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#28

“OUT OF TIME – PART ONE”

Written by Dino Pollard

Deep beneath Stark Solutions sits the private workshop of Tony Stark. It is here that Stark works at developing and improving the technology that drives the Iron Man armor. As he works on repairing damage done to the armor by AIM’s latest attack, he wonders who could be pulling the strings.

“Any luck?”

The voice comes from Jim Rhodes. Formerly a superhero in his own right, first as Iron Man and later as War Machine. He’s since retired from both those positions.

“In what?” asks Tony. “Repairing the armor or figuring out who’s behind this?”

“How does both sound?” asks Rhodey with a smile.

“Repairs are fine,” replies Tony. “AIM’s weapons didn’t cause too much damage.”

“And the mastermind...?” asks Rhodey.

“That I’m no closer to figuring out,” replies Tony.

“In that case, I guess you’ve ruled out AIM.”

“It doesn’t add up,” says Tony. “Why would AIM work with the Scarecrow of all people? He’s too unpredictable. And that said, how is the Scarecrow even here? I thought he died.”

“Tone, how many times have you died?” asks Rhodey.

“None, actually,” replies Tony. “I’m an imposter Rhodey, remember? Maybe if I was the real Stark, I could figure this out. But being just a shadow of him... who knows?”

“Don’t turn this into a self-pity thing,” says Rhodey. “Doesn’t matter how you came here, you’re Tony Stark, understand?”

“I remember three different lives, Rhodey—three different pasts,” says Tony. “But as time goes on, they fade away more and more... as if they’re only dreams.”

“So what’s your solution?” asks Rhodey. “Give up? Hope that whoever’s behind this will just go away? No Tony Stark I know would do that, and I don’t care what universe you came from.”

“You’re right,” replies Tony. “Jocasta.”

On a computer screen, the image of a robotic woman with a white face and black markings on it appears.

<<Yes Tony?>>

“I want you to gather all the information you can on Ebenezer Laughton,” says Tony.

<<The Scarecrow?>>

“Yes,” replies Tony. He stands and walks over to a closed, metal door with a sensor by its side. He places his hand on the sensor. The scanner scans his hand and the pad turns green as the locks disengage and the door slides open.

“Have the information ready for me as soon as I get back,” he says. Inside the small chamber is the familiar red and gold armor, which has become a household name across the world.

“And where are you going?” asks Rhodey.

“We already know AIM is responsible for the break-in, the question is why,” replies Tony as he begins to don the components of the armor. “Their last known base of operations was in a factory in Canada. It seems as good a place as any to start looking for some sort of connection.”

Tony slides on the helmet and looks up as the air tunnel opens. A cybernetic command activates the thrusters in his boots, sending him flying out from Stark Solutions.

Rumiko Fujikawa. Granddaughter of Kenjiro Fujikawa and heiress to Stark-Fujikawa. Also, she is presently involved with Tony Stark. A relationship which bears the possibility of putting her between a rock and a hard place.

"Rumiko..."

She turns her head at the sound of her name.

“Who’s there?”

“Rumiko, it’s me, let me in.”

“Tony?” she asks. “Tony, is that you?”

She pulls the drapes away from her balcony door and sees the red and gold form of Iron Man standing there. She slides open the door and allows him to come inside.

“You scared me for a minute there,” she says. “The armor’s different, isn’t it?”

“You... might say that,” says Iron Man. He removes his helmet and Rumiko jumps back slightly.

“You’re not Tony...” she says. “Who are you?”

“Call me Arno,” he says.

“What’s this all about?” asks Rumiko.

“I’m sorry, Rumiko,” he says. He gently takes her hand in his own and lifts it. He kisses the hand lightly.

“Let go of me...” says Rumiko.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that,” he says. He closes his grip on her hand, careful not to harm her. Rumiko tries to pull away, but the attempt is futile. Arno lifts his free hand and moves it behind her neck. At the base of her skull, he leaves a small, disc-shaped object and Rumiko stops protesting. “There we are now,” he says. “Isn’t that better?”

“Yes...” says Rumiko. “Much better...”

“Good,” says Arno. He leans in and places his lips against Rumiko’s.

Canada

Iron Man’s boot thrusters deactivate as he touches down outside the factory which once housed AIM. He activates his sensors, scanning the immediate area for any hostiles. The sensors pick up nothing.

