

I found Steve and Peggy waiting for me in the underground parking center at Shield headquarters, Natasha standing not far away. Steve was carrying what looked like an artist's portfolio bag, stretched a bit to carry his shield. Peggy noticed me first and pointed me out to Steve, who's eyes went wide at the super truck as he spotted us. Peggy, who had already seen the super truck in passing, just smirked when Steve walked around my green and gold behemoth.

"Is this a normal truck these days or...?" He asked, looking at the front end.

"No, not at all." I assured him. "This is very much unique... Well I'll show how it works when we get to our first stop."

"First stop?" He asked, walking around to open the door for Peggy and helping her step in.

"Gotta make sure you're properly equipped." I said with a shrug. "I tend to follow my naming convention."

"Right, Maker." He said with a nod. He climbed into the passenger seat and closed the door.

Before I climbed back in I stepped closer to Natasha, with a flick I pushed out a medium sized package.

"This is a gift for Fury. I've been stepping on his toes so I figured I would make it up to him."

"Oh?" She asked, eyebrow cocked. "Is it a special gift?"

"It is, so get it to him directly, assuming he is still here."

"He is." She said simply. "Waiting to react to whatever hornets nest you guys kick up."

"Yeah... Listen, I'm going to do my best to convince Steve to wait another day." I explained. "I want to scout out the location and maybe watch it over night."

"... Why the sudden bout of caution?" Natasha asked, now looking very curious.

"Don't worry about it. Just tell Fury that you should be with him when he opens his gift."

Natasha's eyes narrowed, examining my face before eventually nodding.

"Alright, I'll take your word for it." She said, stepping back with the box in her hands. "Good luck rescuing Bucky."

I nodded and walked away, climbing into the truck, giving a nod to Steve before starting the truck back up and pulling away. We were driving for a minute or so before Peggy spoke up to break the silence.

"I'm a bit surprised you managed to get this running again so quickly." Peggy commented. "Natasha insisted you were hit twice by a grenade."

"We were." I said with a smirk. "And it's not just fixed, Ema and I spent some time making it even tougher. Next time I won't have to jump between cars. Hopefully."

"That's always fun." Steve said sarcastically, shaking his head. "It's a pain to match speed and judge the distance."

I looked at him as we stopped at a red light, chuckling and nodding when he looked back.

"Yeah, yeah it is. I suppose if anyone else would know it would be you."

"So where is this first stop?" Steve asked after a few moments. "And where is your friend, Ema?"

"Our first stop is my workshop." I explained. "Ema is waiting for us there."

We drove for a bit longer before I pulled into a random run down parking garage. I made sure to scan for security cameras as I stepped out. Steve all but jumped out to help Peggy, who graciously accepted his hand as she climbed down. I couldn't tell if Peggy was loving the attention or not.

"So... where is your workshop?" Steve asked. "Is it-"

Steve looked around and just happened to turn back and look at me as I put my hand on the hood of the super truck, pulling it into a card. When I looked back at him he had instinctively gone into a ready stance, his eyes locked on the card. I flicked it out to him, and he caught it easily from the air. He looked at the card and then back to me.

"Peggy explained what your deck could do but... I wasn't ready for that."

"Yeah, that's been an ongoing theme so far." I said with a smirk, yanking the card back to my hand and flourishing it away. "Now, I need you to both take my hand. This is going to be a bit jarring but I promise you'll be fine."

I asked, reaching out with both of my hands, obviously waiting for them to grab on. Steve looked at me for a moment before checking with Peggy, who smiled and nodded, reaching out

and taking my hand. Steve shrugged and grabbed the other and I smiled. Before it could get awkward I spoke.

“Travel Quarry.”

The shift from the parking garage to the small copse of trees next to the quarry only took a few seconds, but it was plenty to scare the hell out of Steve and Peggy. My danger sense flared as Steve tried to put me in a headlock, giving me just enough warning to use my own enhanced strength to tear my hand free and step back. Peggy simply let go and half stumbled away.

“What was that!” She shouted, frantically looking around. “Where are we?”

“My workshop.” I explained, sheepishly holding my hands up in surrender. “Sorry I probably could have explained a bit better, I was just kind of looking forward to how people reacted to their first time traveling.”

“Where are we?” Peggy asked again.

“Somewhere in Texas.” I answered vaguely, walking away through the trees, leading them to the quarry.

“Texas?! Are you being serious?” She asked, Steve following behind. “You made a teleportation device?”

