

"FOR ONE MORE HOUR, FOR ONE MORE DAY"

Chapter 3

Author: **NeroDart**
Author's Email: pantellisapantoniou@btinternet.com
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Jarvis stood at the door...

"A Dr. Banner and Wife would like to speak to you all. I believe he is asking to be readmitted... He says he would prefer it if you could contact members of the Defenders as well"

Iron Man who had been talking with Wonderman on the uses of Ionic energy rose suddenly. He looked around....

Jarvis added:

"He told me to tell you he isn't going to 'get angry' if you refuse"

The two looked at the other members of the team. Thor rose grimly looking round. Then nodded. Every one else then did. Wanda then went off, to get on to Dr. Strange and the Defenders.

"Show him in, Jarvis, and her"

Banner and Betty walked in, still in the executive suits that the Ringmaster had managed to get for them.... "When you are that much in need you ask no questions...." and sat down. The She-Hulk hurried in with two chairs... And placed them down...

"Bruce... Does this mean..."

"Of course not Jen. That's still some way off. But it's safe for now. And that's part of it. I have... We have, a respite. Look...."

He turned to look at the Avengers. Banner looked... Tired. Beaten. A man who had seen more hell than most men in history. And pained that he was dragging people who he loved into his hell with him...

"I have a respite. For now, and for some time, the Hulk is under my control. But that will, eventually end. It always does. I'm going to try to lengthen that but... I'm not all that's involved. There's Betty as well... And our future. I've given..."

He sank back on the chair, guilt tearing at him...

"I've given Betty hell. And all that have known me. NO MORE! She needs peace. She deserves it. I'll be your remand prisoner, your one under probation anything. What it takes. The Avengers and Defenders are the only groups that can give us that, without deciding that the only way to help me is to kill me"

Thor spoke then:

"Friend Banner, tis not so long before when thee, deprived of thy mind did wreak most deadly havock on this town...."

"I KNOW that. I also know Betty deserves more than to be tied to a man who is a walking bulls eye... Look, I'll be the Hulk, in his form I'll lick Iron Man's boots, I'll walk on a collar and lead, I'll kiss Jarvis butt, I'll fall down before Spider-Man and beg him not to hurt my feelings with his nasty wisecracks! I'll do anything! Anything! Just give us a chance!"

The She-Hulk nodded; "Better make sure not no one talks about that-some people may demand you do JUST THAT!"

"I'll do it. If I have to, I'll do it. Please... All we need is some... Time. I'm not asking to rejoin... Unless you feel you a can trust me. Please. All I need is a place for me and Betty to be just Bruce and Betty... How we should have been, so long ago. To be an Avenger again could ensure that... But I'll take anything, ANYTHING else on offer if it will give me that"

A misty light appeared in the room... That grew... And grew, became blinding then... Dr. Strange wafting his cape walked over... He had, while being outside normal space heard his plea... And pondered...

"I am willing. I have spaces in my sanctum I've never really used. They could be an apartment..."

Iron Man stood up...

"I say the Hulk is an Avenger. He's with us"

Wonderman spoke slowly:

"I'd like to agree but..."

Banner spoke; "Suppose I allow a photo opportunity?"

The She-Hulk looked at Simon;

"Please! Let him try! Give him... Give them a chance! Just once?"

TO BE CONTINUED.....