



Chapter 13

Ready! AIM! Fire!

For The Honor Of The Hulk Busters!

Standing naked on the balcony of the Braddock family Malibu beach house estate, Coulson and May embrace and stare off into the distance at the dim green glow of the newly arrived Emerald City, as it settles into it's new home between Long Beach and Catalina Island. The Hulk unleashes a signature howl that echoes along the coast to Malibu.

Coulson: Dr. Banner?... Well that happened!... There's bound to be an interesting story wrapped up in that!... But Dr. Banner's been through more than enough... all without exposing him to Ogun...

May: Is that why we're hiding out here?... keeping Ogun away from the others?...

Ogun: No need to be shy on my account Phil... I can take you to the heart of the action if you like... to heart of the sunrise if you will... But that wouldn't necessarily be around about here... if you want to look up old friends...

Coulson and May are engulfed in black smoke, then disappear from the balcony of the Malibu beach house. They reappear in a similar black cloud of smoke, materializing in a blinding white space. May reacts badly to the light and covers hers eyes.

May: Aggh!... What the hell!... Where are we?... Can you see anything?...

Coulson: Nothing but white!... But I think I'm starting to make some things out...





As Coulson's eyes adapt to the bright white, details and shapes emerge from the blinding white haze. The figure of a small child size bipedal raccoon gradually takes shape, wearing clothing adorned with various tools, and carrying some sort of plasma rifle strapped to it's back. Behind him, standing in front of what appears to be a large clear translucent crystal throne, is a somewhat larger teenager sized humanoid living tree creature, with no roots, playing with a small pocket video game in it's hands. The details of what appear to be a large crystal throne room of some kind, come into fuller clearer view.

Tree Creature: I am Groot!...

Raccoon: It's not gross... They're humys... That's how they do that... Although normally they do that sort of thing in private... or charge admission...
Normally I don't go in for this sort of performance art... But it is fascinating... scientifically speaking... Like a nature show where the animals talk as well as make baby animals...

Groot: I am Groot...

Raccoon: Oh shaddup... Nobody asked you... Put that stupid game away and pay attention... You just might learn something... It's educational programming... a learning experience... just like visiting a zoo...

May: Can you see who's talking?... I still can't see a damn thing...

Coulson: I can... But I don't believe it... But I don't know why... We've both seen stranger things...

Raccoon: Who are you calling strange humy?... I'm not the but naked performance artist giving it away for free... And at least I'm supposed to be here... Where the hell did you two come from anyway?... You might as well tell me...
The next people you talk to might impale first and ask questions later...





- Coulson: It seems like we've been transported to ship of talking raccoons... I'm starting to think this is some sort of revenge by Ogun... I think Ogun's messing with my head...
- Raccoon: I'm no raccoon!... I don't even know what that is... My name is Rocket!...
Humy!... Not raccoon!...
- Groot: I am Groot...
- Rocket: I think they normally look like that... But don't stare just in case... They might be sensitive... But if that's the case... they really should give up on performance art and find a new line of work...
- Coulson: Alright that's enough!...

Coulson and May are suddenly engulfed in a flurry of white sparkles, as they form two sets of matte black business suits, with plain white shirts and skinny black ties. A pair of matte black shades form on both May and Coulson's face, and a matte black katana forms within Coulson's waiting hands. The raccoon pulls the plasma rifle from his back and holds it at the ready, as Groot puts his game down on the crystal throne behind him.

- Rocket: You seem to be forgetting... that you're the intruder here...
- Groot: I am Groot!...
- Coulson: Well I am Phil Coulson... And I don't care who's supposed to be here...
We're not!... And we didn't choose to be... If you've got a problem with that... don't expect us to go quietly...
- Thor: I would never expect the Son of Coul to go quietly... not even unto death apparently...





In a translucent crystal doorway to the crystal throne room, behind Coulson and May, Thor stands next to a tall woman with long platinum blonde hair, green eyes, and pointed ears. She wore a long green gown with yellow embroidery, topped off with a green wreath with yellow flowers as a crown. Several armed and armored guards with similarly pointy ears fill in the space behind them, standing by for orders.

Coulson: Thor!... What are you doing here?...

Rocket: You know this humy?... This is the Son of Coul you were talking about?...
Seems awfully lively for a dead person... Are you sure he's not a Skrull?...
Or a Dire Wraith?...

Thor: I'm sure... I've known of his resurrection for some time now... Lady Sif let it slip... But begged me to respect the secret... As he had his reasons...
But what in Niflheim are you doing here?... And how did you ever get here?...

Coulson: That's really hard to explain... The short version... is that I've recently become possessed by a demon... the demon sorcerer Ogun... He transported me here for some reason only he knows... I think he's just messing with me at this point... For his own amusement if nothing else...

Thor: Ogun?!... Of The Hand?!?...

The hammer in Thor's hands spark up suddenly, with cool blue lightening dancing over its surface as if motivated by Thor's emotional agitation.

Coulson: Woh!... Take it easy Thor... I'm not saying it's okay... But we have a truce of sorts... And except for the occasional prank for his amusement... he's





mostly honoring that truce...

Thor: There can be no lasting truce with the likes of Ogun...

Coulson: I agree... But there's not really anything that can be done at the moment... If you want to try... you'll have to get in line behind Tony Stark and Queen Karnilla... But where are we?... What is this place?... And why is everything so bright?...

Green Woman: You are in Ljosalfgard... the crystal palace of Alfheim... But if you find that name difficult... It's often just referred to as the crystal palace... But a rough translation of it's nickname... is the Heart of the Sunrise... I am Aelsa Featherwine of the Fay... queen of Alfheim... And we are in the process of journeying to Midgard... For the sake of the war... You do know of the war... Don't you?...

Coulson: Yes... That was part of how I became the host for Ogun... I've effectively been sidelined for that war ever since... before we even knew what was happening... But how are we traveling anywhere... in a palace?...

Queen Aelsa: The crystal palace of Alfheim... is no normal palace... It is essentially what might be referred to on Midgard... as dimensionally transcendental... in the jargon of Midgard... it is made using trans-dimensional quantum entanglement... or at least that's how our cousins from Midgard refer to it... It is permanently dimensionally tethered to its home in Alfheim... but can be dimensionally projected far and wide anywhere in the universe... We could step outside right now... and enter Alfheim proper... all the while simultaneously traveling to fetch Prince Thor here... and convey him to Asgard or Midgard... or just about anywhere else you like...

Thor: I don't mean to add to your burden... But I've only just learned myself...





that my brother Loki is still alive...

Coulson: Really?... He's not behind this war too is he?...

Queen Aelsa: No!... He most assuredly is not!... My love may be politically mischievous in the extreme... But even he would not knowingly do business with the Kree or The Hand... But then again... he was foolish enough to deal with Thanos... for the sake of conquest... But the death of his mother effected him greatly... as he blames himself for it... It seems to have cured him of the burden of glorious ambition... while simultaneously trapping him with actual family responsibility... My love is now the man I always knew he could be... And I will not abide any defamation of my love... for crimes he has not committed...

Coulson: Your love?...

Queen Aelsa: My first and only... The father of my only child... from whom I still hope for many more... Fate has not been kind to our love... for the sake of the poison of politics... and my love's own incorrigible mischief... But even as war looms... my heart is filled with hope... and my love has become even more the man I believed him to be... And so I love him all the more... And I have nothing to apologize for... for the sake of my love...

Coulson: Well... That's nice and flowery and all... But your love shanked me in the heart... So you'll pardon me if I don't see it that way...

Queen Aelsa: Fair enough Son of Coul... Fair enough... But Loki has been serving Asgard... and his father King Odin... and whether you believe it or not... the interest of Midgard right along with them... All in their time of most dire need...

Thor: It is true Son of Coul... Queen Aelsa and Queen Karnilla have both been





helping him cover for my father and his debilitating condition... to maintain the strength and stability of Asgard... and buying time for me to return... He has been a steadfast and faithful caretaker of the throne of Asgard... in spite of past transgressions... More so than I have been in recent years...

Coulson: I hope your right... But I don't think I'll ever be able to trust that...

Groot: I am Groot!...

Rocket: You said it...

Coulson: And... Who are they?... Are they elves too?...

