

**(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)**

**A/N: Finding the third option.**

**-x-X-x-**

“... I don't want it.”

The truth slips out from between his lips as a sigh. He really doesn't want this... to become a god. To become 'above' it all. Sure, he's already so far beyond mortal it's not even funny. Even before finding out he was always destined to be an External, Thaddeus had been on track to become ever-lasting purely through his mutation alone. He would continue to grow, continue to get stronger, and almost certainly wasn't going to age normally by any stretch of the imagination.

And yet, he could tell this would be much more than that. Letting this happen, letting this power finish settling into his bones and the very essence of his being, would result in Thaddeus becoming *more* in every sense of the word.

That wasn't necessarily a good thing. He wouldn't be able to relate to everyone anymore. The only person who could even hope to stand with him would be Emma and only because she was hosting the Phoenix. Thaddeus didn't want that. He didn't want their connection to be predicated on her continuing to control one of the universe's fundamental cosmic forces.

... Unfortunately, he wasn't seeing much of a choice in the matter. Because the other side of the coin was just as objectionable. If he let the power go, if he forcefully expelled it all from his body before it could 'ascend' him... then Thaddeus knew instinctively that it would bring the other Externals back. Eventually they would be reconstituted, alive once more, their immortality only delayed rather than permanently halted.

And that... that wasn't something Thaddeus wanted either. He didn't want the likes of Selene or Apocalypse to return with a literal vengeance. He didn't want to have to worry about them coming back and making a mess of things. Even if

he could make them back off, they would still probably do damage to others, robbing innocent lives in the midst of their machinations.

And hell, while the other Externals like Saul might not be as bad, that didn't mean they were *better*. Saul himself had told Thaddeus that the group had effectively been sparring over the fate of the world for ages. If Thaddeus refused to accept this power, if he refused to become the 'god' he was apparently supposed to be... he wasn't just stepping back from 'ascension'... he was releasing all that evil back into the world, akin to a living Pandora's Box.

Emma's hand on his cheek presses in, applying a pressure that forces Thaddeus out of his spiraling thoughts and focuses him back on her. The beautiful blue-eyed blonde stares at him with a slight smile, having heard every thought, listening to every concern he has.

"You're right to worry, Thaddeus. This isn't the sort of thing where the answer is easy. Both options are... poor in quality."

She's not wrong about that. They're basically stuck between a rock and a hard place. Damned if they do, damned if they don't. One option will ruin his life and change the nature of every relationship he has for the rest of time by making him some sort of unapproachable god. The other option promises to ruin countless other innocent lives when the Externals all come back from the dead and start running amok again.

The lesser of two evils is probably just to ascend. He might not trust himself completely with absolute power, but he trusts himself a lot more than he trusts the likes of Apocalypse or Selene.

And yet... he hesitates... and Emma's smile grows.

"Let's find a third way, shall we?"

Hope swells in Thaddeus' chest as he looks at her.

"A third way?"

Emma shrugs, all but admitting that she doesn't have an idea right off the top of her head... but at the same time...

“Why not? What's the point of all the power we already do have... if we can't come up with a solution to this sort of thing?”

... She was right. So what if they were stuck between a rock and a hard place? Break the rock. Shatter the hard place. Make a new path. Find a third option. Thaddeus breathes slowly out at that and gives Emma a nod, even as he turns his attention to the power trying to forcibly ascend him... and tells it 'no'.

Of course, it doesn't want to take 'no' for an answer. He'd have to expel it by force if he truly wanted to stop things... but expelling it would just bring back the other Externals. Instead though, with Emma's help, Thaddeus reaches out... and grabs hold of all of that power.

It's a lot, to be fair. Selene had been falling apart before she finally attacked them, and Thaddeus can understand why. For all her agelessness, for all her experience and magic... she simply didn't have the capacity for this much power.

He did, technically. But not forever... just a lot longer than Selene could hope to hold onto it. So long as Emma was assisting him, he could quarantine the power of the other Externals, keeping himself from fully ascending to godhood.

“A stop gap measure... we still need a solution.”

Emma hums and nods.

“Perhaps we have one. What if... we could control the rebirth of your kin, Thaddeus?”

