Life is the Art of Dying

by Panda_2703

Summary

“Dude this is so cool, I can’t believe I have Tony Stark’s phone number.”

Ned’s excited voice reached Peter’s ears causing the teen to smile. “Yeah, but you can’t just call him, its only for emergencies.”

“Emergency got it. Can do…But dude this is just the greatest, I’m best friends with Spiderman and I have Tony Stark’s number!”

“But you can’t call him unless its an emergency.” Peter replied.

~ ~ ~

Looking down at his deteriorated body Peter shook his head, this definitely counted as an emergency.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
“Dude this is so cool, I can’t believe I have Tony Stark’s phone number.”

Ned’s excited voice reached Peter’s ears causing the teen to smile. “Yeah, but you can’t just call him, its only for emergencies.”

“Emergency got it. Can do…But dude this is just the greatest, I’m best friends with Spiderman and I have Tony Stark’s number!”

“But you can’t call him unless its an emergency.” Peter replied, though Ned could detect a smile in his voice.

“Oh-um by the way Ned, you know how aunt May found out about the whole Spidermen thing… well she wants me to go to a camp over summer, get away from the super-heroing and just be a kid. I feel super bad about lying to her so I agreed. I wont be contactable for the the first part of the Summer, though she’s been pretty quiet about the details of the camp, probably wanting to surprise me.”

“That kind of sucks man, but when you get back we can have a Star Wars marathon.”

“Sounds good man, got to go see you tomorrow for the last day of school.” Peter pulls the phone away but not before he hears Ned murmur a goodbye from the other side of the phone.

Putting his phone on charge Peter falls into his bed, ready for sleep.

~ ~ ~

7 Weeks later.

A skeleton of a boy stumbles through the forest, desperately hoping not to hear his pursuers, hoping beyond hope that they haven’t followed him. That they haven't found his trail. Deep down he knows its a fools dream. Of course they will follow him, and judging by the amount of blood he seems to be losing, he probably wont be that hard to find.

Still three days of stumbling around the forest agitating his injuries and probably insuring infection was better then where he had been. Anywhere was better than where he had been.

Shaking his head he tries to clear his eyesight as black dots appear, this causes his headache to punish him terribly. The boy keeps moving, by this point he’s too numb feel anything, perhaps he’s already dead. A dry sob escapes his lips at the thought. Dead.

If there is one thing he knew, it was that he didn't want to die. He had lived through hell, and had no intention of giving up. It was against his nature. Even if no one cared, deep in his bones the boy was resolute. He would live. He would make the world a better place, even if everyone else didn't care. He would do it on his own. After all, he was Spiderman, and that had to count for something right?

It was late at night, Peter didn't really know when it had gotten so dark, but the darkness was a blessing, for without the dark, he would have missed the dim lights coming through the foliage on his
Civilisation. A sight of relief escaped the boy, as he made his way towards where he now knew was the edge of the forest. The brush thinned out, and Peter stood on the edge, carefully examine the scene.

It was abandoned, ghostly quiet in the pale moonlight. One of the street-lamps flickered. he wasn't even at a town. There was a small service station, a break that only truck drivers would frequent. Across the road was a small diner “Andy and Laura’s Best Breakfast Break” making his way slowly towards the closed diner, keeping towards the shadows in an attempt to keep from gaining any onlookers attention. The bleeding boy had far less of his usual poise, yet managed to make it to the side of the building without falling over. The building thankfully had a map of American on it. Studying the fading map the teen easily found the ‘YOU ARE HERE’ in obnoxiously bright red. ‘Great, now I know where I am.’ Peter’s inner monologue stated, slightly cheering Peter, as it had been silent recently, physically and mentally exhausted.

determining his next course of action Peter apologised under his breath as he through a rock through the window of the diner. Climbing delicately thought the broken window, avoiding the broken glass Peter looked around the diner, his eyes resting on the phone next to the old style jukebox in the corner.

Peter made his way over to the phone and held it up ready to dial, remembering the conversation his best friend - a reminder to only call in emergencies and his own promises to the genius in question ‘not to bug him that’s what Happy is for.’ Looking down at his deteriorated body Peter shook his head, this definitely counted as an emergency. Though the doubt held Peter as he listened to the tone of the phone connecting. What if he didn't come? What if Mr Stark didn't care?

The call kept beeping, and Peter’s heart was in his mouth, the boy was ready to start hyperventilating, Mr Stark wasn't going to pick up. Peter was alone.