Thor: They're with a group known... as the Guardians of the Galaxy...

Coulson: The Guardians of the Galaxy?... More like guardians of vain pretension...

Rocket: Hey!... We earned that title!... The hard way!... Just because you humies don't know... doesn't mean squat...

Coulson: Just the two of you?...

Rocket: Our other colleagues are on a secret diplomatic mission...

May and Coulson chuckle slightly at the accidental movie reference.

Rocket: Quill thought that was funny too... But I don't get it...

As old friends catch up on the way back to earth, the Star God, Dr. Spectrum, and the various young biker hooligans from Niflheim, speed towards the fight heating up at Stark Industries, Iron Man arrives just in time to see the Black Smith form a matte black gatling gun in a flurry of white sparkles on the forearm of his armor, forming a matte black belt to feed ammo to it, forming out of his back in a similar flurry of white sparkles. The Black Smith then





begins a rapid fire barrage of matte black zero matter bullets, which penetrate MODOC's field and begin to pelt and penetrate the outer surface of MODOC's face and body.

Black Smith: Try zero matter bullets!... They seem to be able to penetrate his field!...
They also act like the ultimate heat sink!... Their absorbing his energy!... I'll send you the specs!... We have to press the advantage!...

War Machine: Got it!... But we made need a bigger caliber than that!...

Iron Man: Maybe I can help!...

Iron Man flies in at full speed and blasts MODOC with his repulsors.

Black Smith: No!... Wait!... We already tried that!... He's upgraded himself with Gamma Extremis!... He'll just absorb the energy and get stronger!... Physical concussive force works best!... But it has to penetrate his protective force field!... Zero matter slugs will absorb his energy and allow for more penetration!...

War Machine: Sorry Boss!... But you're a bit behind the curve!... The kid knows his MODOC!... But I'm game!... Let's try concentrating fire!...

The white sparkles fly again, and the War Machine forms a larger matte black 50 cal gatling gun, mounted on the ground with a matte black tripod, with a matte black ammunition belt forming similarly out of the War Machine's back in a flurry of white sparkles. The black Smith continues to fire at MODOC, as the War Machine joins in with an even heavier barrage of bigger zero matter slugs. MODOC ramps up his energy with a sudden howl of rage at the ongoing bombardment, sending a concussive shock wave outward from his body all around





himself in every direction, knocking the Black Smith and the War Machine off of their feet, and destroying the larger gating gun of the War Machine. Iron Man flies down and lands near MODOC, and proceeds to attack him up close and personal with his FSB modified Hulk Buster armor, striking MODOC repeatedly in rapid succession.

Iron Man: Alright!... If we have to get physical... then let's get physical!...

The Black Smith and the War Machine recover to their feet, and begin to rush MODOC in order to assist Iron Man.

MODOC: Get!... Away!... From me!...

MODOC lashes out at the three assailants, with three concentrated lightening blasts, sending each one of them flying back through the air, and crashing into surrounding buildings.

MODOC: I am the Science!... And the science will not be denied!...

Then Star God shimmers into view in the air above, hurling himself at MODOC with a ballistic trajectory. Bearing his shield as a battering ram, held fast with both arms. Star God plows into MODOC's face, unleashing his own lightening attack upon impact, forcing MODOC back, tumbling into one of the surrounding buildings.

Star God: Shut up MODOC!... That's enough out of you!... For the honor of Gen. Thunderbolt Ross and the Hulk Busters... I will stop you... One way or the other...





Dr. Spectrum: That... was a mistake... An impressive and showy mistake... But still a mistake...

Dr. Spectrum shimmers into view next to Star God where he stands after his attack on MODOC.

Star God: How is that a mistake Fitz?... You're not saying I should go easy on him?... Not after what he did to Ross?...

Dr. Spectrum: No... I'm saying that I've been monitoring the fight on the way here... And according to Gabe... MODOC has upgraded himself with Gamma Extremis... He absorbs energy now... And we have no idea what his capacity is... or what he can do with that if you give him enough energy for it...

Star God: Well where the hell is Gabe?... Wasn't Mike supposed to be here too?...

Dr. Spectrum: Mike and others are busy with their own fight elsewhere at the moment... Gabe is in the burning building behind me... Iron Man and War Machine are here too... But they were all blasted back by MODOC... We have to rely upon brute physical force... or otherwise use only zero matter weapons that can also absorb energy... including his...

Iron Man, the Black Smith, and the War Machine make their way out of the buildings they were thrown into, and try to rejoin the fight, as MODOC unleashes a tremendous and explosive electrical discharge, destroying the building that he was knocked into by Star God.

MODOC: How dare you!... I will dissect you for that!...

Star God: I see what you mean... I might have something for that... Something we



cooked up in Niflheim for the Black Queen... But I don't have time to show you and I may need help with that... I can send you the specs... But it requires the coordination and teamwork of people who already know the plan...

Helga: Well then... It's a good thing we came along for the fight...

Helga and the Gang of Three, shimmer into view with a roar and whine of engines and the screeching of tires, as they pull up along side their father, the Star God. Ilsa, Loco, and Spartan follow suit.

Star God: Helga!... What are you doing here?... You're supposed to be on escort duty!...

Helga: So were you dad!... So were you!...

Spartan: Sorry dad... But you know how she is... We couldn't let them fight without us... Wow!... MODOC is even freakier than I imagined in person...

Iron Man: Who are these kids again?...

Star God: They're my kids... My disobedient hooligan kids!... But Helga's right... I do need them here after all... But only if they can follow orders!... They know the plan... We've practiced...

Helga: Uh... Dad?... Which plan are we using again?...

Star God: It's the Black Queen drill... Prepare yourselves!... And get ready!... We'll need to buy them a little time to get ready...

Black Smith: More than happy too... Time to get seriously kinetic...

Dr. Spectrum: Wait!... Let me talk to MODOC for a moment...

Star God: You want to talk to it?...





- Dr. Spectrum: It... is partly my own creation... And I want to know for myself just what kind of creation it is...
- MODOC: I am no creation of yours!... Who are you to claim credit for MODOC?... I am the science!... The supremacy of science will not be denied!...
- Dr. Spectrum: The supremacy of science?... You talk as if you don't even know the meaning of the word... That attitude... is an abomination against science!...
- Iron Man: To say the least...
- Black Smith: I still say it's time for dissection on the tray...
- Star God: I'm no scientist... But I have a scalpel...

Star God's right hand is engulfed in white sparkles and a sudden flash of lightening, as a short but wide bladed matte black double edge sword, with large serrated shark tooth edges on either side.

Dr. Spectrum: So do I...

In a similar display to the Star God's, Dr. Spectrum materializes his matte black katana into his waiting hands in a flurry of white sparkles.

- Dr. Spectrum: My name... is Leopold Fitz... You should know that name... if you know anything about how you came to be... Surrender to me now... and we can forgo dissection...
- MODOC: Leopold... Fitz?... You?... are Leopold Fitz?... Your words are nothing but a heresy!... of an apostate against science!... Even more so than Gen. Ross... For such a brilliant scientist to be so blasphemous... something must have





gone seriously wrong with your head... So I shall dissect you!... And I will get to the bottom of this defect of the mind!...

Dr. Spectrum: Right back at ya freak!... We're done talking!... Time for dissection!...

Dr. Spectrum pulls out a small matte black object out of his pocket, and rolls it along the ground to just past MODOC's position, then it enlarges into a thirty foot tall matte black golem of Mr. Kong, right behind MODOC. Mr. Kong grabs MODOC from behind, but MODOC unleashes another blast of lightening, and destroys the Mr. Kong golem, shattering it into charred debris fragments. Dr. Spectrum skates away a bit then shimmers out of view, as the Star God, the Black Smith, the War Machine, and Iron Man, all move to engage MODOC up close and personal, in order to buy time to prepare for the Black Queen drill.

Downstairs in the warehouse building with Mike 'Deathlok' Peterson, Happy Hogan, and the Guardsmen, the proper killing machine and Dr. Golem have been fighting and killing many of the Guardsmen. Mike and the proper killing machine square off and separate from the others, as the proper killing machine seems to run away somewhat leading Mike back up to the surface as they fight. Happy Hogan and the other guardsmen finish with the regular beekeeper drones, then focus their efforts on Dr. Golem. Repulsor blasts from the Guardsmen seem to have no effect on Dr. Golem. They engage Dr. Golem in hand to hand combat, but he swats them away, only for them to regroup and keep trying. Dr. Spectrum then shimmers into view behind Dr. Golem.

