

Metal and Magic

Chapter 25

Tony lived by a strict code, and he only had three rules ... always order top-shelf, never apologize, and, above all else, flaunt your money with the subtlety of a sledgehammer. By the time Harry found him in the dealership, Tony had charmed the receptionist into agreeing to go out with him and browbeat a nervous junior salesman into surrendering his personal stash of breath mints. The luxury car lot was quiet, but Tony's voice carried like a fart in church.

Harry strolled in wearing ripped jeans and a t-shirt, looking like every other average earner. Tony hooked an arm around his shoulders and said, "You look like you're about to smoke a dooby, not buy a Ferrari."

Harry shrugged, not really caring how he presented himself to the snooty car dealers. "You said this was a casual meeting. I took you at your word."

Tony snorted. "There's 'casual' and then there's 'broke bum.' When you're a success, you gotta dress like you matter."

They cut through a maze of million-dollar vehicles. The place had a strange vibe. The place was too sterile, and the air was heavy with the scent of leather and expensive cologne. A suited man intercepted them, his eyes alight with the excitement of receiving a huge commission. He gave Tony a fake, practiced smile. "Mr. Stark," he said. "I believe you said that you were considering the F430."

Tony's face split into a wolfish grin. "I did indeed. You guys have it in red, I assume?"

"Yes, sir," said the salesman. He had a name badge, but Harry refused to learn it.

Harry sidled up to the car, and Tony circled it, practically drooling. "This is what you buy when expensive paintings just aren't cutting it anymore," Tony said. He gestured at the lines, the curves, and the prancing horse badge. "It's like the Mona Lisa, only with better tits."

The salesman nodded, showing off his blinding white teeth. "Do you want to sit inside and get a feel for the wheel?"

Tony ignored him, already halfway in. Harry eased into the passenger seat. The interior was full of carbon fiber and hand-stitched leather. Tony fired the ignition. The engine bellowed to life, loud enough to rattle the showroom glass. The salesman winced but kept his smile. "Do you want to take her for a spin?" he asked. It was a question for form's sake only. He already knew the answer.

Tony nodded. "Let's do it. Are you riding with us?" Tony asked. "You can probably fit in the middle if you don't mind being rectally probed by a gear stick." The salesman blanched and shook his head.

As soon as the salesman finished shaking his head, Tony jabbed the gas. The car revved loudly, and Tony whooped, grinning at Harry. "You drive," he said. "You need to learn how it feels to be alive."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure?"

"Of course. Besides, maybe you could buy one too. We can take them to the track and race," he excitedly said.

They switched seats, and Harry eased the Ferrari out of the lot. The car shuddered and leapt with every touch of the throttle. It was the kind of machine that rewarded recklessness with a trip to the ER. Harry merged into traffic and immediately cut off a Bentley. The driver flipped Harry the bird. Tony made a tsking sound. "You drive like a grandmother with cataracts."

Harry raised an eyebrow and hit the gas harder. The Ferrari screamed, and Tony's head snapped back. "Much better," Tony said, nodding in approval.

They took Sunset at seventy, ducked and weaved through clusters of commuters, and Tony played with the climate control, the stereo, and even the windows, just to mess with Harry's focus. Tony gave a running commentary on the merits of Italian design and the potential sexual prowess of every sexy woman he saw. "I bet she can go all night long," Tony said as he craned his neck to get a better look at a statuesque blonde walking down the sidewalk.

Harry ignored him. He was starting to enjoy the car. It was the most excessive thing he'd ever touched, and he'd once had an entire bank vault full of gold, so that was really saying something. At a red light, Tony reached over to the steering wheel and pressed the button for Race Mode. "Let's see what this thing can really do."

The light turned green, and Harry punched it. The Ferrari jerked forward, hurling both of them into their seats. Behind them, horns blared. Up ahead, the street narrowed, and a black SUV cut them off, then slowed to a crawl. Harry swore and let off the gas.

Tony sighed theatrically. "This city's full of bad drivers."

They rolled up to the next stoplight, where the SUV was idling in the left lane. The tinted window was open about an inch, and cigarette smoke billowed out. The light turned green, and the SUV lurched into the intersection, then screeched to a halt diagonally, blocking traffic. In the blink of an eye, three guys in black masks spilled out. The first aimed a pistol straight at them. The second yelled, "Out of the car! Now!" The third produced a machine gun and pointed it at Tony's head.

Harry's hand twitched toward the gearshift. The men advanced with their guns pointed. The smallest one jabbed the muzzle at the window. "Tony Stark, you're coming with us!" Tony instantly knew this was yet another attempted kidnapping. The thought of tens of millions of dollars worth of ransom money was apparently too good to pass up.

