

Starting Over

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by [Ithildin](#)

Summary

Tony and Methos try to make a fresh start.

Notes

After reading today's challenge at lunch, the first thing that came into my mind is the scene you're about to read. This takes place during Iron Man II, just after Tony signs SI over to Pepper and just before the trip to Monte Carlo. It's set after my story, Transformative Variations.

"Can I come in?"

Methos nodded at his unexpected guest, pulling the door wider, letting Tony Stark into the house. "Charlotte's not here," he began, only to shake his head. "But you know that since she's in L.A. – where you're supposed to be."

"Yeah, I thought we could talk," Tony said as he followed Methos down the hall towards the kitchen.

"Did you now?" He looked at the other man speculatively. "And what exactly do you think we think we should talk about?"

Entering the kitchen, Methos went to the fridge, pulling out two beers, handing one to Tony.

Laughing, he shook his head. "I don't know; football, the stock market, maybe the weather?" Opening his beer he took a drink, looking around the room. "Why is it whenever you come here, you always end up in the kitchen?"

"It's always the heart of wherever Charlotte lives."

"The heart? I always thought it had more to do with my stomach."

"That too." Methos snaked a foot under a rung, pulling out a chair, and dropping into it. Tony followed suit, and silence fell, the two men drinking their beer.

"Hard to believe," Tony murmured.

"What's that?"

Shrugging, he answered, "That it wasn't that long ago I sat in this same chair, interrogating Birdie about her new boyfriend, planning to drag her off to Afghanistan with me." He looked down at the bottle in his hands. "Seems like a century ago."

"A lot has changed."

"No kidding – and I thought having to share my best friend with you was going to be the biggest thing I'd have to deal with."

"Yes, well, Charlotte will insist on jumping in front of bullets," he said lightly.

"Can't say that I have problems with that." A few weeks before, an assassin had made an attempt on Tony's life, an attempt that was thwarted when Charlotte took the bullet meant for him. Even though he'd found out after that his friend was Immortal, the experience had left him shaken. "Look, I know we're never going to be friends, but I owe you; and not just for saving Hogan's life."

Methos looked puzzled. "How do you figure that?"

"I know she loves you, and I know that you could have made it difficult for her to stay friends with me. I'm glad you didn't."

"I just want her to be happy."

"Then we do have something in common." Tony seemed uncomfortable. "Look, I just wanted to say, that as much as it surprises me, I'm glad Birdie has you in her life; that she's not alone. I just needed you to know that."

Methos didn't immediately reply. Then he sighed, leaning forward. "How long have you got?"

Tony's mouth dropped open in shock. How did he know? "I have a few hours before I have to head back," he dissembled.

"Come on, Stark, I'm a doctor remember? Not to mention, a student of human nature. You've been giving away your stuff, including your company, your overprotectiveness of those close to you, the moodiness; even for you apparently. And last but not least, coming here to see me."

He looked away. "Does Birdie know?"

"No, and she won't, not from me. It isn't my secret to share."

Tony nodded. "Six months, maybe a year, if I'm lucky," he said, finally answering Methos' question.

"It's the palladium." It was a statement, not a question.

"Yeah."

"I'm not one given to platitudes, Stark, but I've also lived long enough to know that there's always hope."

"You really believe that?"

He shrugged. "Some days."

"You'll have to believe for me then, because I'm out." He drank the last of his beer. "You coming to Monte Carlo with us?" he asked, changing the subject.

"As if I'd miss seeing where it all began!"

Standing, Tony held out his hand. "I better be getting back."

Methos shook his hand. "I was hoping you had a little time."

"Oh?"

"Thought we could start over—go down the saloon, have a couple of real drinks and set off on a different foot this time."

Smiling broadly, Tony said, "I think I'd like that."

"Good! And then maybe you can tell me exactly what it is that happened on that trip to Bali...."

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