Dr. Spectrum: Dr. Golem I presume... Remember me?... Traitor?... Or is the traitor Dr. Tarlton even in there anymore?... I knew you would come here... eventually... It's too good a target to pass up... for the likes of AIM fanatics like you... I can't believe that I ever gave you a second chance... This part of



our little trap was my idea... I don't know who Mike was fighting... But you're the one I wanted... even more than MODOC... Still nothing to say?... Traitor?...

Dr. Golem: I am... Dr. Tarlton... And I... wanted you too... To say goodbye... and thank you... for my power...

Dr. Spectrum: Thanks for the power?... The power to kill our friends?... when you cleared out Shield West Coast HQ?... to rescue MODOC?... There really is nothing human left in you is there?...

Dr. Golem: And I am better off for it... And you will be too... Just as we all have been...

Dr. Spectrum: Like bloody hell I will!...

Dr. Golem then disappears in a flash of lightening.

Happy Hogan: He's gone?... Just like that?...

Dr. Spectrum: No... He's not running away... They came down here for a reason... And either that reason is still here... Or they already have what they came for... Continue to scan for any drones that might be shrunk down out of sight... I have to get back up top... But I'll leave behind some backup... as well as a cleanup crew for all the beekeeper drone debris...

Dr. Spectrum reaches into another pocket, and pulls out a handful of matte black powder, and tosses it onto the ground in front of him. The bits of matte black powder then enlarge into a large mass of Madame Web's small matte black spider minion FSB drones, as they scurry about to search for Dr. Golem, and cleanup the beekeepers.





Dr. Spectrum: Watch your backs!... And watch your feet!... I have to check on Mike and the others...

Happy Hogan: You got it Fitz!...

Dr. Spectrum shimmers away as he turns away to head back up the stairs. Mike and the proper killing machine make their way back to the surface as they continue to fight. As they reach the door to the outside, Mike tries to grab the proper killing machine by the shoulders from behind to stop him from getting away. The killer spins around and throws Mike through the closed door, smashing it open, and into splinters, as they take the fight outside. Mike tumbles a bit before recovering to his feet, just in time to smash his fist against the face of the killer's beekeeper headgear, knocking it off of his head entirely, revealing the face of Silvio 'Silvermane' Manfredi.

Mike: Silvermane?!?... What the hell do you have to do with AIM?...

Silvermane: You've heard of me?... How flattering... I know all about you... Mike Peterson... May I call you Mike?... Or would you prefer Deathlok?... You're something of an inspiration to me... I am what I am thanks to your pioneering example... It's a great honor to meet you... and to fight you... I must confess... I haven't had this much fun since I raided Cybertek!... Did you really think that you and John Garret were the only customers of the Deathlok Program?... besides the Centipede Project?... You could do way better than Stark Industries... Seriously... We should talk... But I'm afraid that I really must be going... Chow!...

Mike: Wait!...





Silvermane disappears in a lightening flash, just as Dr. Spectrum shimmers into view behind Mike.

Dr. Spectrum: That's one hell of an exit... Just like Dr. Golem's... and Dr. Rappaccini's... suspiciously similar in fact... You'd better double back... and make sure they don't do the same... I have to go help with MODOC...

Mike: You got it Fitz...

King Odin's escort arrives safely in Emerald City, and makes it's way to Hulk Orchard Park. The Hell Charger and it's motorcycle escort pull into the park, and park next to Gen. Fitz's war shuttle. Robbie steps out and let's Queen Karnilla and King Odin out of the back seat, as they are greeted by an anxious Lord Balder, and a relieved Loki, among others.

Lord Balder: King Odin... You seem well your majesty... I had feared the worse... given Loki's reputation for mischief and deception...

King Odin: I assure you Lord Balder... I am in as good a health as anyone in my condition can be... Better than average in fact... Thanks largely to the efforts of my son Loki... as well as Queen Karnilla and Queen Aelsa...

Queen K: Where are my other grandchildren?... The ones who came over in the shuttle?... Those who were escorting us took off after their father when they heard about MODOC... I suspect it's a common trait of the brood...

Lady Sif: Dammit!... You're right!... They must have slipped away after Stark took off... They did fight as a team in Niflheim... by necessity... But this is not Niflheim...

Queen K: Perhaps now that we are safely here... Master Reyes can feel free to join the



fight... Eh?... Master Reyes?... Are you okay?... Are you still beset by your sense of evil?...

Robbie Reyes: Yeah... But no... I mean... I am... But now it's different... Like it's coming from here... I thought that I sensed something before... but not like this...

Bishop: Is it possible that we brought a stowaway or two back with us from Niflheim?...

Lorelei: For that to be true... it would have to very well hidden... Anything that could hide from us here... is more dangerous than the usual evil of Niflheim...

Robbie Reyes: It's definitely coming from here now... and more intensely... More like pure evil... if there is any such thing... It's more focused... and clear... and undeniable...

Robbie's skull erupts into flames as he transforms into the Ghost Rider.

Ghost Rider: We are beset by a great evil... And this evil must be purged from this place... We are vengeance!... And vengeance will not be denied!...

The Ghost Rider storms off, seemingly in pursuit of his evil prey, followed close behind by Daisy.

Daisy: Robbie!... Wait up!...

Mack: Hold up!... I'm coming too!... Lucas... You come along too... You can be my tour guide...

Bishop: Indeed... I will not tolerate interlopers in my home... Not in Niflheim... And not here...





Daisy, Mack, and Yo Yo follow after the Ghost Rider, along with Bishop and Lorelei.

Mr. Hide: Daisy wait!... That sounds dangerous!... I'm coming with you!...

Daisy: No dad... You stay with Robin... She needs you more...

Mr. Hide: Okay...

Emma Frost: Mara... Come on... We can help out mom... and get to see your dad in action...

Emma and Mara sneak around to follow at a discrete distance.

King Odin: Wait!... I'm coming with you!...

King Odin begins to follow after the Ghost Rider, followed by his attendants, to the obvious concern of all those present.

Lady Sif: King Odin!... We're supposed to be protecting you!...

Loki: There's no point in objecting... Let's just go...

Lord Balder: Indeed...

Queen K: Agreed...

Romanov: Come on Clint... We can't let Thor's daddy get hurt now can we?...

Clint: Maybe... We could always just blame Loki... He'd believe that... Right?...

Romanov: Come on...

Clint: Alright... What about Bruce?...

Romanov: He's sleeping it off... And I don't want to have to talk him into it... I'm just





going to let sleeping Hulks lie for the moment... I'm hoping Yelena is sleeping it off somewhere too... As it is... I don't want her involved unnecessarily...

King T'Challa: Shuri... You should stay here with the Golem Master and Sgt. Barnes... I will take Gen. Okoye and go and help see to this evil... And I want to learn more... about this Ghost Rider... and this city...

Chief M'Baku: I'm coming too... This Ghost Rider seems way more interesting than the Spider Man... with all due respect...

Spider Man: No problem chief... Ned... I gotta go... But you gotta stay...

Ned: It's cool... I feel next to useless without my Mega Golem anyway now... I've been spoiled...

Dir. Mace: Come on Talbot... We can't sit out... whatever this is...

Gen. Talbot: Right there with ya...

Gen. Fitz: Come on Cap. Braddock... Family business...

Cap. Braddock: Yes it is...

Werner VS: We should check it out too... Right Dr. Simmons?...

Dr. Simmons: I'm afraid I have my hands full with patients here... and spider minions elsewhere...

Dr. Laufey: If I were not so pregnant... I might've followed after them... If you wish to see for yourself... Then go ahead... But try not to get lost with some evil supposedly on the loose...

Lorelei: I can help him with that... Acting as a guide to my city is the least I can do... given my failure to secure the city adequately to begin with...