“Technically it's not teleportation as far as I understand.” I explained, making my way down. “I made it using samples of Bifrost energy I managed to snag when Thor was here.”

“How...” Peggy trailed off as I sat down in one of the chairs under the tent. She sat down across from me, Steve putting his hand on the chair back.

Ema, who had been waiting for us to get here, brought a box of stuff from the storage shed. I picked something at random, a security camera I had gotten for my danger sense, and a compass.

“Basically, my abilities come from the Deck itself. I didn't use my abilities to make it, rather I used the Deck to make things. Anything that I can pull into a card, I can combine.”

As I explained I demonstrated by carding the two objects and combining them, pushing the new object out onto the table. The result was a small, squat cylinder that had an internally spinning object, a camera that settled pointing to what I assumed to be north.

“Combining items blends them together, which can result in some weird results. But, as I stack more and more things on top of each other, concepts that the objects hold begin to stack. It's these stacking concepts that allow me to make objects that do incredible things.”

Steve leaned forward and picked up the camera and compass hybrid, watching the internally suspended camera refocus northward.

“That... is about the most bizarre thing I have ever seen.” He admitted, handing the camera to Peggy. “It seems...”

“It's a lot, I get it.” I said, nodding and holding a hand up in placation. “Just think of me as a conceptual and metaphysical inventor. The rules I follow are a bit different and much more flexible, but they are rules and I am still learning. That said...”

I flick out to cards, both of them landing on the table, sliding closer before the boxes pop out into existence.

“What I've been able to do so far has been pretty impressive.”

Over the next thirty minutes or so I showed them what I had made for them, starting with the under armor and working my way up. Steve liked the idea of being bulletproof, but he liked the idea of Peggy being bulletproof even more. After a few minutes of explaining all of their armor I quickly bound them to both forms of their deployable armor, as well as both forms of their undersuit. The results were interesting to say the least.

Steve's under armor changed from the normal ark metallic bands and plates to smooth matte metal, hugging and accenting his muscles. The leather jacket shifted to a slightly darker color within just a hint of blue, a white five pointed star attached to the back. When his armor was deployed it covered almost all of the undersuit, a much more subtle plating than mine, barely shifted from what it had been before. The coloration wasn't far off from the classic Captain America uniform I remembered from some of the later comics, though they were muted enough that it wasn't eye watering.

Peggy's armor reacted similarly, the undersuit shifting into a matte dark green, only slightly darker than her deployable armor, which flowed from her belt and torc to cover her entire body. The biggest difference between Steve and Peggy was that Steve's helmet looked like his comic classic, Peggy's shifted into a deep hood. After slipping on their gloves and boots they cut an impressive and intimidating image.

“This... You put this together in just a day?” Steve asked, examining his suit as Peggy looked at hers in the mirror. “That's incredible.”

“How quickly and how flexible the Deck works is one of its major advantages.” I explained with a shrug. “It has limitations as well.”

“Yeah?” He asked, smirking as he flexed and stretched, checking his range of motion. “Make sure you point them out at some point.”

“Will do.” I answered with a chuckle. “So, the armor works for you guys?”

“Yes, I suppose it will do.” Peggy said sarcastically, rejoining us out from under the tent.

“If it's as tough as you say it is, you won't hear any complaints from me.”

“Good. Then let's move onto the other goodies.” I said with an excited smile. “First up, guns for each of you.”

We continued going over everything else I had made for the pair. Steve's revolver was strapped to his hip, while Peggy wore it in its ring form, each taking some time to fire practice shots into the quarry. When they had learned the ins and outs of the quad stacked, magic enhanced, ammo regenerating revolvers, and Steve's similarly enhanced shotgun, I explained the healing amulets.

“Okay, so here is the deal.” I said, holding one of the unbound amulets. “These little miracles work by stacking the concept of healing over and over and over again. Ointments, pills, herbs known for having healing effects, even mumbo jumbo stuff like healing crystals. I stack them with symbols having to do with healing, before mixing in a bit of magic I got from our encounter with Asgardians and viola.”

I carded the amulet before cutting my palm, letting them watch as it healed rapidly with just a hint of a golden glow.

“Now mine is a bit more enhanced, since I had to de-age Peggy, but these are nothing to sneeze at.”

I held out both amulets, hanging down by the necklace. Peggy frowned when she saw both of them.