Peter’s hands shook, whether it was out of fear of his own doubts, or exhaustion Peter didn't know. Finally Peter hears the other side pick up.

“Who is this and how did you get this number.”

Peter’s first reply way a sob of relief followed by a mashed up flow of words that he himself could not understand.

“Peter is that you?” Tony Starks voice interrupted, it sounded concerned.

On the other side of the country Tony Stark sat up in bed, his finance frowning beside him. Tony’s hear constricted, it was 2:24 according to the clock next to his hotel bed. The only person he could fathom calling at this hour in hysterics was the superpowered teen he was mentoring. Peter was meant to be at some summer camp. Safe and away from any crime fighting that was one of the reasons he had organised to visit Los Angeles this week with Pepper and take actual interest his finances work.

“M-Mr Stark--“ the voice is raspy and broken, but still identifiably Peter. “Can you come and pick me up?” The request is so childish, the desperation in his voice is clear and the heart braking hope so delicate, almost as if Peter doesn't believe he would come for him.

“Where are you.” Tony asks urgency in his tone. Something felt undeniably wrong about the whole situation, and the desperation in his interns voice making the half asleep billionaire awake and aware.
“Andy and Laura’s - cough - Best Breakfast Break, Ohio.” The wet cough in the middle of the sentence made Tony freeze.

“Peter are you hurt?”

There is a slight pause on the other side of the phone before Peter answers. “Yes.”

With that answer Tony Stark is out of bet and preparing to get into his Iron-man suit quick as a flash. The only time Peter would admit to being hurt was if it was life threatening, the kid had no sense of self preservation, not that Tony could really argue. FRIDAY had already pinpointed location of the call, as Tony prepared to go ‘pick up’ Peter.

Pepper watched worriedly as Tony got up, the boy in question flashing before her eyes, her smiling face, an unsettling feeling churned its way into her gut. She hoped the boy was ok.

Tony smiled reassuringly at Pepper, nodded at himself before flying off to find Peter.

“Ok Pete, tell me whats going on.”

The other side of the phone was oddly silent, Tony cursed under his breath, and checked if the call was still connected.

A minute later Tony heard the phone being fumbled, and then sharp breathing. “Mr Stark, I’m going to hide now, just make sure you land near the diner and I’ll see you an come out. Please hurry, I think they’re close.” Peters hurried whispers made the fear that settled in his stomach grow.

“Shit not Peter, wait what. Who are you-”

The phone disconnected, causing Tony to start cursing and push his boosters. He was of yet two hours away going at his top speed, and by the sounds of things, he needed to be faster.

“Dammit. Dammit.” Tony swore under his breath, before deciding that a new course of action was to be taken. Instigating a new call he waited for the other side to pick up.

“Bloody hell who is calling me at the ungodly hour.” the disgruntled voice of Stephen Strange reached Tony’s ears.

“Strange its me Tony Stark. I need you to work your voodoo and take me to Ohio now.”

The urgency in his voice must have dissuaded the Doctor from asking questions because after landing on the top of a building Stephen appears to his right, looking concerned.

“What’s happened?”

“I don't know but I intend to find out, take me to Andy and Laura’s Best Breakfast Break, Ohio” Nodding Doctor Strange began his ‘weird voodoo’ as Tony had liked to call it and the two walked through the portal and into still of the small truck stop over.

“PETER? WHERE ARE YOU? PETER!” Tony begins yelling looking around trying to find his normally exuberant intern.

“Who’s Peter and why is he in the middle of no where.”

Sighing Tony looked at Strange knowing an explanation was needed. The two men scan the area, “Peter is Spiderman and-“ in the corner of his eye Stephen spots it, a slight movement from behind the bins. Motioning for Stark to follow he moves toward the bins.
“Peter its me Tony.”

Slowly a figure emerges unbelievably thin, the boys arm is literally an open wound, several other injuries appear to be sown up, though Stephen sees that whoever did it had medical training because they were sure to reopen - some had. His leg looked twisted and the bags under his eyes and bruised on his face make it look like the boy had naturally back and purple skin. The most heartbreaking thing was his youth. He looked so young, not even out of high school, and someone had decided to torture him.

“Mr Stark-” The boy stumbled forwards and collapses in the mans arms unconscious.

“God Pete.” Tony gasps, taking the boys form in ad he held the still body. He looks at Stephen, eyes promising retribution to whomever had done this to the boy. “Take us to the Avengers facility, he needs medical attention.”