An apparition of Lorelei shimmers into view next to Werner, as she begins walking after the others, closely followed by an eager and excited Werner. The ad hoc assembled posse follows after the spirit of vengeance to investigate, while Jack Frost and Mr. Hide continue to self medicate with the wolf king's secret stash. Dr. Simmons stays with Dr. Laufey, her patients, and Robin, while Dr. Simmons concentrates on remote controlling her spider minions helping out at Stark Industries. Various Shield agents and military troops stream into Emerald City to help secure it, while a matte black shuttle speeds over to Stark Industries to provide unauthorized back up. The shuttle lands as the battle is just heating up in preparation for the Black Queen drill, with the young biker hooligans waiting in the wings, mounted upon matte black quad motorcycles, with matte black harpoon guns mounted on the backs of the quads.

The War Machine continues a barrage of 50 cal matte black bullets from his chain fed matte black gatling gun, now reformed and reloaded, only interrupting his barrage intermittently, for sake of other attacks. The Black Smith waits behind the War Machine for his turn of attack, seated on his matte black motorcycle, with a large matte black version of a medieval knight's jousting spear, held at the ready. The War Machine cuts off his barrage, and the Black Smith begins to speed towards MODOC.

Before the Black Smith gets anywhere near MODOC, the Star God shimmers into view, rollerblading at high speed towards MODOC. Then he slashes MODOC's face with his double edged shark tooth sword, putting a huge bloody gouge in MODOC's cheek. Then he shimmers out of view as he continues to skate past him, as Dr. Spectrum shimmers into view right behind him, skating straight for MODOC's face. Dr. Spectrum stabs MODOC in the eye with his matte black katana, and leaves it behind, still stabbed in his eye, as he also skates past him and shimmers away. The Black Smith then rams his jousting spear into MODOC's back from behind, having circled around at high speed while the others were making their attack, leaving



the jousting spear stuck in MODOC's back, just like Dr. Spectrum had done with his katana. The War Machine renews his barrage, as MODOC reals in pain.

MODOC: Ergh!... Argh!... I will destroy you all!... Exterminate!... Exterminate!...

MODOC unleashes another telekinetic blast, sending the katana and the jousting stick shooting out from their respective stab wounds, with the blast continuing on to destroy the War Macine's gatling gun again. MODOC's eye, cheek, and back begin to rapidly heal and reform to their original uninjured state, before the Iron Man comes crashing down on top of MODOC's head from up above, executing a perfect MODOC maneuver.

Black Smith: Nice MODOC!...

War Machine: Yeah... But I would have preferred to do it myself... But what's the point if he just heals everything?... We can barely penetrate his defenses as it is... But he just heals all the damage we do... We can't make any headway like this!... How's that damn Black Queen drill coming?...

Helga: We're almost ready... But we need an opening!... BT!...

BT: You got it Helga!...

The matte black war shuttle morphs and shape shifts into a matte black tank, as it's cannon turret spins around to take dead aim at MODOC's large head, then fires a large matte black zero matter shell at him.

Star God: Helga?... BT?... What are B & T doing here?...

War Machine: At this point... I'm just glad they're here... Whoever they are...



The zero matter shell hits the side of MODOC's big head, and explodes with zero matter shrapnel. The back of the tank opens up, and the Cuckoos file out, holding hands and wearing thick matte black body armor and helmets.

Star God: The Cuckoos too?... Dammit Helga!... Did you call them here?...

Helga: No... But I did let them know what we were doing... We need them too!...
MODOC's too strong otherwise... And we're a team!... The Buster Brigade of Emerald City!... You made us that way dad!... You can hardly complain now that you need us more than ever!...

Dr. Spectrum: She does have a point...

Star God: Don't encourage her!...

The Cuckoos begin to chant in unison.

Cuckoos: Sleep... MODOC... Be at peace... Dream of silence... Sleep...

MODOC begins to reel again, more from the Cuckoos attack, than the zero matter shell shrapnel.

MODOC: Aaaagghh... Aaaaagghh... What?... What... is... this?... Get... out... of... my... mind... Aaaagghh...

Helga: Now!... Now while he's reeling!...

Spartan: Let's go Buster Brigade!...

Star God: BT!... Guard the Cuckoos!... Everyone else... Get your scalpels ready...





B & T race out of the back of their tank, wearing matte black helmets, and carrying large Roman style rectangular shields, almost larger than B or T, held onto with both arms in front of themselves. They race over and plant themselves in front of the Cuckoos, with their shields together. Dr. Spectrum generates another matte black katana within a flurry of white sparkles in his hands. The Black Smith follows suit, but generates a large matte black double bladed battle ax, formed likewise right into his waiting hands.

The Buster Brigade biker hooligans begin to race and swarm around MODOC, launching their zero matter harpoons at MODOC from all sides as they circle around him, tethered by matte black cables to the harpoon guns on the back of their quads. The harpoons penetrate and hook their prey, as the bikes circle around, and begin to tie up MODOC with their matte black cables. MODOC tries to levitate upwards, only to be pulled down again by the quads and their cables, as the Cuckoos continue their chant.

- Cuckoos: Sleep... MODOC... Be at peace... Dream of silence... Sleep...
- Star God: The black queen drill with the Cuckoos chant is working!... We might actually be able to capture this thing alive!... Should we bother?... I'm game either way... Dissection is gross anyway...
- Dr. Spectrum: Is Grant Ward actually advising mercy?...
- Star God: I'm advocating for pragmatic restraint... Something I like to teach my kids so that they don't follow in my footsteps... But I have to set a good example for that... Either way... I'm fine with it...
- Dr. Spectrum: What about the honor of the Hulk Busters?...
- Star God: That honor is better served by bringing them back alive... if at all possible...
- Dr. Spectrum: Like Uncle Brucy?...





Star God: Exactly like Uncle Brucy...

Helga: You two better hurry up and make up your minds... It's coming time to fish or cut bait here... Are we putting MODOC out for good?... Or just for now?...

Dr. Spectrum: For now then... We can always dissect later...

Just when it looks as if they might capture MODOC alive, from out of the sky lands the Red Hulk, directly on top of MODOC's head, delivering the ultimate MODOC maneuver, to the shock of it's inventor. The impact severs all the cables attached to the back of the quads, causing all of them to spin wildly out of control, and tumble away from MODOC in the center of their Black Queen drill circle.

Black Smith: Holy Crap!... Was that part of the Black Queen drill?... I thought we decided to try and capture it...

Star God: The Thunderbolt seems to have other plans...

Dr. Spectrum: With bloody prejudice!...

Black Smith: Damn!...

The impact of the Thunderbolt puts a considerable bloody dent in the side of MODOC's head, as he continues to pummel MODOC, and bludgeon his potato head into mashed potatoes. As the Red Hulk continues his brutal and bloody execution of MODOC, he begins to emit large amounts of hot red and orange flames, setting fire to MODOC's head. As the punishment continues, the flames rise higher and higher, hotter and hotter, incinerating almost everything they touch, as Star God and the Buster Brigade of Emerald City look on in barely concealed horror. The Thunderbolt ceases his flaming pummeling, and glances over at the Star God, and



raises his hand to his head in salute, startling him, before leaping away east towards Death Valley, and howling as he goes.

Helga: Dad?... We don't have to bust the Thunderbolt... Do we?...

Star God: No Helga... No we don't... At least... I hope not...

The cleanup and investigation begin immediately at Stark Industries, as they absorb all of the new revelations about AIM, and try to figure out what they were really after, and whether or not they got it. The Ghost Rider posse in Emerald City continues to search Emerald City for the near pure evil that supposedly resides there, continuing on at an ever slower and more deliberate pace, as the Ghost Rider's flames slowly intensify, but the Rider remains silent.

Daisy: This is weird... and getting weirder... He's never like this... At least not as long as I have known him... He never slows down when things get more intense... I'm actually starting to worry here...

King Odin: I have seen this before... with vengeance of a more personal nature... More personal to Zarathos himself... Anything of that nature... is more than mere cause for concern... Personal vengeance is not the way of the vengeance spirits... Personal vengeance clouds one's judgment... while making the desire for vengeance that much more intense... What may seem like caution and restraint... is the momentary confusion... of dealing with one's own personal demons... Spirits of vengeance are not immune to this... They are especially vulnerable...