“You made two?” She asked. “I thought you were worried about Steve using it?”

“I think that there is a very very very small chance that my unbound healing amulet would interact with the serum.” I explained clearly. “But you've seen it yourself, binding an object to someone makes it theirs in a conceptual sense. It resizes it to fit them and shifts to become more aesthetically pleasing. I think combining the amulet with Steve's blood will tune the risk. As much as I wanted to help, I wasn't ready to bind my amulet to you just to test it out, not when you were recovering on your own.”

“I can understand that.” Steve said with a nod. “And I appreciate you waiting to try anything. I don’t know if I’m willing to risk it.”

“Understandable. I’d like to bind it to you anyway, let you carry it in one of your pouches in your armor just in case.”

“I... Alright.”

We spent a while getting everything bound properly, everything shifting slightly to fit their own theme. Cap’s revolver and shotgun both went red white and blue, though it was muted and matte enough that it actually looked good, while Peggy’s revolver went the same color as her undersuit, a dark matte green. They both got their secure cell phones, though Steve looked visibly uncomfortable holding his.

“Just put it in a pouch Steve, I’ll help you with it later.” Peggy said, getting a relieved nod in return.

Once everything was ready and I had run out ways to stall, Peggy immediately noticed my rising anxiety.

“What is it?” She asked, her eyes narrowing. “Why are you nervous?”

“I’m not nervous.” I said truthfully, shaking my head. “I’m apprehensive.”

“About what.”

“C’mon, we need to sit down. This is going to be... intense.”

I made my way back under the tent, barely noticing the cooler interior. I sat down, facing the other two. Ema, who had been waiting out of hearing range had returned shortly after I had messaged her, once again in her exosuit.

Steve and Peggy shared a look but sat down, both of them extremely serious. After a long moment I let out a sigh, leaning heavily on the table.

“We can’t go after Bucky yet.” I said, unable to look Steve in the eye. “Because, I’m pretty sure I know who sent him.”

Both of them asked a half dozen rapid fire questions, Steve even standing up from his chair, sending it falling backwards. Ema finally spoke up loudly.

“Hey! Let him answer you at least!”

The two went quiet for a moment, Peggy looking frustrated and Steve looking stoney and walled off.

“The problem is that if I’m right they have infiltrated Shield and probably a whole lot of other groups. The government, big businesses. You name it, they probably have a finger in it. Bucky, once we bring him back... They will be forced to move. They know I can almost definitely fix his brainwashing, which means we will have access to all of the intel he knows.”

“Why haven’t they made a move yet then?” Peggy asked, now sitting forward.

“Because they don’t know I know.” I explained. “Taking and fixing Bucky would all but guarantee we would find out, but I already know. And now Fury does as well.”

“... the package you handed Natasha?” Peggy guessed.

“Yeah. It had thirty five lie detecting leather bands, six secure cell phones, four tracking tablets that show any person that shares the belief system of the particular group they are hunting and forty rings that zap people into a very deep sleep on contact. Ema has been on the phone with Fury, explaining what we know.”

“Who are they hunting Maker?” Peggy asked, surprisingly quiet.

Without answering, I held out my hand to Ema, who pushed out my new secure phone. I scrolled through it for a moment before pulling up a video feed, hitting play and handing it to Peggy, who held it so Steve could watch as well. While I hadn’t seen it yet, Ema had described it to me and I could hear the voices. A rather unfriendly conversation between Fury, Natasha and Agent Sitwell, who was apparently the closest Hydra agent the tracking tablet revealed.

The unlucky man was bruised, bleeding and groaning in pain, locked in a dark room and tied to a chair while Natasha sat, casually lounged really, in front of him. Fury stood in the corner while a third person held the cell phone and recorded.

“We know your lying Sitwell. We know what is going on.” Natasha said, playing the all knowing spy perfectly. “Here is your chance to come clean. Who do you work for?”

“Shield! I’m a Shield agent! Fuck! Coulson, you know me!”

“Oh, thank you for reminding me.” Natasha said with a smile that was anything but kind. “We have been meaning to test Coulson’s knife on humans. It cuts through steel but... will it cut through Muscles? Bones? Teeth?”

With every word Sitwell groaned, pulling at his restraints, looking around wildly. The sound of a knife being flicked opened echoed in the room and the traitor whimpered. It took Coulson stepping forward for the man to finally crack.

“Fine! Fine, okay!” He said desperately. “Hydra! I work for Hydra!”