Iron Man steps towards the factory’s entrance. He points his open palm at the door and fires off a repulsor blast which kicks it open. Slowly, he steps inside and continues to survey.

“Jo, you read me?”

<<Loud and clear, Tony.>>

"The factory looks abandoned, scanners aren't picking anything up, either," says Iron Man. "No sight of MODOK, the Scarecrow, or even a single AIM agent. Were you able to get the information I requested on the Scarecrow?"

<<Yes, I have it here.>>

"Good, let's hear what you have to say."

<<Like you said, he's dead.>>

"Which means we're either dealing with an imposter or he somehow came back to life," says Iron Man. "But please tell me you have something beyond that."

<<Unfortunately not.>>

"Isn't that great..." mutters Iron Man.

<<You do have an incoming call, however.>>

"From who?" asks Iron Man.

<<Ms. Fujikawa.>>

"Rumiko?" asks Iron Man. "Okay, put her through."

<<"Tony?">>

"Hey Ru, something you need?"

<<"I... I want to see you.">>

"Now's not really a good time, Ru."

<<"Tony... please? It's important.">>

"Okay, where are you?"

<<"My apartment.">>

"I'll be there as soon as I can," says Iron Man.

<<"Good... I'm looking forward to it.">>

The line goes dead after that.

"Jo, I want you to search through all the databases we have access to, locate any mention of AIM," says Iron Man. "Attacks, known bases of operation... anything. Basically, if it's connected to AIM in some fashion, I want to know about it."

<<I'll get right on it, Tony.>>

"Thanks, I appreciate it," says Iron Man. "By the way, did Rumiko sound a little... off to you?"

<<Off? I'm not sure what you mean.>>

"I dunno, there was just something odd about the way she spoke," says Iron Man. "You mean you didn't notice?"

<<Not particularly.>>

"Maybe I'm just overanalyzing then," says Iron Man. "Keep me posted on whatever information you find, okay?"

<<Of course.>>

Iron Man's boot jets lower him down to Rumiko Fujikawa's balcony. He places his hand on the glass door and gently slides it open. As soon as he steps inside the apartment, he disengages the encryption code on his helmet, and the locks for it to disengage. He removes it from his head and looks around.

"Ru?" he asks.

"In here," comes the reply.

Tony follows the sound of the voice, stepping inside the bedroom. Rumiko sits in the bed, the sheets covering her.

"Take it off," she says. "The armor."

"Ru, I thought this was serious," says Tony. "Look... as much as I would love to stay, I have work to do. I'm trying to figure out who was behind the attack on Stark Solutions."

"This is important," says Rumiko. "Tony, I need you. Please. Don't toy with me."

"I'm not, but now's not the time or the place," says Tony. "Ru really, I have to go. What's gotten into you?"

"I suppose you could say I have."

The closet doors open, and Arno Stark, the Iron Man of 2020, steps out in full armor. Tony immediately grits his teeth in rage once he sees the sight of his future nephew and pieces together the reason for his presence in Rumiko's bedroom.

"Rumiko, darling," says Arno. Tony looks over to Rumiko, who reaches beneath the covers and pulls out a gun.

"Ru..." says Tony. "Put the gun down."

"Aim for the head, Rumiko," says Arno. "Once Tony is out of the way, we can be together. And that's what you want, isn't it?"

"Yes..." says Rumiko. She takes aim with the gun and fires. Tony quickly brings his hand up and blocks the bullet with his armor. Tony makes the small leap across the room towards Rumiko and pulls the gun from her hand. He holds her body down and notices the small, disc-shaped object at the base of her skull. He pulls it free and faces Arno.

"You..." he says. "You're behind this."

"Tony...?" asks Rumiko. She looks around, and then says, "what's going on?"

"Come on, uncle," says Arno. "Grab your helmet. Come after me. I need a challenge. Killing different Tony Starks throughout the multiverse with no effort has worked up my appetite for a good fight."

Arno fires off his thrusters and crashes through the wall of Rumiko's bedroom. He flies off into the night sky, and Tony quickly grabs his helmet. He slides it on and the locks engage. The computer display begins flashing start-up information into his retina.

"Tony?" asks Rumiko.

"Get dressed and get to Stark Solutions," says Tony. He hands her the mind control device. "Rhodey's there right now, tell him everything you know and have him examine this."

"What are you doing?" asks Rumiko.

"I'm going after him," replies Tony. "He's going to pay for what he's done..."

Iron Man engages his thrusters and flies into the distance.