Daisy: The personal demons... of a spirit of vengeance... That doesn't sound good no matter what it is... Come to think of it... He reacted that way to my



mother as well... But I was fighting on the other side at the time... Under the thrall of my evil bitch of a mother... the Black Queen...

King Odin: So you're that Daisy Johnson... I thought you seemed familiar... I believe I've had visions of you... But visions are not always clear or well remembered... I was told about you... But I had not made the connection until now... I have seen a battle... between you and your mother... But I have not yet seen it's end... But I know that you will get your chance... as will Zarathos...

Daisy: Thanks your majesty... Believe it or not... That's the most encouraging thing I've heard in weeks... Although... it seems more like forever... what with that decade we spent in Nova Roma...

King Odin: Is that why you forgot all about our little fundraiser this evening?... The Inhuman outreach benefit?... You and your friend Yo Yo were supposed to be in attendance... to meet and greet any Inhumans who might need help and support... and to fund that support... At least that was how you sold it to me at the time...

Daisy: Holy crap!... That was tonight?... I completely forgot all about that!... I set that all up only a couple of months ago... before everything went crazy and we spent a decade in Niflheim... Damn that evil bitch!...

King Odin: We can always try again... The only reason that I agreed to it... was the fact that I had seen visions of you... that I had no explanation for... I had no real intense concern for the Inhuman issue at the time... But since then I've been doing my homework... as they say here on Midgard... And I've had more visions... I now believe the Inhumans may be the key to victory... I believe that this creation of the Kree... will be their ultimate undoing... But I cannot





say for certain... But we must try again!... And do more besides...

Daisy: You got it your majesty... It's a date... As soon as things stop being crazy long enough to plan the next attempt... But next time... we're not planning it two months in advance... We don't have the luxury of that kind of spare time anymore...

King Odin: Indeed... We're coming to a dead end...

Daisy: That's not a prophecy I hope...

King Odin: No... An observation... Look up ahead...

King Odin pulls out his gold plated twenty sided polyhedron, and it begins to emit bright light, as he holds it up to illuminate the path ahead more clearly, as the Ghost Rider comes to a stop in front of them. In front of the Ghost Rider, the hallway they were hiking through terminates with a large round matte black vault door.

Lady Sif: This looks like one of Ward's time compression vaults... The ones he uses to age his mead in the distillery... But this is no where near the distillery...

A timer alarm begins to sound off, coming from the Vault door.

Lady Sif: It's opening!...

Steam begins to escape from the opening as the door slowly opens. As the steam clears, and the door swings completely open, a seated humanoid figure is revealed within the chamber, with eyes closed. It is the figure of a naked, but anatomically incomplete, manikin like form, with his body divided down the middle, with one side matte black, and the other side porcelain





white. He has white hair, including his eyebrow, on the black side, and black hair with a black eyebrow on the white side. The figure's eyes open, revealing a solid black eyeball on the white side of his body, and a white cataract covered eye on the black side of his body. The figure begins to open it's mouth to speak.

Figure: Greetings and salutations from Niflheim... miscreants and malcontents... abominations of light... I take it we have arrived... I am what's left... of Malekith... the accursed... Pleased to meet you... Especially you... Odin Borson... Seeing you brings back fond memories... like the killing of your precious queen... If only Thor were here... But I suppose you and Loki will just have to do...

King Odin: Traitorous genocidal freak!... I'll destroy you for good this time!... Agghh!...

King Odin physically collapses under the emotional distress, and succumbs to a bout of prophecy under the stress, as he grips his head in his hands and stares off into nothing, seeing things that aren't there. The Ghost Rider begins to tremble with fists clenched, as his flames continue to intensify slightly, as if under the influence of frustrated adrenaline, seemingly paralyzed otherwise.

Loki: Get father out of here!... Now!...

Malekith: Father?... Loki Laufeyson?... Surely you don't care for this abductor of children... You killed your real father... But you supposedly care for this one?... Is the notorious deceiver now self deceiving?... Or perhaps just more deceiving?...





Loki: Lady Sif... Take King Odin and his attendants... along with your mother... and get them out of here now...

Queen K: Come daughter... We must see to the king...

Lady Sif: Yes mother...

Lady Sif and the king's attendants lift up the king and carry him out back the way they came, followed by an obviously concerned Queen Karnilla.

Loki: You talk of things that you know nothing about!... Freak!... I will not be lectured by a genocidal murderer of his own people!...

Malekith: No... Of course you won't... Not a servant of Thanos... Not a leader of an army of Thanos... I'm sure that you are far more of an expert on genocide than I... Or didn't you consider that when you agreed to serve him?...

Loki's agitation grows as Malekith continues to provoke him. Loki glances quickly at Lord Balder, then at the distraught face of the FSB drone of his dead daughter Lorelei, before refocusing back on Malekith.

Loki: How would you even know or care... about the fate of King Laufey?... You wouldn't have known any of that... not about Thanos and the Chitauri either... as it happened while you were in hibernation... waiting for another chance at universal genocide... And I doubt you had much time to catch up on current affairs... while you were busy trying to destroy Asgard the last time around... before Thor finished you off...

Malekith: You're quite right... But the spirits of the damned... love to talk... They love





to go on and on... whining wailing and wallowing... That is the truth of damnation... The punishment is largely self inflicted... for those with either a care or a conscience... For those with neither... It is simply a very enlightening learning experience... And death is only a transient state of being... for those who understand these things... And Niflheim provides nothing if not time to learn... to listen... to spirits like that of your dead daughter Lorelei... She was most forthcoming... when she thought it didn't matter... You should have taught her batter than that... And she was so desperate for comfort and solace... as if she were never loved in her entire life... not even by her own father...

Loki: Silence!... You lie Monster!...

Malekith: Oh?... Do I now?... And how would you know that?... Do you really know your own daughter all that well?... How else do you think I came to have this new FSB body of mine... As well as this...

Malekith waves his hand over his own chest, and a hole opens up, as a translucent twenty sided polyhedron emerges within the void, startling those present. Lorelei closes her eyes tight, as her father Loki watches her reaction intensely, before pulling out his own power prism, and returning his intense gaze back to Malekith.

Loki: Enough of this!... It's long past time to finish you!... If Niflheim can't hold you... we'll just have to find some hell that can...

Malekith: Tough talk... for a failed princeling... makes for a very bad boy... and a very foolish man...





Lord Balder and the others ready themselves for a fight, with Mack transforming into his executioner form, while the Ghost Rider continues to tremble with growing rage and hate, but seemingly without the ability to act on it. Malekith then stands up from his chair within the chamber, and walks over to the Ghost Rider, and stares into his flaming eye sockets. Bishop holds his right hand palm up in front of himself, as it begins to glow, as if readying some strike with one hand, waiting for an opening, while comforting an increasingly distraught Lorelei with his other arm around her.

Malekith: Oh poor Zarathos... So beset by the overwhelming desire for vengeance... that you are paralyzed by your own compulsion... What a foolish spirit you are... to be so easily compromised... by feelings... You're a joke... Why don't you try that penance stare of yours?... Because you know how impotent it is... against those without a conscience... The last time you tried it... it tickled... Now... I won't feel a thing... unless I want to... So much for the mighty Zarathos...

Daisy: Robbie?...

Amara: Get away from him!... Monster!...

Emma and Amara shimmer into view, with Amara already transformed into her magma form. Amara storms after Malekith without thinking, shaking the ground beneath her feet as she does, in a similar manner to her mother, with her head engulfed in flames like her father, but for different reasons in each case.

Daisy: Mara!... Wait!...

Loki: She has the right idea!...



Loki uses his power prism to launch a lightening attack on Malekith's face. But the lightening bounces off some invisible force field, and strikes the walls instead. As Amara gets closer, Malekith unleashes some kind of super chilling wind from his power prism, that douses her flames, causing her to pass out naked on the floor.

Daisy: Mara!...

At the dousing of the daughter of Robbie Reyes, the Ghost Rider is broken free of his own paralysis, and strikes Malekith with a flaming fist that knocks him into the wall. Daisy then steps up and uses her power to hold Malekith against the wall, with a continuous vibratory force field pressure placed against him, pinning him against the wall, as Zarathos closes in.