The two men arrive, between them an unconscious broken boy.

Stephens medical mind takes over, and “He needs proper stitches, the injuries are surely infected, I’ll also need an x-ray to find broken bones and internal damage.”

Tony was already already ordering people around, though many just stared at the trio that had just arrived via magic portal.

“You can help him right?” Tony asked, his eyes never leaving Peter’s form.

“I - I’ve never seen these kinds of injuries on a living person before, by all medical expectations he should be dead.”

“But you can help him? I mean he has a healing factor so…”

Stephen shakes his head. the truth was, he didn't think that anyone should be alive in the state Peter was in, superpowers or not. Yet he was. So there was still hope.
Stephen Strange slumped down in the chair next to Tony, both men looked exhausted.

“He’ll be alright. It will be a long road to recovery.” The Doctor, while out of practice, knew his skills were up to scratch, the boy in the bed in front of them would live, though Stephen knew that the injuries would also carry mental scars.

“I should call his aunt, she needs to know.” Tony’s voice was dry, the very thought of calling May made his gut twist. Sure things between her and Peter had been strained after her discovery of his after school activities, but she loved her nephew. She had certainly put Tony in his place after finding out, Tony almost smiled at the memory of a two-hour call consisted of her insulting him and then running out of insults only to start again. Tony stood and moved towards the door, stopping he turned, “Thank you, without you he’d probably be dead.”

Stephen nodded acknowledgment of the thanks, and with one final lingering look at Peter’s unconscious form, Tony Stark left to make several calls.

Stephen looked back at the young man in the bed, alone with his patient. The boy’s injuries left him uneasy, there was something off about them. Rubbing his eyes tiredly Stephen Strange stood up and went to make himself some tea. Yes tea would be nice and relaxing.

~ ~ ~

It took three days for Peter to wake up.

May had arrived within the hour that Tony had called her. She had been mute seeing her nephews destroyed body, and had not left the room he lay in. It was like she had become part of the furniture, so incredibly still, whenever another person joined her they were unnerved by her complete stillness.

The nurses often came in and tried to convince the woman to leave, if only for her own health. Every now and then it worked.

When Peter woke the first thing he was aware of was the heavy smell of disinfectant, the very scent making his skin crawl. His mind was groggy, and he could feel all sorts of wires connecting to him. A heavy weight settled on his chest. He was still with them. Trapped.

His arms and legs felt weighted, but strangely enough, not restrained.

He blinked slowly, the soft blue of the walls was the first thing to come into focus. Blue walls. They were the stark white walls he was used to.

Looking slowly moving his head there was a window, and a set of chairs. Blinking his eyes again in an attempt to bring the room into focus. The light was giving him a headache but he had to be sure. He had to know whether his escape had really happened. He had to know whether he was safe.
He was alone and unrestrained. Perhaps he was safe.

Moving slowly to get up, Peter rolled himself to the side of the bed, looking down at his arms that were attached to wires and machines. The ringing in his ears quieted down enough for him to hear the beeping of machines. Beep. Beep. Beep.

The sound of his heart beat. ‘I’m still alive’.

Pulling away the wires, taking no notice the tugging of his skin, the machines start screaming, the hear monitor falling into a dark hum. Now, as far as the medical machines were concerned, he was dead.

His action seemed to have caused a commotion outside and he heard footsteps and a harried murmur approach the door.

Opening the door he made eye contact with one of the two women that had been approaching the room. His eyes widened slightly, before looking at the other woman, she wore a medical uniform, this time Peter swore his heart really stopped. He bolted.

Running out of the room and down the hallway in the opposite direction from where the women had come.

He wasn't safe. It had all been a dream. They still had him.

Peter dint know where he was going all he knew was that he had to get out. The boy sprinted down corridors much the surprise of onlookers, seeing a teen dressed in a hospital gown run like hell was behind him.

Behind him he could feel them following him, sometimes calling for him to stop, but he would not. Peter had no intentions of staying with them. Running around the corner of the hallway he ran straight into a man. The force at which he ran a sudden resulted in his toppling to the floor. Groaning Peter felt each of his wounds jarred by the fall.

“Kid, Jeez kid, calm down.” The man kneels down his hands up in the air: the universal sign that means no harm. Peter whimpered, flinching away from the man’s attempts to touch him. He was not safe. They were going to hurt him.