"Jocasta, can you get a lock on Arno's armor?" asks Tony.

<<I'm trying my best, but the technology of his armor is far more advanced than the technology we have access to.>>

"I know, advanced by almost twenty years..." mutters Tony. "Scrap the hunt for AIM, Arno's the one behind this, I'm sure of it."

<<Tony, behind you!>>

Tony doesn't have a chance to react as Arno slams into him at full-force. Tony begins to fall from the sky, but quickly recovers and engages his thrusters. The armor flashes a targeting speck into Tony's retina, and he tries to get a lock on Arno. Once the armor's CPU locks onto the target, Tony allows the armor to take over and unleash a barrage of repulsor blasts. A few of them hit their mark, but Arno recovers quickly by activating an energy shield. The shield protects him from the majority of the damage, and the shield reforms into a blade of some sort. Arno slashes at Tony, sparks fly as the energy blade finds its mark. Tony pulls back and runs a quick diagnostic on his armor to ensure that no vital components have been destroyed.

<<Tony, you have to pull back! You can't face him on your own! Let me call in the Avengers or...>>

"Not gonna happen, Jo," says Tony.

<<But Tony...>>

"I don't need the Avengers to take out this piece of shit!" exclaims Tony. "I can handle this just fine on my own!"

"Rumiko was also quite good at handling things on her own," says Arno.

<<Tony no, he's baiting you!>>

"And it's working..." mutters Tony. He fires off a unibeam, striking Arno directly in the chest.

<<Tony you're being irrational, let me call for help!>>

"No!" exclaims Tony. "I'm not afraid of him, I can handle this on my own!"

<<Who said anything about being afraid...?>>

"Enough!" exclaims Tony. He rockets towards Arno and slams into him. Arno clutches him and smiles beneath his helmet. Tony's eyes grow wide as the onboard computer begins flashing warnings into his retina, informing him that the power reserves are depleting. And then he realizes that Arno is absorbing his armor's energy.

Arno shoves Tony away from him, and the original Iron Man begins to tumble in freefall. Arno rockets below and catches him. Tony looks at him with curiosity, and Arno opens his palm in front of Tony's face.

"Goodbye, Tony," says Arno.

And then everything goes black.



#30

"OUT OF TIME – PART THREE"

Written by Dino Pollard

Stark Solutions

An electronic door slides open and Happy Hogan enters the private laboratory of Tony Stark. He sees Rhodey sitting off to the side watching as Tony Stark and a man with short, blonde hair work on Tony's Iron Man armor. Happy takes a seat next to Rhodey and looks over at him.

"How's it going?" he asks.

"They've been at it for awhile," replies Rhodey. "I couldn't even begin to understand what they're doing. I mean, I know what they're doing, I just don't understand how I guess."

"When you've got a brain like Tony's and friends like Hank Pym, I'm guessin' that kinda makes the impossible possible, huh?" asks Happy. Rhodey nods.

"How's Rumiko?" asks Rhodey.

"She's with Pep, I think," replies Happy.

"Has she spoken to Tony yet?" asks Rhodey.

"No, not yet," replies Happy. "Knowin' Tony, he probably blames himself for what Arno did."

"I'm sure he does," says Rhodey. "At least this will end all the crap we've been through recently."

"Assumin' this works," says Happy.

"I still don't like this," says Rhodey. "Going after Arno in the timestream... that's playing with fire."

"Yeah, but Tony's got a point," says Happy. "If Arno can come and go in it as he pleases, what's to stop him from coming back?"

"I know," says Rhodey. "I understand it, but I don't like it."

"Gotta admit, I was a bit surprised that you wanted to put the armor back on," says Happy.

"It had nothing to do with want," says Rhodey. "I hate that damned armor, always will. But after everything Tony's done for me, I had to pay him back."

Several floors above the laboratory is the Stark Solutions cafeteria. Pepper Potts looks across the table at Rumiko Fujikawa, who has her attention focused on the Greek salad sitting before her. Pepper tries to think of something to say, instead she takes a bite of her sandwich.

The silence seems to last forever, and Pepper looks up at the clock on the wall and watches as the second hand ticks away. She wonders how things are going below, and she wonders how close Tony is to getting ready to head into the timestream... if he hasn't already left, that is.

"Listen... Rumiko..." she begins.

"Pepper, I appreciate what you're trying to do," says Rumiko. "But stop."