Malekith: Ha! Ha! Ha!... You're cute... really... This conversation has been fun... But I really must be going... I'm late... for a very important date... with Ragnorak...

Right before the Ghost Rider could land another blow, Malekith disappears from his position being held against the wall, with a flash of lightening that strikes and travels through the FSB walls of the hallway, past them into the city at large, then out into the wider world of Midgard. The Ghost Rider's flames are doused, with the exit of Malekith, then Robbie kneels down to place his hand upon Amara's doused head.

Loki: Dammit!... Of all the monsters to ever escape from Niflheim... It just had to be mother's killer... Is she okay?...





Loki takes the matte black cloak from off of his own shoulders, and places it over the unconscious and naked Amara.

Daisy: She will be... I think... I should have guessed that she'd have the same temperament as her mommy and daddy... What about you?... Are you going to be okay?... Or her?...

Daisy says this as she motions in the direction of the Lorelei FSB drone, with it's head in it's hands.

Loki: I don't know... I hope so... I just can't imagine how I'm ever going to explain this to Thor... I don't even know how to make sense of this to myself... Lorelei... we have to have ourselves a little family chat...

Lorelei lifts her head out of her hands and looks at her father.

Lorelei: I... I... I can't!...

Then she puts her head back in her hands, before she buries them in Bishop's chest.

Loki: Perhaps later then... Lord Balder... We should check on the king... and give my daughter time to gather her thoughts...

Lord Balder: Agreed... for now...

Loki: Perhaps when Thor gets here... he should send me to Niflheim... I certainly



deserve it more than anyone else who's been there recently... who hasn't already escaped...

While the mess is cleaned up and investigated by Dr. Spectrum, Iron Man, and Company at Stark Industries, Star God and his wild bunch brood of biker hooligans make their back to Emerald City, somewhat reeling from shock at the vulgar display of power by the Thunderbolt, unaware of the revelations that await them at home. The Ghost Rider Posse does it's best to gather their senses and absorb the revelations themselves, as they look after King Odin, still in the thrall of a bout of prophecy. Lorelei wanders off alone with Bishop, still distraught over the reveal of the consequences of her own past, coming back to haunt her.

Along the high wall surrounding the city, looking out over the city lights at night, the winged horses of the Valkyrie settle into their new homes along the wall. New troughs for water and feeding are formed out of the FSB colonized material of the wall, sparkling green and everything, with a new roof placed over the top of the wall to provide shade during the day. A drunken Yelena chats up Brunhilde and the other Valkyrie about the winged horses, while Ned, Shuri, and their escort Sgt. Barnes join them out of their own curiosity. Princess Meghan shimmers into view next to them.

Meghan: Wow... Winged horses are pretty... Except for the eyes... Their freaky scary looking... Why are they blind?... How do they see where they're going?...

Brunhilde: The winged horses of the Valkyrie... are made by magic... They cannot be allowed to see normally... because appearances within the maze of Niflheim... are what make it a nearly inescapable maze to begin with... They must see by other means... and they are enchanted and trained to do so...

Meghan: The wings are pretty though... I made wings once... But I still couldn't fly...



Flying is hard...

Brunhilde: The flying of our horses... is as much a feature of their magic... as their wings...

Yelena: Can anyone ride these horses?... I've never rode a horse... flying or otherwise...

Brunhilde: It requires special skill and training... Because the Valkyrie themselves have to do some of the seeing for them... And we must be resistant to the effects of the maze for that...

Yelena: Never mind Niflheim... I just want to ride around the city...

Brunhilde: I could take you for a ride if you wish... if that's all you desire...

Yelena: Cool...

Ned: Uhm... Brunhilde?... Mam?... I don't mean to criticize... But... The Ghost Rider's head just flamed up and he started chasing after some great evil or whatever... Everybody who could do so then followed after him to deal with it... We couldn't go... But... shouldn't you guys be helping out?... or something?...

Brunhilde: The Valkyrie do not chase after spirits of vengeance young mortal...
Vengeance is not the way of the Valkyrie... The Valkyrie must be above passions such as vengeance... If we cannot be detached... and remain calm... then we cannot serve... not within the maze of Niflheim... That is why berzerkers cannot be Valkyrie... Or at least... that was what was believed up till now... The revelations of this city... and how it was brought here... and by whom most of all... leave us with much to consider... and to reconsider... What of your escort?... Sgt. Barnes is it?...

Sgt. Barnes: Sgt. Barnes... is doing just that... escort duty... essentially an imperial



bodyguard... Which beats some of the alternatives... In terms of what I'm trained for...

Yelena: Alternatives?... I like that... I think I'll use that... Alternative diplomacy... with prejudice...

Brunhilde: Alternative diplomacy?...

Sgt. Barnes: She means assassination... Bodyguarding is more difficult... But is still preferable to alternative diplomacy... And I have enough mental baggage to deal with...

Yelena: Wait... Did my sister go with them too?... Without me?... again?...

Ned: Uh... You mean... the Black Widow?... Yeah... She went with them too...

Yelena: I am going to have to have a serious talk with that woman... just as soon as the earth stops spinning... Is this city still floating?... I could swear the ground was moving beneath my feet...

Elsewhere within Emerald City, Lady Sif and Lady Amora lead King Odin's attendants along with Odin himself and Queen Karnilla, into a secluded room for privacy and security, along with Lord Balder and Loki, as well as King T'Challa, Dir. Mace, and Gen. Talbot. Gen. Fitz and Cap. Braddock attend as well, in order to keep an eye on the family business. Loki stares at his father with a near despondent look on his face, as his daughter Lady Amora stares at him with growing concern for his mental state.

Loki: This all my fault... No matter how you look at it... this is all my fault... It was I who shocked father in to succumbing to prophecy... And while I was covering for him... it was I who ordered Lady Sif to bring Lorelei back alive... I couldn't trust her on the loose... And someone would have gone





after her for revenge eventually... I thought I was protecting her... And I effectively killed her... and sent her into the waiting arms... of my mother's killer... Even that... was my fault... In one careless spiteful moment... while I was self indulgently wallowing in self pity... for being a failed princeling... I gave a few words of advice to the wrong monster... that led directly to mother's death... As angry as I am at Lorelei... as angry as I want to be... There is no one to blame for this all... but me... For the first time in my life... I think Thor might actually kill me this time... And I wouldn't blame him...

Lady Sif: Get a hold of yourself Loki... Wallowing in the past this way does not serve any purpose here now...

Lord Balder: Agreed... And I would have been one of those pursuing Lorelei for vengeance... if my own daughter had not beaten me to it under your orders... I thought King Odin was being too merciful at the time... But now I know why... You did what you could for her...

Queen K: And you have done what you could for your father and Asgard ever since...

Loki: That would be easier to accept... if the last thing that I had said to my mother... wasn't to denounce her as such... And if the last thing that I did for my daughter... wasn't to send her back to the dungeons to die in child birth... for a grandchild that I don't deserve...

Lady Sif: I am just as much to blame for my sister's death as you are Loki...

Loki: You were just following my orders...

Lady Sif: That is no excuse that I make anymore... Ward lectured us all endlessly about the history of the Nuremberg Trials... 'following orders is no excuse'... a lesson from Midgard... That man carries way more guilt than you Loki...



and he overcompensates for it with his own children... But even he refuses to wallow in it to this extent...

King Odin: Agreed!... Enough of this!... I have heard enough... of this wallowing... You are as much to blame for your mother's death... as the Asgardian weather on the day that she died...

King Odin opens his eyes, and sits up from the mattress upon which he was resting.

King Odin: I have visions of the past... as well as the future... I saw that little scene in the dungeon... I know all about it... And I'm not impressed with your supposed guilt... You helped Thor defeat the Dark Elves... You did not help Malekith kill your mother... And as far as Lorelei was concerned... I only spared her life to begin with... for your sake... and at your mother's insistence... And not without controversy at the time... Your daughter earned her death... and her damnation... And whatever we may make of her spirit now... She has already paid for it... So... No more wallowing... And no more blame or guilt... Not while Malekith in any form... is loose upon Midgard... or anywhere else besides a hell that can keep him...

Loki: Yes father...