“Dammit kid, err Peter right? Your safe. Look at me.” Stephen looked at the cowering boy on the floor, at a loss of what to do. He had never experienced a patient fearing him, often they were relieved to see him. He was a healer, yet the way this child reacted to him… Stephen’s heart broke at the implications.

The boy, had managed to push himself toward the wall, and had curled into himself, making himself as small as possible.

Other workers at the compound had managed to catch up, “Get away from him and give him some space.” Stephen barked, holding his hands out in warning. The man took a step closer to the boy, bending down in an attempt to make eye contact. “Peter, please look at me.” Stephen once again held his hands out attempting to assure the boy he means no harm, and hoping that Stark would turn up. Surely the kid would respond to him.

Slowly, the boys hear raised itself from where it had been cradled in his shaking arms, raised enough for Stephen to meet the brown eyes that were filled with panic and fear. “Peter my name is Doctor Strange and I want to help you.”
It seemed that something he said only added to the boys fear as the boy whined in fear and he tried to move closer to the wall. “St-stay away from me.” His breathing came in sharp bursts and Stephen could tell the boy was on the verge of having a panic attack.

“Peter I swear, I mean you no harm. No one in this building will hurt you.” Stephen moved slowly closer, his arm reaching towards the boy. Peter made no movement, just watched the arm with eyes filled with mistrust.

With unexpected speed the boy lashed out at the approaching hand, kicking with surprising force, and in one movement he had moved and started running. Luckily, or unluckily for Peter, Stephen’s cloak had caught the attack, and Stephen moved quick enough to hold the boy in his arms as he struggled.

Screaming and straining against Stephen’s arms Peter was terrified. He had to get out. This Doctor was going to hurt him. He had to escape.

Feeling the boy struggle in his arms Strange struggled to hold onto the him, also painfully aware of his injuries and fearful he would reopen them.

“Peter stop, god Pete what are you doing.” Stephen thanked whatever god had been listening as he heard Stark’s voice from behind him. Peter it seemed, froze, once he heard his mentors voice.

Tony walked into view making sure to make eye contact with the terrified young man. Seeing Tony seemed to make Peter calm down, slowly he seemed to relax into Stephen’s hold, who in turn slowly released his grip. Standing unsteadily between the two men, Peter instinctively moved closer to Tony, Peering at the older man, as if barely believing he was there.

“Mr Stark?”

It came out as a whisper, the incredulity in his voice seemed to snap something in the billionaire, as he moved to take to boy into a hug. Peter responded in turn, feeling the very real Tony Stark under his hands. This was real.

Like a damn, Peter seemed to break down, and started to quietly sob into his mentors shoulder, gripping the man tightly, desperate for this to feel real. To feel safe.

Stephen looked at the embracing pair, feeling lost intrusive at the sight. He observed Peter properly; his hospital gown was half hanging off of him, leaving his injuries in full view. The sloping of the scar on his back trailed down around his rib cage, the other side was similar in shape and pattern, one trailed right down his back tracing his spine. This was the first time Stephen had seen the boys back without having to stitch it back together. Suddenly it dawned on him, Peters injuries were no mere feats of torture, someone had been dissecting him. Someone had taken this child and opened him up like a scientist would a frog. Stephen felt sick at this realisation, and had to look away from the boy, whose injuries would haunt him.

Tony held Peter close, trying to calm him. To assure him that he was safe, that everything would be ok. He was shaking, clinging to him, and for the first time in his life Tony Stark felt truly helpless. Tony knew that what had been done could not be fixed quickly or easily, the boy was broken. The worst part was he had not been there to stop it, and frustratingly, he was no where closer to finding out who hurt him.

“Your safe Pete.” Tony repeated into the young mans ear, he made eye contact with Stephen Strange, the Doctor had an odd look in his eyes, and looked slightly ill. Frowning with confusion, after all he had spoken to Stephen that morning, and he had been fine then. Pulling slightly away
from Peter, who in turn buried himself into his side, Tony motioned to Stephen, “Pete, this is Stephen Strange, he’s been looking after you.”

Peter hesitantly looked at the man who had been subduing him, and gave him a shy nod.

Stephen looked at the boy, and couldn’t help but inwardly marvel at his ability to be standing up - hell, Stephen was shocked to see the boy awake and coherent after three days. His medical instinct seemed to want to take over, he wanted to take the boy, put him back in bed, and give him a full check over. Though Stephen also realised that, if his theory was correct, and someone had tried to cut him open like a science project, Peter probably would not appreciate any medical personnel near him, let alone administering anything to him.