Tony gave them the finger. "Get a better script, you losers." Tony then looked at Harry. "Step on it!" he demanded.

Harry gunned the Ferrari. The car shot forward, skidding out of the line of fire. Bullets shattered the rear glass, forcing Tony to duck. The force of the acceleration pinned Harry to the seat, but he managed to swerve around the SUV, jumping the curb and tearing through a landscaping display. The sickening grinding sound from underneath the car told Harry that their getaway car had likely taken some damage. Supercars weren't designed to go off-roading.

"Nice!" Tony said, grinning. He seemed way too excited, given the circumstances.

However, Harry was too busy trying not to die to care about his level of excitement. He zigged and zagged, and the engine roared as the SUV peeled after them. The streets blurred by, and a second round of gunfire ripped through the back end. Tony ducked and laughed.

"Remind me to fire my security team," Tony said. "They're supposed to be on the lookout for idiots like this. Take the next right, then gun it."

Harry barely made the turn. The Ferrari scraped something, but the power kept it moving. He slammed through an alley, clipping trash cans and sending plastic bags into the air. Tony was clearly enjoying himself. The sad thing was, Harry was kind of enjoying it as well.

At the end of the alley, they burst out onto a busy street. The Ferrari cut across two lanes and over a median. A taco truck careened out of the way, and Harry heard the driver call him a Cabron. The SUV was close behind, tearing up the same alley. The gunmen fired wildly, missing everything but a few parked cars and a mail truck.

Harry gritted his teeth and pushed the car harder. The F430 was barely in control, and the tires skidded as it rounded corners and shot down straightaways. "Where exactly are we going?" he asked while Tony was messing with his phone.

"I've texted my security. So we just need to buy them some time to get their lazy asses over here. Remind me to design us some portable Iron Man suits," Tony said, and cranked up the stereo. Queen blared as they careened down the boulevard, chased by maniacs. "I had a feeling today would be a good one. If we survive this, it'll get even better. There's free wings at the strip club tonight," Tony said, slapping Harry on the back.

Harry chuckled, and the car jumped the curb again. They were outpacing the SUV, but not by much. There was simply too much traffic to make use of the car's insane speed. Every time they thought they'd lost it, the black beast would rear up in the rearview.

"Jesus," Harry said. "Why do these guys have such a hard-on for you? Did you sleep with their sisters or something?"

Tony smirked. "It's a very real possibility."

The chase roared through another intersection. Pedestrians dove for cover. Harry jerked the wheel, and the car nearly took out a minivan.

The first gunman leaned out the window and opened fire. The back of the car was peppered, and a round whizzed past Harry's head and punched a hole straight through the windshield. Tony reclined his seat to avoid catching a stray shot.

Harry floored it, and the car bounded forward, its engine wailing. He zigzagged down another alley, nearly clipping a dumpster. The SUV gave chase, crunching over loose garbage and flattening a row of blue recycling bins. At the next intersection, Harry pulled a hard right. The Ferrari fishtailed but gripped the asphalt.

Tony peeked over the dashboard. "The police response in this part of town is usually pretty fast. We just have to stay alive until then."

"I'm open to suggestions," Harry said, his hands welded to the wheel.

"Just keep driving like a lunatic and don't get stuck behind traffic," Tony said. "And try not to get shot," he added, scooching down a bit lower.

"Excellent advice, as always," Harry sarcastically stated.

The chase shot down two more city blocks, weaving through traffic. The SUV's driver was either a former stuntman or completely deranged. Every so often, bullets would ping off the Ferrari's battered panels. Harry caught sight of a red light and braced himself. He punched the gas and shot through, barely missing a tourist-packed bus.

"Nice," Tony said. "I give that a nine out of ten."

The next volley of gunfire was more precise. The rear tire blew, and the Ferrari bucked and shuddered. Harry compensated and kept it straight, but the steering was shot. The SUV drew up beside them with its windows down, and the business end of a machine gun poked through. Tony rolled his own window down and flipped the attackers off.

"Subtle," Harry said.

"When am I anything but?" Tony smirked and rolled the window back up.

The SUV jerked closer until metal scraped metal. Harry let off the gas, then hammered the brakes. The Ferrari lurched, and the SUV overshot them. Harry swerved, sideswiped a parked BMW, then spun the wheel hard to the left.