King Odin: I have seen visions of this new form of Malekith's... But I did not recognize him as such... I might as well be to blame for not providing adequate warning... But now I know what that thing was... And I can tell you for certain... he will be involved in this war... We have not seen the last of him... And he is in league with the Black Queen... And from what I have seen of the past... he always has been... It was Malekith... in league with





the Black Queen... and using a book of infinite evil... known only as the Darkhold... provided to him by the Black Queen... that created the wolfkin to begin with... And it was the coordination between them during the attack of the Dark Elves 5000 years ago... that allowed the Black Queen to lure the wolkin to Midgard during the great convergence... and curse them with the Darkhold... so as to render them powerless and vulnerable to her... to be enslaved as hell hounds from the very beginning... This is all a very long game by the Black Queen... So no more wallowing and pouting over the fruits of an evil tree... that was planted long before any of us were born...

Loki: You saw all of that?... in the vision that you just had?...

King Odin: No... I saw it before... But I had no means of completely understanding it before now... Prophecy does not interpret or explain itself... It is one of the most frustrating aspects my current condition... The vision that I just had... was about your mother... your birth mother...

Loki: My birth mother?... How do you even know who my birth mother was?...

King Odin: I didn't know... until now... I figured by your appearance that you were some sort of hybrid when I found you... But I had no knowledge of how that came about... until now... I saw it all... I still don't know her name... But I know that she was a beautiful and caring woman... She was an acolyte of Nornheim... and a powerful seer among them... She had a vision of peace with Yoteneheim... by an heir of King Laufey's and herself... So she took it upon herself... without permission or even warning... to travel to Yoteneheim... and surrender herself to King Laufey... for whatever he may desire... A condition he gladly accepted... She died in childbirth... without help or care by the Yotens... And you were abandoned to die shortly after





that... But this young man... the one with the blue skin and the long black hair... that looks just like you... I have seen him before too... And I have seen him on the throne of Yotenheim... Who is he?...

Loki: He is allegedly my son... the son that I only just learned about... that I had with the Black Queen... while she was going by another name... Lady Gallio...

King Odin: Lady Gallio?... was the Black Queen Selene?... So he's part Inhuman?...

Loki: Yes father... and very powerful... I must still confirm the truth of it... But based on what you've said... there is no more doubt in my mind... But I don't see how that necessarily leads to peace... even if he does sit on the throne... Yotenheim barely even has a throne at the moment thanks to me... Ever since I killed King Laufey... Yotenheim has been in complete chaos... and not in a fun way... The only consolation being that they're more of a danger to themselves than Asgard or anyone else... But much of the wolfkin uprising seems to be organized within Yotenheim... essentially using the chaos as cover...

King Odin: Then it looks like you've got your work cut out for you... Doesn't it son?...

Loki: Yes father... It certainly does...

King Odin: You should also know... that I have seen Thanos... with the Black Queen and this new form of Malekith's... This is all connected... and most likely always has been... Try not to be so hard on your daughter Loki... I believe that she still has much to confess... and much to reveal that even the enemy doesn't realize she knows...

Loki: Malekith went on about how Lorelei would reveal so many things when she didn't think it mattered... I suspect that she may have learned a great deal



from Malekith... when he didn't think it mattered... And I plan on making him pay for that mistake...

Out of a starry night sky, the Red Hulk comes crashing down onto the desert floor of Death Valley, creating a small crater where he lands. He stands there for a moment waiting. A lightening flash erupts out of the ground and surrounding cacti, and forms four human figures. Dr. Rappaccini, Whitney Frost, and Betsy Braddock, along with the proper killing machine, Silvio 'Silvermane' Manfredi.

Red Hulk: Well?... How'd I do?... Or more to the point... how'd we do?...

Dr. Rappaccini: We did great... for the most part... We got what we were after... But Uncle Silvio ended up showing his face... I think he was enjoying himself a little bit too much... The Deathlok cyborg was there... Mike Peterson... He got a little carried away... But I don't think it matters that much... If they connect Uncle Silvio to AIM... that just moves up our plans a bit...

Red Hulk: Why is it again... that we even needed the Extremis cure?...

Dr. Rappaccini: For control...

Whitney Frost: AIM giveth... and AIM taketh away...

Dr. Rappaccini: Precisely... With this... we can begin to expand again... This cure that Tony Stark developed for his girlfriend Pepper Pots... Can be easily modified for any variation of Extremis that we have now... or will make in the future...

Red Hulk: Any Extremis?... Even my Gamma Extremis?... What if I don't want a cure anymore?...

Dr. Rappaccini: No one wants to give you the cure Thunderbolt... It's clear that you've come to enjoy your newfound power... And grand mama would never forgive me



anyway...

Whitney Frost: You're damn right I wouldn't...

Red Hulk: What about the others?... They're awfully shy all of a sudden... Was it something I bled?...

The Thunderbolt chuckles at his own stupid joke, as another lightening strike erupts from the ground and the surrounding cacti, forming two large monstrous figures. The first figure is the hulking matte black Dr. Golem. While the second figure is the now apparently undead MODOC, seemingly in a bad mood for being undead.

MODOC: Did you enjoy yourself grandfather?... You're gratuitous display against my puppet clone may have cost us even more than Uncle Silvio showing his face... With all due respect... Silvermane here is a known criminal... You were no doubt considered a hero... until a few minutes ago... You could have played the victim... But now you can't go back there without facing all kinds of unfortunate questions...

Red Hulk: You're right... about all of that... But it doesn't matter... Even if no one here wants to cure me... the same can't be said for Dr. Simmons... She was chatting me up before she left for Emerald City... talking up an experimental cure for Gamma Extremis that she's working on... She said she got the basics from Stark... Great minds think alike I guess... I can't go back there anyway... no matter what... You were also right about two other things... You did free me from my prison of politics... And you did make me as much a part of science as you are... But you also did something else that I'm not sure if even you realize just yet... You made the dream of the Hulk Busters





not only possible... but practical... if not politically appealing... The politics are not completely deniable by any of us... not until we can free the world from it...

Whitney Frost: Easier said than done my love...

Dr. Rappaccini: Uncle Silvio tells me that you were still upset with me when he made contact... Are you still angry with me?... about that misdirect at Stark Industries?... You incinerated first and asked questions later!... I was just trying to survive what appeared to be a bad experiment gone wrong... In the heat of the moment I concocted a lie to survive... But what I didn't realize... is the lie was simply an unconscious fantasy... of what I wanted to be true... what I needed to be true... I promised my angel Gabriel an empire of science for our children... But I need AIM for that... And AIM needs a Scientist Supreme... there was no scientist supreme at the time... there never was... But there should be... And you need to be it...

MODOC: Me?... You actually want me to be Scientist Supreme mother?...

Dr. Rappaccini: Yes... But not because you are worthy of it yet... But because you need to do it... and grow into it... to become worthy of it... As powerfully intelligent as you clearly are... you are still effectively a child... But because of your intelligence... your rate of maturation has been astounding... Children need burdens to mature under the weight of... Like the burden of leadership... A heavier burden to be sure... But one meant for those of higher capacity to bear it... What happened during your creation was unfortunate... But I did it survive... Which is often as much a part of science as anything else... But what I did to you... Dr. Tarlton... had nothing to do with science... That was pure weakness... and cowardice... Are you really still in there... Dr.





Tarlton?... I heard your conversation with Fitz... Are you really happy?... as you are now?... How much of you is still in there really?...

Dr. Golem: I am... content... I never would have been able... to do to myself... what you did to me... I consider it to be... an accidental experiment... From which I have already benefited... Do not feel bad for me... Dr. Rappaccini... Feel ashamed for the experiment that you have neglected to properly monitor...

Dr. Rappaccini: You are quite right... But the nature of your experiment has become more something that MODOC would be appropriate to handle...

MODOC: Me mother?...