Tony looked down at the teen, he seemed to have stopped shaking and was relatively calm, though he didn't miss the way Peter had yet to move away from him.

Tony looked behind the Doctor to see many of his staff crowed around and watching the scene. Sighing annoyed, Tony started ordering the crowd to disperse. Most of them did, hesitantly moving off to continue on with their jobs, many casting curious or worried glances over to boy that stuck like glue to Tony Starks side.

Remaining behind was May Parker. As the crowd had dispersed the woman remained, Peter only noticing her once the others had made their way around the corner.

Tony felt Peter stiffen, he also seemed to have stopped breathing as the boy made eye contact with his aunt. Looking down with concern Tony felt the boy move, his shaking began again and he edged himself behind Tony, putting the genius between himself and his Aunt.

“What i-is she doing here?”

Stephen Strange turned around to look at the woman, her eyes glassed over with tears.

“Peter please let me - ”

“Get away from me.”

Tony’s eyes narrowed at Peter’s words, dread pooling into his stomach. Please no. This couldn't be what he thought it was.

Strange thankfully seemed to catch on as well. “Ms Parker I suggest you leave, you are making my patient uncomfortable”

On the other hand, Tony’s vision turned red, “What the fuck does he mean by that May! You better leave now before I find out why your nephew is afraid of you, and might I suggest going further than just Queens because I swear to God if you hurt him I will kill you.” Tony had half a mind to follow her, and find out from her, but the precious boy behind him, clutched at him. Tony knew he couldn't leave, Peter needed him.

“C’mon Pete, lets get you fixed up.”

Tony began leading Peter back to his room, Doctor Strange following closely behind.
Once again thanks for reading. I really hope you are enjoying it.

- For reference, I have nothing against Aunt May, but someone needed to be a villain, and I thought, the worst villain Peter could ever face would be Aunt May, a person he implicitly trusted.

Again sorry for any spelling and grammar errors.

Feedback is always appreciated.

Thanks again.
“What is that?”

This was the fifth time Peter had asked Stephen that question in the space two minutes. Sadly, it was excited curiosity that had him asking the questions, but instead fear. Peter had been trepidatious in having Stephen look him over, and had been tempted to run away again when the Doctor had suggested he be hooked back up the the machines. The boy kept looking at Tony, reassuring himself that the great Iron-Man was there. Tony himself stood next to Peter, giving him, what he hoped, were soothing looks.

“This is the IV, its going to ensure you get the required vitamins, and restore you unbalanced electrolyte levels.” Stephen patiently explained what he was doing, though could still sense Peter’s unease.

“Can’t I eat?” The underlying fear in his voice broke both the mens hearts, knowing that Peter probably hadn't actually eaten in weeks made their blood boil.

“Of course you can, but you are right now suffering from a sever case of malnutrition, dehydration and vitamin deficiencies, the IV will help you catch up, along with a balanced diet.”

Peter sagged slightly at this, feeling slightly embarrassed. Of course Mr Stark would let him eat, often when he joined in lab work Tony had an open bag of chips or biscuits ready to share when they were doing ‘official intern work’.

Once the IV was attached, Stephen announced that he was finished, making all occupants relax.

Tony sighed, he hated that he had to ask but he needed to know. He needed to make whoever hurt Peter pay for the damage the caused. Walking around to face Peter he pulled on of the plastic chairs to him so he would be on the same level as the boy.

“Pete, I know you probably don't want to talk about it but I need to know what happened. I need to know who did it.” Tony looked Peter dead in the eye, saddened as they slowly grew haunted. The boy nodded slightly, he knew it would come up sometime.

~ ~ ~

Seven weeks earlier

“Hey May, I cant find my socks, they've gone - no wait, I found them. They were at the bottom of m bag.”

Peter re-zips the bag, after checking once again that he had everything. Somehow he couldn't help but feel off, like something bad was going to happen. The teen shook his head, he had a summer camp to go to - hopefully have some fun, and going in with a bad attitude would surely ruin it. Picking up the bad he walked out of his room to find his aunt finishing making pancakes.
“Oh Aunt May you're the best!” Peter readily watched as she plated up the appetising pancakes and set it down in front of him. His Aunt just smiled, “I made them special today. To say goodbye.”

Peter sat at the table, and pulled the plate closer toward him. A niggling in the back of his mind began, distracting the teen from the for in front of him. He felt off again.

