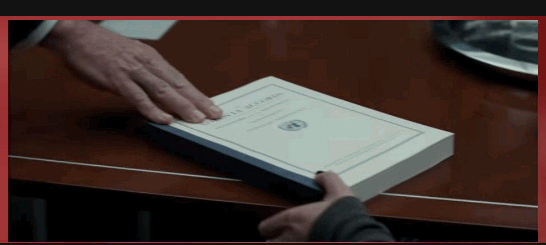

1.3

Scottie smiled so ly at Wanda as the girl entered the room with Steve and Vision. Quickly moving across the room, she took the red-head's face in between her hands as she placed a so but passionate kiss to her lips before pulling back. Wanda leaned her head into Scottie's palm, placing her own over it for a second to hold it there before Sam coughed to alert them to Thaddeus Ross' presence about to enter the room.

Scottie moved away from Wanda with a reassuring squeeze of the hand before moving to take her place at the table beside Steve. Tony was sitting on her other side, casting her the occasional glance to make sure that she didn't have any discomfort from her healing arm. While she usually healed quite quickly from her own burns, the explosion had seemingly revealed to them all that it was simply only her own that she would heal quickly from.

General Ross stood at the top of the table, his beady eyes flicking between them all with his harder glares especially reserved for Scottie and Wanda. Scottie had never gotten along with the man when she had met him in passing - and he had been one of those who had called for her to be imprisoned when she had first discovered her powers and accidentally killed her parents.

Since then, she had pretty much tried her hardest to just stay out of the mans way. Until now that was. The man was staring her down with a grimace on his lips as he watched her stare right back at him. Tony and Steve both shared a look with each other a er witnessing the staring match, not sure if this was something that was going to come back and attack them.

"Five years ago, I had a heart attack. I dropped right in the middle of my backswing. Turned out it was the best round of my life, because a er 13 hours of surgery and a triple bypass... I found something 40 years in the Army had never taught me: Perspective. The world owes the Avengers an unpayable debt," Ross said, his eyes flickering to Scottie as he let the word Avengers fall from his lips. It was no secret that he did not believe she had earned her place on the team. "You have fought for us, protected us, risked your lives... but while a great many people see you as heroes, there are some... who would prefer the word "vigilantes"."

Natasha fake smiled at the man as she crossed her arms over, titling her head as she studied the man. "And what word would you use, Mr. Secretary?"

Scottie stifled a smile as she saw the question irk the man, a small snarl falling on his lips as he continued to pace in front of the team. Scottie could feel the anger coming from the general as he worked himself up again.

"How about "dangerous"? What would you call a group of US-based, enhanced individuals who routinely ignore sovereign borders and inflict their will wherever they choose and who, frankly, seem unconcerned about what they leave behind?" He asked, turning around and pressing a button on the table to activate the screen that was placed behind him.

Scottie sunk slightly into her chair as she watched the footage of past Avengers missions and the occasional SHIELD battle flash across the screen. Footage of Loki wrecking havoc across New York was the first to appear on the screen, footage of Hulk smashing into buildings and taking down Chitauri leviathans.

"New York," he narrated, ending the clips of New York on a final clip of a very much younger Scottie screaming as she shot sunlight from her palms. The girl sunk even lower into her chair as she flinched from the footage. Natasha shot her a look of sympathy, knowing that Scottie hated watching any footage of her powers in the slightest.

"Washington DC."

Scottie looked back up as the scene changed to footage of the Insight helicarriers crashing down from the sky, massive waves of water engulfing citizens and buildings as it ripped apart the area. The burning triskelion caused Sam to look down just like Scottie had previously.

"Sokovia."

Scottie felt an anger burn inside her as she noticed the way Wanda turned to look at the screen. The Sokovia citizens were running through the street screaming, the buildings were crumpling around the team as they ran and Scottie couldn't help but turn her eyes to look at Wanda as the girl stared at the screen with a lump in her throat.

"Lagos."

This was the last incident that Ross planned on showing them, and just as well. Scottie felt her hands heat up from the way her teammates were reacting. There was no need for Ross to force them all to sit and watch this - except from him to watch them all su er. The footage zoomed up on paramedics moving a dead girl's body and Scottie felt the heat around her rise slightly.

Steve and Tony both noticed the air temperature change around them, with Steve also catching on to Wanda flinching from the scenes that they were being forced to sit through. Tony and Steve shot each other another look before Steve turned to look back at the General in front of them all.

"Okay. That's enough."

Ross nodded as the images disappeared, almost looking smug at himself as he looked at the shocked faces on the team. He noticed the slight burn on the arm of the plastic chair that Scottie was sitting on, eyeing up the melted plastic with a sort of conviction to his claims.

"For the past four years, you've operated with unlimited power and nosupervision. That's an arrangement the governments of the world can no longer tolerate. But I think we have a solution," the man told them all, dropping a thick document on the table with a bang and shoving it in the direction of Wanda.

