gun before reattaching them. I worked anti-mind control cuffs into several points, mostly as backups. I added a stealth module that I could toggle with the intent controls, which I then also added.

At this point, I was beginning to worry about being spoiled for choice. Having access to everything and the kitchen sink meant nothing if I couldn't use it because my hands were full. Which led me to my last addition.

Alongside the thirty-six fully repaired destroyer armors, I had another thirty-six tablets partially repairing the right and left arms, connected by a single band of metal. I sliced one set of arms free, and combined each with a copy of my revolvers, before reinforcing them with ultra metal, high-level sorcerous damascus and finishing them off with a transformation card. I then added in a few limbs from the battle bots and intent controls before using the same attachment technique as I did for most of the other equipment, namely cutting out a portion of the fully enhanced armor under each arm, combining them with the new arms and then repairing them in place with a repair tablet. It looked a little strange, but with any luck, I would be able to shift them away until I absolutely needed more hands for a task.

By now it was almost four in the morning and my enhanced stamina was coming in clutch. I was determined to finish this project. With the thirty-six near identical sets of massively enhanced destroyer armors completed, for now, I stacked them three times each, leaving me with twelve total. When that was done I took the twelve other sets of combined, max stacked,

ultra enhanced armor and combined them individually into the enhanced destroyer armor. I could feel the diminishing returns getting more and more punishing as the potency increased at every stage.

Finally, I finished the project by adding two bars of Uru and four divine essences to each set, before combining it down to a singular suit of armor. For a while I stood in the middle of my workshop, just admiring my creation.

There, in golden embossed script was the name "Panoply of the Maker".

For a long moment, I debated immediately binding it to myself. Instead, I pushed it out into a UCM and told it to print out a single copy. I might use it to build something in the future, so I needed an unbound copy, but I would not leave dozens of this armor sitting around. A singular unbound copy would stay permanently in my deck. Even better, because it was named it wouldn't take up any space.

When the UCM was set I immediately bound the original to myself, before pushing the armor out onto a workbench. Quickly pulling off all of my clothes, including my now old armor, stripping down to my under armor. When I was ready I reached out and touched the Panoply, the armor immediately shattering into green light, motes of energy whipping and spinning around me, seeming to settle into my body. I could only imagine that it was what Odin's armor had felt like.

Somehow I could feel it, just waiting to be called forth, bound to me in a way that was difficult to describe. Almost like it was standing just behind me, waiting to support me. With a mental flex my armor was surrounding me in seconds, green specks of light fluttering around me. I could feel the power, the incredibly dense power that seemed connected to me and meld perfectly with my body. I had thought my old armor was seamless, that it had been the pinnacle of what I could achieve for fluidity and control. But this was on a whole different level. Like night and day.

I carefully made my way to a corner of the shop, standing in front of a large mirror that existed for exactly this purpose.

The armor was drastically different from my previous set, with the Destroyer armor influence barely present. I could still see a layer of armored bands in certain places small places, but I was mostly covered by interlocking and layered armored plates. I looked like a less cumbersome science fiction knight, with subtle Asgardian influences. There was a steady, slowly pulsing low white light coming from under the plates as well. It was also smaller than my old armor had been, much more compact and tighter to my body.

I focused for a moment and my spare set of arms shifted out of my sides. They forced me to move my real arms a bit, and it did look a little strange as they were more heavily influenced by the Destroyer armor, but they were incredibly easy to control. I could fully

articulate them like my own arms, except with no bones they could bend backward completely. With a thought, I shifted them again, this time their hands morphing into revolvers, though without the handles. They fused the arms in a way that was fluid, with a familiar orange glow emanating from their seams.

With another mental command, their hands were back, before the arms shifted away completely. I took a long moment to examine myself in the mirror, before smirking under my helmet.

Time for a little test run.