"Are you sure you don't want to talk about it?" asks Pepper.

"Yes," replies Rumiko. "I'm positive."

"Have you spoken to Tony since he got back?" asks Pepper. Rumiko shakes her head. "Why?"

"He's been busy," replies Rumiko. "I don't want to interfere with his work, he has a job to do."

"I don't think you'd be interfering," says Pepper. "I'm not sure if you've noticed or not, but Tony's crazy about you."

"...he said that?" asks Rumiko.

"If there's one person on this planet I know like the back of my hand, it's Tony Stark," replies Pepper. "He didn't have to say it, I can tell by the way he looks at you that he's got it bad. I can't remember the last time I've seen him like this."

"Thank you," says Rumiko.

"For what?" asks Pepper.

"For telling me what he refuses to," replies Rumiko.

"It's not that he refuses to..." says Pepper. "He's just... Tony can be a bit reserved sometimes. It can be difficult for him to open up, especially after everything he's been through in his life."

"I suppose," says Rumiko. "By the way, how are you and Happy?"

"...what?" asks Pepper.

"I saw the way you and Rhodey were looking at each other earlier, I got the impression there was some tension," replies Rumiko.

"No... I think you were mistaken," says Pepper. "Rhodey and I... no, of course not. At least..."

"At least what?"

"Nothing, it's not important," says Pepper. "Come on, why don't we see how Tony's doing?"

Tony raises his hands to his face and slides his safety goggles onto his forehead. His associate, and former teammate in the Avengers, Hank Pym, does the same.

"That should do it," says Hank. "You should be able to travel through the timestream at will now as long as you're wearing the armor."

"And we've got a way to track Arno?" asks Tony.

"Yeah, we can lock onto his own trail," replies Hank.

"Good," says Tony. "I want to thank you for coming down here, Hank. I know you're retired, but I didn't feel like contacting SHIELD unless it was absolutely necessary and I haven't been able to get in touch with Reed."

"Anytime, Tony," says Hank. "As long as you're not asking me to change size or pull on spandex."

"No, I understand those days are in the past for you," says Tony. He stands and turns to face his friends. Jim Rhodes, Happy Hogan, Pepper Potts, and Rumiko Fujikawa, all standing in wait.

"You have it all set up?" asks Rhodey.

"Yeah," replies Tony.

"What exactly are you doing?" asks Pepper.

"Tony and I took Stane's temporal technology and incorporated it into his armor systems," replies Hank. "With it on, he should be able to get a lock on Arno's signal and follow him into the timestream."

"And if the armor sustains too much damage?" asks Rhodey.

"Then Tony will become trapped in the timestream," replies Hank.

"What?" asks Rumiko.

"It's a risk I have to take," replies Tony. "With Arno having full access to the timestream, who knows how much damage he can cause?"

"So you're going in there when your armor is inferior to Arno's," says Rhodey.

"I'll have a better shot this time around," says Tony. "Last time, the Scarecrow's toxins were affecting my judgement. Now that's no longer a concern."

"You're sure they're not affecting you?" asks Happy.

"I ran a full scan on Tony as soon as I got here, that's one of the reasons he asked me to come," replies Hank. "He's clean."

"So it's time to get to work," says Tony. He begins sliding on the different components of his armor, while the others watch on.

"We'll be able to monitor you from here," says Hank. "Since the suit is connected to the temporal unit here, we can keep tabs on you through it. No matter what, you'll be able to be in constant contact with Jocasta."

"That's a relief," says Pepper.

"Everything's going to be fine," says Tony. He picks up the helmet and slides it on his head. The armor locks the helmet into place and he lowers the faceplate. It locks shut as well. "We ready, Dr. Pym?"

Hank takes a seat at a control panel and slides the goggles down over his eyes.

"Ready and willing, Mr. Stark," he says. "The rest of you, put on some goggles or turn away and close your eyes."

Rumiko, Happy, Rhodey, and Pepper all turn locate safety goggles and put them on to shield their eyes. Hank watches them and once he is satisfied, he turns his attention to the control panel and begins to enter commands on the keyboards.

"Jocasta?" he asks.

<<I am here, Dr. Pym.>>

"Good, you linked into Tony's armor?"

<<Yes.>>

"We're ready to go when you are, Hank," says Tony. He steps onto the small platform and it begins to glow brightly. The temporal harness he wears over his armor begins to glow as well. The light builds and builds in intensity and brightness, flooding the entire room. Slowly, little by little, the light dims. When the light clears from the room, Tony Stark is no longer standing on the platform.