Scottie eyed up the thick book as she tried to make out the writing on the front. Wanda took one look at the book before passing it along to Rhodey for the man to have a look instead. He was the much more diplomatic member of the team and Wanda wasn't particularly wanting to start reading that book in the middle of this meeting.

"The Sokovia Accords. Approved by 117 countries... it states that the Avengers shall no longer be a private organization. Instead, they'll operate under the supervision of a United Nations panel, only when and if that panel deems it necessary," Ross noted, his voice thick with a hidden emotion as he eyed them all up.

"The Avengers were formed to make the world a safer place. I feel we've done that," Steve argued, trying to take the man's eyes away from the burns on the chair that he was staring at.

"Tell me, Captain, do you know where Thor and Banner are right now?" Ross said, a fake smile spread across his face as he turned to look at the Captain. Steve looked up with a slight glare as he met Ross' eyes while the man continued his rant. "If I misplaced a couple of 30 megaton nukes... you can bet there'd be consequences. Compromise. Reassurance. That's how the world works. Believe me, this is the middle ground."

"So, there are contingencies," Rhodey clarified.

"Three days from now, the UN meets in Vienna to ratify the Accords, talk it over, let your... pet... burn some more chairs," he added, sneering at Scottie who duped slightly under his words as everyone else in the room turned to notice where her hand had melted an imprint into the plastic.

"And if we come to a decision you don't like?" Natasha interrupted before he said anything that would set Scottie o again.

Ross smirked for a second before he went to leave the room.

"Then you retire."

Scottie sat in silence beside Wanda on the loveseat in the Avengers HQ lounge while the rest of the team argued about what they were going to do with the Accords. Scottie deep down knew exactly what she wanted to do, the metal of the power repressers on her wrist cold against her warm skin.

"Secretary Ross has a Congressional Medal of Honor, which is one more than you have," Rhodey said as he fired back at Sam, the two had been arguing for the past ten minutes about the Accords. Rhodey was ready to sign them in a heartbeat while Sam had no urge to touch the book in the slightest.

"So let's say we agree to this thing. How long is it gonna be before they LoJack us like a bunch of common criminals?" Sam asked, trying to look out for the rest of the team as he considered the odds of them all being placed into the Ra .

"A 117 countries want to sign this. 117, Sam, and you're just like, "No, that's cool. We got it."" Rhodey snapped back, not liking the man's lack of perspective on the whole thing. He wasn't focusing on the bigger picture but rather just his own personal one.

Scottie rubbed at her head as she leaned into Wanda's side, the Sokovian rubbing her girlfriend's knee as they tried to keep their patience with the two men viciously arguing at each other's throats. Wanda was conflicted with it all, unsure on what she really wanted to do in this situation.

Scottie looked up as she felt eyes on her, meeting Tony's gaze. She knew that they were both thinking of the exactly same thing - the moment they had with Mrs Spencer outside the elevator in the corridor at MIT. She knew what he wanted her to do, but there was so much inside of her conflicting with each other.

"How long are you going to play both sides?" Sam asked, moving closer to Rhodey as they all feared there was about to be a literal fist fight in the middle of the room.

"I have an equation," Vision interupted, thankfully breaking up the on coming fight. Scottie sighed, knowing that his equation was most likely not going to solve anything in the slightest.

"Oh, this will clear it up," Sam said sarcastically, throwing his hands into the air as he moved away from Rhodey. Steve and Natasha both looked up from where they were placed, turning their attention to the android that was floating about the room.

"In the eight years since Mr. Stark announced himself as Iron Man, the number of known enhanced persons has grown exponentially. And during the same period, the number of potentially world-ending events has risen at a commensurate rate," Vision noted, with everyone taking a second to process what he was trying to say.

Steve sighed, rubbing his face as he turned to look around the room before focusing back on the android. "Are you saying it's our fault?"

"I'm saying there may be a causality," Vision corrected him, his cloak just touching the floor as he hovered slightly. "Our very strength invites challenge. Challenge incites conflict. And conflict... breeds catastrophe. Oversight... Oversight is not an idea that can be dismissed out of hand."

Rhodey turned to look at Sam, with an almost triumphant look on his face. "Boom."

There was silence for a moment as Scottie moved from her seat and towards the open plan kitchen. Turning around, she walked to the fridge and grabbed a bottle of chilled water before resting against the counter in the kitchen. The rest all faced her, waiting for words to fall from her lips.

When none came, Natasha turned to look at the other unusually quiet team member in the room.

"Tony. You are being uncharacteristically non-hyperverbal," she noted, a small smirk on her lips as she teased the man about him being quiet. Tony removed his hand from his face but Steve was able to instantly tell why he hadn't been speaking.

"It's because he's already made up his mind," Steve said, causing the rest of the room to turn their attention to where Tony was pacing towards the kitchen. Scottie nodded as she noticed what he was coming for, reaching down and placing a clean mug on the counter for him.

