

"Loki was in my head. How did you get him out?"

"I hit you really hard."

"Thanks." Barton looked afraid. "How many agents did I kill?"

"Don't think about it."

"Did Loki get away?"

"Yes. Where is he? Do you know?"

"No. I didn't ask." Barton stood up. "But he's going to use the Tesseract today. He's ready."

"We have to stop him."

"I'd like to put an arrow in his eye," Barton said. "But why are you in this fight, Natasha?"

"I'm an Avenger now. I want to do some good."

"I don't like working for Fury," Stark told Rogers. "He and Loki aren't very different."

"No," Rogers said. "But we have to forget that and do this job. Let's think. Loki has to have energy for the Tesseract."

"Yes, and he wants people to see him win. He wants a building with his name on it ..." Stark stopped and thought. "Banner was right! The Stark Building!" He ran out of the room.

Rogers found Natasha. "We have to go," he said. "Can you fly one of the small planes?"

"I can," Barton said.

Rogers looked at him, then at Natasha.

"It's O.K.," she said. "Barton's with us now."

The Avengers walked to a plane.

Fury saw the plane leave. "I think they're going to Loki," he told Agent Hill. "We have to see this. Turn on cameras everywhere."

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Selvig placed his machines on top of the Stark Building. The Tesseract was ready. He watched and waited.

"Turn that off!" Iron Man shouted from above him.

"I can't!" Selvig said. "Nobody can stop it now."

Iron Man tried to attack it. Selvig fell, but the power of the Tesseract was greater than Iron Man's.

Loki watched and laughed. "The new portal is open," he said. "The Chitauri fighters are coming and nothing will change that. What do I have to be afraid of?"

Stark took off his armor. "The Avengers," he said. Loki looked at him. "That's our name. Earth's greatest fighters ..."

Loki laughed again. "I met them," he said.

"We're getting better at the job," Stark said. "But think about it. Your brother's with us. Also a very, very angry and dangerous man. We're all angry with you."

Loki smiled. "That was the plan. And the Chitauri are with me."

"We have Hulk. You can't win this. But maybe the Chitauri are stronger and more powerful than us. Maybe we *can't* protect the Earth. Then we'll *avenge* it."

"First your Avengers will have to fight *you* because you'll be *mine*," Loki said, and he touched Stark with his scepter.

Nothing happened. Stark laughed, and the two men began to fight. Loki was stronger, but Stark radioed for his armor.

Before the armor arrived, Loki pushed Stark through the glass window. It was a long way down, and people in the street looked up, afraid. But when Stark was almost at the ground, his armor flew out through the window, down, and around him.

Iron Man suddenly flew up again, into the sky.

"You made another person angry, too," he shouted at Loki. "This is for Phil Coulson."

He shot at Loki and Loki fell.