Dr. Rappaccini: Your superior capacity for raw calculation makes you better suited to the nature of that experiment... You however are still largely biological in nature... And your upgrade to Gamma Extremis puts you firmly within the realm of my expertise... As life sciences and genetic engineering are more within that realm of expertise... And while you will take on the burden of being Scientist Supreme... I will take on the burden of guiding your maturation process... You must learn to rely upon your strengths... to compensate for your weaknesses... And so I have homework for you... Primarily... your superior calculation ability is your greatest strength... Probability... game theory... as well as chaos theory... are all areas in which you will excel and be able to compensate for your relative immaturity... But you must also study up on areas that are pertinent to your own personal nature... Quantum Mechanics also benefits from your superior calculation capacity... and is a key discipline necessary to understand the nature of the FSB technology that helped make you what you are now... My area of expertise may be among your weakest areas... So you must study this as



much as possible and practical to overcompensate... With an obvious emphasis on genetic engineering calculation and simulation...

MODOC: A prudent plan of development... Is that all you want to do for yourself?...
To be my doctor?...

Whitney Frost: Not completely no... The FSBs represent a hypothetical bridge between science and magic... partly based upon my own work... Monica and I are going to be focusing on fleshing out that aspect of the work before us... But we must also build an organization... an empire of science as my granddaughter says... My son Silvio has a great deal of experience with that sort of thing... as does the Thunderbolt here...

MODOC: And who are you again?... Are you suppose to be a vampire?... Are you an experiment too?...

Betsy Braddock: An accidental one perhaps... on both counts... I am only Revanche... I am here for Revanche... And to acquire the power of science... for Revanche...

MODOC: Oh... Kay... Revanche...

Red Hulk: Well... Scientist Supreme... Are we going to stay here in the desert all night?... It is a nice evening... But we have to get going... just about anywhere not associated with any of us... at least as far as anything Shield or the others would know about... We need to get scarce... as well as get organized... and we need a secret place to do both... seized or built... And I don't like being shrunk... I don't trust those synthetic Pym particles...

Dr. Rappaccini: According to Dr. Laufey... Emerald City is what is left of Nova Roma... after she colonized it with her FSBs... We could do something similar... and quite literally go under ground...

Red Hulk: I know a bunch of places like that... But Shield knows what I know... Or



must be assumed to...

Dr. Rappaccini: We don't need to steal one... We can make one from scratch... just about anywhere we want... But it will take time... But fortunately... I dropped off a little surprise in Emerald City just in case I needed to keep them busy as cover for my escape... as well as the Johnson Building and the Dunbar Hotel... I can set it off now... And they'll never catch us... But they will be on alert then... No going back for any of us... ever again...

Red Hulk: I'm already all in...

Betsy Braddock: I am here for Revanche... I care for nothing else...

Whitney Frost: I could... But I have no interest... Almost all of the interesting people are going on the run... And I'm not abandoning Big Red...

MODOC: Mother... Set it off... AIM's empire of science begins now!... So declares the Scientist Supreme!...

Dr. Rappaccini: Yes sir... Scientist Supreme...

Dr. Golem: Your supremacy shall be obeyed...

A human form Grant Ward rides a matte black motorcycle, and leads a procession of his own children back to Emerald City, with a bitter taste in their mouths, after experiencing a tainted victory over MODOC, delivered in brutally murderous fashion by the Thunderbolt, former leader of the Hulk Busters. They cross the emerald sparkly causeway and pull into the city where they are greeted with a concerned Lady Sif, who grows more concerned with all the defeated looks, from a Buster Brigade returning home in supposed triumph.

Lady Sif: Is everything alright?... I thought you were victorious?... If I did not know any better... I would think you were mourning this MODOC creature...



- Grant Ward: Not MODOC... But why are you so concerned then if you thought we were victorious?... What happened here while we were gone?...
- Lady Sif: I asked you first...
- Grant Ward: Now Sif... The matter at Stark Industries is well in hand... And we're in Emerald City now... I need to know if there's something here that I need to deal with... So spill...
- Lady Sif: The situation here is also well in hand now... But you should know that we discovered that we had a stowaway from Niflheim while you were gone... Malekith... the accursed...
- Grant Ward: Malekith!?!... the leader of the Dark Elves!?!... It makes sense that he would be in Niflheim... But we never came across him... Did we?...
- Lady Sif: Not that we know of... But Lorelei did apparently... long before we got there... And she shared information with him...
- Grant Ward: Oh... I don't like where this is going... Is she okay?...
- Lady Sif: She is quite distraught... And she isn't talking to or seeing anyone... save for Bishop at the moment... And I suspect she may not even be talking to Bishop just yet...
- Grant Ward: Well... if she's with Bishop... then maybe we should leave it alone for now... Give her time to sort things a little... What about Malekith?... Was he stopped?... Or did he get away?...
- Lady Sif: He got away... escaping into Midgard... effortlessly... as if we were nothing but a joke for him to laugh at as he went on his merry way... But in the process... he managed to provoke King Odin into a bout of prophecy... Which has led to other revelations... But I'm not getting into any of that until you tell me what happened with MODOC that has you all snatching





defeatism from the jaws of victory!....

- Helga: We had him mom!... We were prepared to exterminate with extreme prejudice ourselves if necessary... There was talk of dissection and everything... But we had him!... The Black Queen drill with the Cuckoos chant was working!... And just when we had decided to try capture the freak alive... Bang!... The Thunderbolt happened!...
- Grant Ward: The Thunderbolt brutally murdered someone effectively already in our custody... in front of my kids!... After all the things I've said about him and the Hulk Busters... for the honor of the Hulk Busters... I can't believe that I ever said that now...
- Spartan: The honor of the Hulk busters... isn't about any one Hulk Buster... It's about the work... not the worker...
- Helga: You're damn straight Spartan!... We're the Hulk Busters now dad!... And if necessary... we'll bust the Thunderbolt too!... And if so... so much for the Thunderbolt!... for the honor of the Hulk Busters and everything!...
- Spartan: Exactly!... And our honor is intact!... We did it right!... It was the Thunderbolt that went wrong!...
- Lady Sif: Agreed!... And you know when the three of us can manage to agree on anything...
- Grant Ward: Surrender all hope ye who enter this argument... Okay... Okay... I surrender... for the honor of the Hulk Busters... Speaking of which... I have to talk to Gen. Talbot and Dir. Mace... even more so Gen. Talbot... I have no idea how he's going to react to this... or if he'll even believe it... How long ago did Lorelei wonder off?...
- Lady Sif: Several minutes ago...



Grant Ward: She probably needs more time... But we may not have more time... It may be sexist to say but... I suspect that she needs some girl talk right now... more than Bishop talk...

Helga: You're right dad... On both counts... It is both sexist and true... It's time for some girl talk with aunty Lorelei... Right Ilsa?... Don't worry... You can be the strong silent one...

Lady Sif: I'll see if I can grab our other sister to assist... You too Cuckoos...

Grant Ward: Good... The boys could use Uncle Bishop's help assisting the Shield agents searching and securing the city... Alright boys listen up!... We had a stowaway from Niflheim cause some trouble while we were gone... I want every inch of this city searched and secured against any other possible hidden rooms compartments or portals of any kind... Shield doesn't know this city... we do... But we still let one slip by... We can't afford to let that happen again... I have to talk to Gen. Talbot and the others... for the honor of the Hulk Busters!...

Ward Brood: For the honor of the Hulk Busters!...

Just then, as if on cue, the sparkly green emerald appearance of Emerald City changes suddenly, as if shifting modes of operation, changing to a more multicolored and pulsating pattern of illumination, startling everyone present in Emerald City. The same change occurs simultaneously in both the Johnson Building and the Dunbar Hotel, both structures previously colonized by FSBs. FSB constructed statues of mushrooms, of various sizes and shapes, form out of the FSB colonized structures in all three locations, all with the same sparkly multicolored pulsation. The sky over Los Angeles begins to darken, as the stars and the moon





appear to darken before disappearing entirely, appearing like an impenetrable matte black cloud cover.

The lights and electricity of the city begin to go out little by little at first, and then black out entirely, leaving the city completely engulfed in darkness save for the sparkly multicolored pulsations of FSBs. The sparkly multicolored pulsation intensifies, as the cloud cover begins to match and reflect the ongoing pulsation, until that pulsation is the only light anywhere, and completely covers all of Los Angeles in the same pulsating light. People all over Los Angeles, and all throughout Emerald City, begin to collapse into a deep sleep, and fall to ground where they stand, all fast asleep and dreaming.

Politics Are Poison!
Poison That Never Ends!
Battles Of Shadows And Mist!
That Forever Never End!