"Boy, you know me so well. Actually, I'm nursing an electromagnetic headache," Tony answered back, thanking Scottie as he snatched the mug up o the counter. "That's what's going on, Cap. It's just pain. It's discomfort. Who's putting co ee grounds in the disposal? Am I running a bed and breakfast for a biker gang?"

Scottie narrowed her eyes slightly as he tapped his phone and projected the photo of Charles Spencer into the air in front of them. She sighed, noticing that Tony wasn't going to say anything straight away.

"That's Charles Spencer, by the way," Scottie mumbled, watching as everyone looked at her in confusion before Tony took over.

"He's a great kid. Computer engineering degree, 3.6 GPA. Had a floor level gig at Intel planned for the fall. But first, he wanted to put a few miles on his soul, before he parked it behind a desk. See the world. Maybe be of service. Charlie didn't want to go to Vegas or Fort Lauderdale, which is what I would do," Tony told them all, everyone nodding slightly as they tried to figure out where this was heading. "He didn't go to Paris or Amsterdam, which sounds fun. He decided to spend his summer building sustainable housing for the poor. Guess where, Sokovia."

There was a slight pause as it dawned on the rest of them just what was coming. Scottie gulped slightly as she continued what Tony was saying.

"He wanted to make a di erence, I suppose."

Tony nodded in agreement before continuing, popping some pills in his mouth as he sipped his co ee. "I mean, we won't know because we dropped a building on him while we were kicking ass."

"Kicking ass while killing the murder bot I brought to life," Scottie muttered, everyone shooting her a disapproving look as she continued to blame herself for the birth of Ultron. It was an issue they had thought she had finally stopped blaming herself for, but that obviously wasn't the case.

"There's no decision-making process here. We need to be put in check! Whatever form that takes, I'm game. If we can't accept limitations, if we're boundary-less, we're no better than the bad guys," Tony yelled, trying to make the rest of them understand that they shouldn't be above the law for any reason at all.

Steve shook his head, not taking this as an answer at all. "Tony, someone dies on your watch, you don't give up."

"Who said we're giving up?"

"We are if we're not taking responsibility for our actions. This document just shi s the blame," Scottie, Rhodey and Natasha all shu led slightly at his comment, none of them agreeing with that in the slightest.

"I'm sorry. Steve. That - that is dangerously arrogant," Rhodey began slowly, trying to make the man realise that this wasn't any of the corrupt organisations they had dealt with in the past but a legitimate standing. "This is the United Nations we're talking about. It's not the World Security Council, it's not SHIELD, it's not HYDRA."

"No, but it's run by people with agendas, and agendas change," Steve noted, not backing down from this fight. Scottie moved back to side beside Wanda, the girl instantly clutching the blonde's hand as they sat down.

"That's good That's why I'm here. When I realised what my weapons were capable of in the wrong hands, I shut it down and stop manufacturing," Tony exclaimed, trying to prove that change was sometimes a good thing. Wanda flinched ever so slightly at the mention of his weapons manufacturing, something that had inevitably lead her down this path and changed her whole life.

"Tony, you chose to do that. If we sign this, we surrender our right to choose. What if this panel sends us somewhere we don't think we should go? What if there is somewhere we need to go, and they don't let us? We may not be perfect, but the safest hands are still our own," Steve tried to argue back, something that Scottie agreed with but also wasn't sure about. She knew that Steve was in the right but she was also sure that Tony was too.

This was a grey area, and while she wished it was as easy as black and white, she knew it was never going to be.

"If we don't do this now, it's gonna be done to us later. That's the fact. That won't be pretty," Tony clarified, causing Wanda to finally realise where she stood in all of this.

Letting go of Scottie's hand, the girl finally spoke up as she realised the implications of her being in the Avengers. "You're saying they'll come for me."

There was a moment of silence before Scottie spoke immediately. "We would protect you, I won't let anything happen to you."

"Maybe Tony's right," Natasha said, causing everyone to turn and look at her in surprise. No-one had expected the former spy to agree with the billionaire over Steve. "If we have one hand on the wheel, we can still steer. If we take it o ..."

"Aren't you the same woman who told the government to kiss her ass a few years ago?" Sam interrupted, reminding Natasha that she was the one who stood up for them all in court and told the government that they would never be able to arrest all of them.

The woman nodded, gulping slightly as she was careful with her words. "I'm just... I'm reading the terrain. We have made... some very public mistakes. We need to win their trust back."

"I'm sorry, did I just mishear you or did you agree with me?"

"Oh, I want to take it back now," Natasha decided as Tony began to boast.

"No, no, no. You can't retract it. Thank you. Unprecedented. Okay, case closed - I win."

Just as Steve went to argue back, his phone seemed to vibrate heavily in his pocket. Casting a quick look at the device, his eyes widened ever so slightly before he rose quickly from his seat.

"I have to go," Steve abruptly said, reading a message on his phone and taking o . The whole team sighed, an uncomfortable silence taking over again.

Continue reading next part