He blinks at that, able to pick up the meaning from Emma's thoughts. They bring an incredulous, but also slightly awed look to his eyes as he stares down at the woman he loves most in this universe.

“You want to make them my actual kin. You want to make them... my *children*?”

Emma shrugs.

“It’s a thought, isn’t it? You are quite the prolific lover, Thaddeus. You’ve already impregnated a fair few women at this point. Natasha would perhaps be the first... we give a bit of power to the baby she has growing in her womb just to start.”

And slowly but surely, they would siphon off the power of the Externals that he was holding within him. Actually...

“If we do it right, they won’t be reborn at all... we can make an entirely new set of Externals.”

Emma smiles at that.

“Perhaps, though I won’t get our hopes up on that front. We still might have to contend with a bratty Selene as our daughter.”

Oh god. The very thought of it sends a shiver of horror down Thaddeus’ spine, making Emma laugh and shake her head.

“Do not fret. I’m sure we can still raise her... and the rest of them, better than they were originally raised. We can make them good people, better than they ever were before.”

He won’t pretend like the idea doesn’t have some appeal to it. Even if it has its own pitfalls and flaws, it’s a whole lot better than either of the other options, he decides. Letting the Externals come back as they were would be bad for the world... while keeping the power and becoming a god would be bad for *him*.

This was the middle ground. The compromise. Funny, usually compromises were hated by both sides... but Thaddeus finds himself grinning quite happily as

he seizes upon Emma, pulling her in close and kissing her soundly on the lips. Between kisses, he showers her with praise.

“You’re amazing, Emma. Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Emma just giggles and kisses him back. Things begin to get a little amorous between them, hands starting to wander. They really shouldn’t, of course. They have clean up back on Earth. Except...

“Mm... we can spend hours here and only seconds will pass back on Earth, no?”

At Emma’s words, Thaddeus slowly nods. Limbo was nice like that. The demons made it not so nice, but at least where time was concerned, Earth might as well be in stasis for them for the next day or so.

With a wry smirk, Emma looks off into the distance, past all the destruction that he and Selene caused to where Illyana’s palace still lies.

“Shall we then?”

In the end... Thaddeus could never say no to her. They move to the palace, specifically to the master bedroom, and by the time they reach the bed, both of them are undressed. Thaddeus lays Emma on her back and looms over her, neither of them interested in anything particularly fancy.

Rather, in that moment... they just need each other. Thaddeus’ cock slides into Emma’s cunt with little fanfare, finding her wet enough for him to push deeply in even as she’s tight enough to grip down and squeeze the life half out of him.

Groaning, he falls upon her breasts a moment later, her back already arched to offer them up to him as sacrifice. As he begins to fuck her, Thaddeus lavishes attention on Emma’s breasts, his mouth sucking down hard on one nipple and then the other, his teeth nibbling at her teat.

In turn, Emma cries out, clamping down on his cock even harder and running her hands along his bulging, muscular back. Her fingernails rake across his flesh in a pleasant sensation as they begin to fuck.

PLAP! PLAP! PLAP!

The sound of flesh slapping against flesh fills the air, mixing with wanton moans and muffled grunts and groans. They go at it like a pair of wild animals... primal in their ferocious love for one another, bestial in the way they show it to each other. In that moment, everything else doesn't matter. All that matters is Emma... and him.

Thaddeus loses himself in Emma's body, her perfect form. He feels every inch of her, not just with his hands and mouth, but with his mind. In turn, she's touching every bit of him at the same time, their shared telekinesis and mental connection only adding to the overwhelming sensations between them.

They just... work. That's the secret sauce. Selene had ranted on and on about how they should have just stayed in their lanes, how he was only ever supposed to be a meal and Emma was only ever supposed to be the 'chef'.

Well fuck that noise. They were more than some seventeen thousand year old witch's latest pawns. They were more than a pair of puppets in someone else's master plan. Selene had officially bitten off more than she could chew by setting Emma onto him... she'd made a pair of powerhouses who even she couldn't hope to contend with.