"Did it work?" asks Rumiko.

"Let's find out," replies Hank. "Tony, do you read me?"

"Tony, do you read me?"

"Loud and clear, Pym," replies Tony.

"Where are you?"

"Not in Kansas, I'll tell you that much," replies Tony.

He takes stock of his surroundings. He finds himself in the middle of a forest, or perhaps a jungle. He recognizes his surroundings, and he has a feeling he knows exactly where he is. He slowly moves forward through the jungle, his sensors scanning at full capacity.

"Jo, do we have a lock on Arno?"

<<His signal is very strong, Tony. He must be nearby.>>

"Looks like I was right, Hank," says Tony. "I'm *definitely* not in Kansas anymore."

"Where are you?"

"Vietnam," replies Tony.

His memories flash back to this period of his life. He came to Vietnam years ago to tour one of his Asian plants. He was injured, a piece of shrapnel lodged near his heart, and captured by a guerilla fighter named Wong Chu. Wong Chu wanted Tony to design and build weapons for him. With the help of another of Wong Chu's prisoner, Tony built the

first Iron Man armor and used it to keep his heart beating as well as to escape. It was the birth of Iron Man.

Tony slowly treks through the jungle, following the signal's strength. He pushes aside the brush and he sees a body lying stiff on the ground. He approaches slowly, and before he leaves the brush, he recognizes the man as himself, albeit younger. His sensors pick up others in the vicinity, and Tony looks for them. He sees Wong Chu and his men, weapons aimed at another young man.

"Arno..." mutters Tony.

"If you wish to keep your life, you will design and build weapons for me," says Wong Chu. "Do we understand each other, Mr. Stark?"

"We do," says Arno.

A small object falls between Arno and Wong Chu. Wong Chu bends down to investigate it, and a cloud of smoke emits from it, obscuring the visuals of the area. Arno steps back slowly, but a low-level repulsor blast strikes him in his shoulder.

"I think you've done enough damage so far," says Tony as he steps through the smoke.

"Well, look who decided to join the party," says Arno. He smiles and his image seems to begin to dissipate. Tony watches in shock. As Arno seems to vanish into thin air, the Iron Man of 2020 stands there instead.

"An illusion..." says Tony.

"What is the meaning of this?!" demands Wong Chu. He turns to his men and points at the Iron Men. "Kill them both!"

The men raise their guns and open fire on the two Iron Men. Tony draws their fire, combating them with carefully-placed repulsor blasts to their rifles, knocking them from the hands of the soldiers. Tony turns to Wong Chu and fires another blast at him, knocking him back.

"That's for Ho Yinsen," says Tony, remembering the man who helped him build the first Iron Man suit. He turns and sees Arno beginning to vanish from sight.

"Nice seeing you again, Tony," says Arno. "But I really must be going now. I have places to go and Tony Starks to kill."

"No!" exclaims Tony. He activates his boot thrusters and charges towards Arno. He finds he is too late, and charges into the empty space Arno once occupied.

"Damn!" he exclaims. "Jo, Hank, lock onto his signal!"

<<He is still drifting, Tony, it's difficult to get a lock.>>

"Do you have anything solid?" asks Tony.

"Looks like I do," replies Hank. "Hold on, Tony, I'm transferring now."

Stark Solutions

"What exactly is Arno trying to do?" asks Rumiko. "What did he mean when he said he has to kill Tonys?"

"He's traversing the timestream and different realities," replies Hank. "In each one he goes to, he locates Tony, kills him, and then replaces him."

"What could he gain from that, though?" asks Rhodey.

"I honestly haven't a clue," replies Hank. "Every time Arno kills one of these Tony Starks, all he does is create a divergent timeline, yet another alternate reality. It's impossible to change the future, every time a person travels through time, all they succeed in doing is creating a divergent timeline."

"Then why would he keep doing this?" asks Pepper.

"Because of Tony," replies Happy. "The guy's got a grudge against the boss, and he works it out by killing Tony as many times as he can."

Somewhere in time

Space appears to distort and bend to make way for the introduction of Tony Stark into the area. As soon as he sets foot in this new era, he immediately begins scanning.

"I'm trying to lock on his signal, but I'm picking up others..." says Tony. His scanners detect something approaching on the horizon. A massive, purple hand knocks down a decrepit building, and Tony looks up to find himself facing a Sentinel. The Sentinel looks down at him.