The F430 caught the SUV's bumper and nudged it. At ninety miles an hour, this was enough to send both cars into a death spiral. Their world went sideways, then upside down. Harry caught a flash of Tony's grin before the car rolled three times, then miraculously landed upright. The engine coughed and died.

The SUV was less lucky. It careened into a telephone pole, crumpling the front end. The gunmen staggered out, dazed and bleeding. Their weapons were still in hand.

Harry kicked open his door. His leg buckled, and he stumbled, blinking away the daze. His mouth tasted like blood, and his shoulder ached. Tony groaned, climbed out the other side, and pointed at the would-be kidnappers. "Do you want to handle this, or should I?"

"And what are you going to do to them ... blab them to death?" Harry snorted. Tony rolled his eyes and pointed.

"Just do it, dumbass," he said.

Harry lazily flicked his wand and sent three red jets in quick succession. The first gunman went down like a sack of potatoes. The second tried to duck behind the SUV, but the stunner caught him right in the face. The third managed two steps before collapsing face-first onto the sidewalk.

Tony surveyed the carnage. "That was one hell of a move you pulled. It really saved our bacon." Harry nodded his head, wiped blood from his eyebrow, and limped over to the car. Sirens howled in the distance. Tony dusted the glass off his jacket and whistled. "I give that a ten."

The cops arrived with a flash of guns and a lot of shouting. They had the good sense to recognize Tony and Harry on sight. Within minutes, the entire situation was reduced to paperwork, blurry cell phone videos, and a couple of ruined vehicles. The gunmen were loaded onto stretchers.

One cop came up, pad in hand, and asked, "You want to explain what happened?" Tony and Harry looked at each other and chuckled.

After more than an hour of giving statements, Tony and Harry limped back to the Ferrari, which was technically still drivable. The hood was gone, the front bumper hung on by a thread, and every panel had at least one bullet hole. Tony asked, "You still want to buy it? I'll get you a good deal."

Harry chuckled and shook his head. "I think I'll pass."

They drove it back to the dealership, or at least what was left of it. The parking lot was full of employees craning their necks, waiting for the test drive to return. It had been nearly two hours, and they were ready to call the cops and report it stolen. The only thing stopping them was the fact that it was their best customer who had taken it. When the Ferrari finally rolled up, scraping the asphalt and dragging sparks, the sales manager looked ready to faint. The engine cut off with a sputter, and steam billowed from the cracked radiator.

Harry untangled himself from the deployed airbag, climbed out, and tossed the keys to the nearest guy. "It was like this when I got it," Harry stated.

Tony added, "And we don't want to hear anything about no dang optional upgrade packages."

The two of them walked away, laughing, and they didn't even notice when the poor sales manager actually did faint.

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Harry hissed through his teeth as the sting of rubbing alcohol found the open cut above his eyebrow. Natasha had him half-reclined on her living room couch with one hand cradling the back of his skull and the other expertly dabbing at the wound. The living room smelled strongly of the antiseptic, though Natasha herself seemed immune to the chemical smell, as though tending to injured men was a daily occurrence. Considering her job, Harry wouldn't have been surprised if that was a regular thing.

She was dressed in a pair of shorts so small that the bottoms of her luscious butt cheeks hung out. Her chest was covered in a camisole that clung to her body like a second skin. The neckline was quite low, and she put on one hell of a show as she leaned forward to clean his cuts. Her dangling tits produced an incredible valley of cock-hardening flesh. Her bare legs were draped over Harry's lap, pinning him more effectively than any medical restraint. Harry could feel the heat of her thigh beneath the bruised meat of his own, but he wisely kept still as she wielded the cotton ball like a medical expert.

"I can't believe they made me pay for it," Harry said, his voice thick with indignation. The stinging at his brow was almost a welcome distraction from the mounting embarrassment.

Natasha snorted. "You mean the very expensive car you completely totaled?" She looked down at him, her eyes dancing with mirth.

"Yeah," Harry groaned as she continued to clean his scrapes and cuts. "They said their insurance doesn't cover acts of idiocy," he told her.

Natasha chuckled and smirked. "Well, if you wanted to move fast and wreck something, you could have just taken me to bed," she teased.

He grinned, despite the pain, and in retaliation, he let his fingers drift up her outer thigh. He curled his hand around to the back of her knee and tickled gently. Natasha shivered and let out a pleased gasp. Harry knew that behind her knee was one of her favorite spots. She always got super wet when he played with the delicate skin there. She smacked his hand away with a warning glare. "Not until I'm finished," she told him. Then she set the bottle down on the coffee table, adjusted her position so she was practically straddling Harry, and peered closely at his battered face.