With Selene dealt with, Thaddeus could finally stop worrying about surviving and finally look to actually living. Though... he wasn't sure how much longer he'd actually be staying in University. And playing college football? Somehow, it just didn't really feel that important to him anymore.

The Hellfire Club on the other hand... well, maybe it was time for a consolidation and a revamp into something else. Out with the old, in with the new. Together, they could turn the organization into something truly special. Something that, while not necessarily heroic, also wouldn't be directly villainous anymore either.

Thaddeus didn't consider himself a hero, even now. And he knew Emma didn't consider herself one either. No matter what some people, like Rachel, or Jennifer, or Gwen might want from them... they just weren't interested in that sort of thing.

And that was okay, Thaddeus decides. It was okay not to be a big damn hero. They'd protect their people of course... and that would include the Earth whenever the threat became big enough. But beyond that... it simply wasn't necessary.

Enjoying Emma's body to his heart's content though, now THAT is very necessary. As Thaddeus fucks the beautiful blonde through orgasm after orgasm, pounding away into her pussy as they go at it for what feels like hours, he well and truly loses himself in her. And she loses herself in him.

Limbo is the perfect place to celebrate their victory, really, because it allows them to fuck each other senseless, spend some time recovering, fuck each other senseless again, and then get cleaned up and ready to return to Earth with barely a handful of seconds having passed.

Eventually though, they do finish up and reach that final step. As much as Thaddeus is reluctant to return... he knows they have to. To set things right, if nothing else.

And so, cleaned up and dressed once more, hand in hand, Thaddeus looks to Emma and Emma looks to him. The blonde smiles, her eyes twinkling as she runs a hand down her front... as if to remind him of the numerous loads he just dropped inside of her womb. Thaddeus flushes a bit at that, knowing the likelihood that she'll be pregnant soon is quite high... after all, at some point in all of their celebrating, they'd decided together that they were actually trying for a baby.

After Natasha, Emma might just be the next who found herself eventually giving birth to a brand new baby External in about nine months from now...

For now though, it was time to face the music. And so Emma and Thaddeus drop out of Limbo and back into the middle of New York City, appearing in the air above Emma's carved apart high rise as it teeters and prepares to fall.

Before it can fully collapse, Emma reaches out and stops it. Meanwhile, Thaddeus reaches out and begins to warp reality itself with their shared power. It's a testament to how much they've both grown even in the time since Thaddeus, Wanda, and Rogue all brought back Wanda's brother... because Thaddeus is able to resurrection the handful of civilians who died in Selene's opening rampage with only Emma's help now.

Together, they put things right. Together, they wipe away any trace that an unstable Selene Gallio was ever even there. By the time they're finished, the entire area looks as good as new... just in time for the arrival of a certain man in a metal suit.

"Alright, look you guys, I love the power couple thing you have going on, don't get me wrong... but what the actual fuck is going on?"

Looking at each other for a moment and then back to Iron Man, Thaddeus and Emma both smile, with the latter doing the talking.

"I'm not quite sure what you mean, Iron Man. Everything seems to be perfectly fine now, no? Though I would say... if there had been a situation, it's been resolved. Everyone can go home now."

The flying Avenger gazes around at everything they've fixed for a long moment... and for perhaps the first time in his life, decides discretion is the better part of valor.

"... Alright then. Just try and keep the noise complaints to a minimum going forward, yeah?"

Thaddeus laughs at the thought of everything that just happened being compared to some rowdy party and Iron Man being a cop called in over a 'disturbance'. Chuckling ruefully, he shakes his head.

“I’m sure we’ll be able to keep things quiet, ‘Officer’.”

“See that you do.”

Slipping in the last word, Iron Man flies away. Thaddeus and Emma watch him go for a moment before smiling at one another.

Everything... was going to be just fine.

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**A/N: I’ve decided the next chapter will probably be the final chapter. I just don’t have it in me to write even 4-5 chapters of epilogue for this story, probably because I let this one drag on a bit too long for my tastes.**

**That said, consider this your opportunity to say what you want to see in next week’s final chapter and I’ll take all suggestions under consideration.**

**Also the replacement for this fic will be a new Marvel story, which I got an idea for from the Patreon Discord and think people should like a lot, hopefully.**

**Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!**