{{ Unauthorized marvel detected. Terminate. }}

"Sorry, not today," says Tony. He activates his thrusters and avoids an energy blast from the Sentinel. Tony counters with a repulsor blast of his own, but it barely seems to slow the Sentinel down. Tony kicks his thrusters into high gear and dodges around the Sentinel's blasts.

"What now, Arno's sending me to post-apocalyptic futures?" asks Tony.

"I thought you might enjoy it here, Tony."

"Arno? But how?"

"Don't look so surprised, I found a way to tap into your frequency," replies Arno. "It probably won't hold up once I go back into the timestream, though. Too bad you won't be following me."

"What do you have to gain from this time, Arno?" asks Tony. "Sentinel technology?"

"No, but this will be your new home," replies Arno. "Think about it, Tony—a world where giant robots roam the Earth. It's like paradise for you. Maybe if you're nice to them, they'll let you work as a mechanic or ask you to design weapons for them."

Tony increases his speed, flying from the Sentinel, but then suddenly changes direction and heads back towards it. He raises his arms up and begins charging up his repulsor armament.

"Jo, divert as much power as possible to the forcefield and repulsors," he says.

Jocasta remains silent, but performs his request. An orange aura surrounds the armor and Tony fires off the built-up repulsor blast right before he flies through the Sentinel's head. He emerges on the other side and watches as the Sentinel tumbles to the ground.

"I've got a lock on you now, Arno," says Tony. "And if you leave me without destroying this harness, you know I can just keep following you."

"What can I say?" asks Arno. "When you're right, you're right."

"Drop the cloak, Arno," says Tony. "I know you're here."

Like an invisible battering ram, Arno strikes into Tony and slowly becomes visible while Tony reels from the attack. Arno grips Tony by the neck and slams his fist against Tony's helmet, striking it with a loud resounding CLANG.

"You just don't know when to quit, do you?" asks Arno. "Don't you realize that I'm stronger, faster, and more powerful than you?"

"You're right," replies Tony. He reaches his hands out and grabs hold of Arno's harness. "But I'm still smarter. Jo, transmit now!"

"What?" asks Arno. Before he can blink, time and space warp around Arno Stark and when reality takes hold again, he finds himself standing on the ground somewhere. "Where are we?"

Tony tears the harness from Arno.

"You're about to witness the birth of the atomic age," says Tony. "You should be honored."

Arno charges forward just as Tony vanishes from time. He glances around and sees Japanese people gathering around him in surprise. They gasp and look in the air. Arno looks up as well just in time to see a bomb falling from a plane overhead...

Stark Solutions

Tony drops the destroyed harness he tore from Arno on the ground. He tears his own harness off and drops it down beside it before removing his helmet.

"Happy, see that the temporal unit and these harnesses are destroyed," he says. "We can't have them hanging around."

"Yeah, sure thing, boss," says Happy.

"Where did you leave Arno?" asks Rhodey.

"Somewhere he won't be able to cause trouble," replies Tony, as he begins removing his armor. "Hiroshima."

"What?" asks Pepper. "Tony, you didn't..."

"I don't want to hear it, Pep," replies Tony, avoiding the looks from his friends. He turns from them all and walks out of the laboratory. "I just... don't want to hear it."

Night falls over New York and Tony finds himself overlooking the city from the roof of Stark Solutions. He takes a sip from his drink and hears the sound of a door opening and closing behind him.

"I hope that's not what I think it is."

"It's a Coke, Rhodey," says Tony. "And it's a Coke without Jack Daniels or Captain Morgan."

"Good," says Rhodey. "After the recent events, I was worried about you."

"That's nice to know," says Tony.

"You feel up to talking about what happened?" asks Rhodey.

"No."

"Didn't think so," says Rhodey.

"I just feel bad about what I said to Cap and that girl he watches over," says Tony.

"Telling him that we weren't real, we were just creations of Franklin Richards' imagination."

"You mean you're not?" asks Rhodey.

"The Scarecrow's fear toxins," replies Tony. "Stane told me their purpose was to make me doubt my place in this world. It makes sense that they made me think I wasn't the real Tony Stark."

"At least now you know you are," says Rhodey.

"The one and only," says Tony.

"So what now?" asks Rhodey. Tony looks at him and smiles coyly.

"Rhodey my friend, you won't believe what I plan to do next."