"Let's see the rest," she said, and her hands went to the hem of his shirt. She peeled the fabric up to expose his ribs, where purple and red bruising was already starting to bloom. Natasha whistled. "You are going to look like a Jackson Pollock painting tomorrow."

Harry shrugged, which hurt. "It's worth it if it means I got you playing nurse."

Natasha grinned, leaned in, and kissed him. Her lips were soft and warm against his. Harry let his hands wander again. This time, his hands slid down her slender sides and over her curvy hips. Harry squeezed her possessively.

They were halfway to starting something when Maria walked through the door. The front door swung open, and Harry felt Natasha tense. Her whole body was instantly alert, but she calmed when she saw it was only Maria.

Maria surveyed the scene and raised a brow in a way that made Harry suddenly feel as though he had done something wrong. She wore a conservative black blouse, half-unbuttoned and untucked, and her hair was a bit messy. She had clearly been working hard over at the bottling plant. She carried a briefcase in one hand and a six-pack of beer in the other.

"Oh good," Maria said in a dry voice. "The patient is not only conscious, but also getting to second base."

Natasha rolled her eyes and slid off Harry's lap, sitting next to him instead. "He's a terrible patient," she explained. "Zero pain tolerance."

"You'd wince too if Nurse Butcher here poured alcohol straight into your gaping wounds," Harry grumbled, attempting his best stoic face.

Maria set down the beer and briefcase, then sat on Harry's other side. She glanced at the cut above his eyebrow and frowned. "This isn't superficial. You should get stitches."

Harry shook his head and objected. "Don't worry about it. I've got some stuff at home that'll clear it right up. I would have gone straight there and patched myself up, but Natasha called, and I was already close by," he explained. "It'll take care of it when I get back."

"How about some vodka then? That cures just about everything," Maria joked. Harry chuckled and told her to bring the bottle. Maria asked Natasha to go grab it out of the freezer.

Natasha nodded, but not before blowing Harry a little kiss and smirking as she sauntered away. Harry watched her wide ass bounce from side to side while her exposed booty cheeks jiggled erotically. Maria ignored the display, already focused on dabbing more alcohol onto his cuts.

Harry tried to speak, but Maria cut him off with a raised finger. "I can't believe you let yourself get caught up in a gunfight."

"Technically, it was a kidnapping attempt, not an assassination," Harry told her. "And it was Tony's fault." That was a valid excuse for practically everything.

Maria leveled a glare at him that could have cauterized his wounds. "Even so, you need to be more prepared for situations like that."

He decided it was best not to argue with her. Instead, he just nodded and gently kissed her on the lips. Maria's cheeks heated up, and she leaned in for another. Harry's hands had just begun exploring her thighs when Natasha came back from the kitchen holding three shot glasses and a chilled bottle. "Doctor's orders," she said, pouring a triple round. She handed Harry a glass, then Maria, and took the last for herself. Harry downed his, coughing at the burn in his throat.

The three of them sat around for a few minutes while Harry explained to Maria exactly what had happened. Once Maria was satisfied with his answers, she stood up. "I'll go change," she said, and without another word, she retreated into the bedroom, shutting the door behind her.

Natasha looked at Harry. "For real, though," she said. "You need to be more careful out there. There are some very crazy people in this world."

"No kidding. But you're right. I'll do my best to take the proper precautions," he assured her.

Natasha smiled a little more softly now. She reached up to run her fingers through his hair, finding the least tender spot. "You're a mess, Harry," she said, but there was warmth in her voice. She leaned in, straddled his lap again, and kissed him. The kiss lingered far longer than the last one. Harry let his hands slide up her back again, and she pressed herself against him. Her body heat and lovely scent overwhelmed the smell of antiseptic.

They only broke apart when Maria returned. She was dressed in a sports bra and the smallest pair of panties Harry had ever seen on her. For a brief moment, Harry was stunned by the sight.

Maria wasn't shy about her body, but she also wasn't known for casual displays of skin. The way half of her mound and all of her ass were showing was anything but casual.

"I bought these just for you. Do you like them?" she teasingly asked, wiggling her hips slightly, which made her wide, jutting ass jiggle. Harry smiled and nodded.

Natasha slid off Harry and made room as Maria approached. Maria knelt beside him, and her hands were gentle as she inspected his shoulder and then his ribs. She kissed him deeply while Natasha massaged his neck and shoulders. Harry's hand found her inner thigh, and Maria moaned into his mouth. Natasha turned his head and captured his lips in an open-mouthed kiss. The two women took turns sharing his lips, and Harry was very eager to see how this night would end.