Furrowing his eyebrows Peter turned his head to look around the room, as if expecting something to jump out at him. Something felt wrong. “Aunt May, you ever get a bad feeling? Like you know something bad is gonna happen but you can't put your finger on it?”

At his words May started, dropping the spatula she was washing into the foamy waters. “Why is that how you feel now?” She asked whilst fishing out the utensil.

In retrospect, Peter would replay this conversation over in his head. Why waste he able to tell that something was wrong? It seemed obvious in hindsight. The way her body was tense, and the things she said. The things she had said should have told him.

“Sort of, I don't know. I guess ever since the bite, my instincts have been telling me things, I’ve been calling it my spider-sense but saying it out loud sound kind of weird. But the spider sense tells me when bad stuff is going to happen.” Peter said while cutting into the pancakes.

“Well we don't know what's going on with you with the bite, perhaps you're just tired. You've been flat-out all term with school, Spiderman, and the actual internship with Stark.”

Peter nodded at this. May was probably right, he reasoned, she always had been before. Hesitating before taking a bite of the food Peter noticed that his aunt hadn't saved any for herself, “Aren't you having any?”

The older woman turned around slightly, “No, I already had breakfast. Besides I know that after the bite you've needed extra food for your metabolism, you just eat the pancakes sweetie.” If Peter hadn't been feeling guilty about his aunt having given up her share of the pancakes, he would have noticed the way her smile was tight and fake.

Sighing Peter bit into the pancakes, he froze slightly at the taste. His aunt though, had been watching him expectantly, so he smiled at her and continued to chew and swallow. “They taste…different.” Peter said, trying not to hurt his aunt's feeling, but they tasted awful.

“Different good?”

Peter didn’t have the heart to tell her how he really felt, sighing he replied, “They good…but I prefer the old recipe.” the last part was added quickly. Peter nodded at his answer, pleased with himself at not hurting his aunt's feelings. Looking down at the plate Peter felt his stomach churn, yet the teen continued to choke down the pancakes, hoping the make the last few minutes before camp at home with his aunt nice.

Once he finished, what he believed to be an acceptable amount to stop at Peter pushed the plate away and stood. He stumbled slightly, his centre of gravity seemed all wrong. “May I don't feel so good.” He stumbled and caught hold of the kitchen bench. His spider sense had quietened down, actually Peter didn't feel much of anything.

“It's ok Peter, we’ll get in the car and you can sleep it off.”

He felt rather than saw May take his hand and lead him out the apartment, down the stairs and toward the car. By this point everything way just fuzzy.
Peter didn't remember actually making it to the car. Everything after that is fuzzy and disjointed.

. . .

Peter woke groggily in a room. The lights were too bright and he felt cold.

He could hear voices talking it took a minute for Peter to focus his hearing to figure out what they were saying. “…been using the abilities. He’s got it in his head that he's a super hero, but he's just a boy. Its unnatural what he can do, and what if its more than what he thinks? I just want him to be normal. None of this unnatural…freakishness. By this point he act like he belongs in a circus rather than a school. I just want things to be normal. I want him to be normal.”

If Peter could actually feel anything, Peters heart would have broken at these words, but the teen was struggling to remain coherent enough to hear the conversation, he had yet to process it. He would have seven weeks to recess everything he heard.

“Ms Parker I assure you we will do everything in our power to ensure that Peter will be back to normal as soon as possible. We’ve dealt with unique, people before, and we’re sure we can cure you nephew.”

“Thank you so much doctor, I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't contacted me. I should be going now, I- tell Peter that this is for the best. He’ll understand.”

“Of course, and we will contact you after he’s back to normal.”

Peter doesn't know whether they kept talking after that, all he remembered was his Spider sense screaming at him, as if it had woken up. It became too much after that. Peter fell unconscious once again.

. . .

When Peter woke again, there was a man leaning over him. “The subject is awake, eyes dilated, heartbeat seemingly normal or the specimen.” The man began clicking around his head, “Response is heightened by sound. It appears to be scared, it has started shaking. So far restraints have been effective. No sign of the super strength yet.”

Peter was scared. His breathing had quickened and if the beeping in his left ear had anything to say, his heartbeat have increased. The mans comments about restraints only added the to teens anxiety, as he tried to sit up, finds his torso, wrists ankles and knees all locked by some metal restraint. He cant look around the room, he can feel blinders on either side of his head, and so is forced to look directly at the light that the man moved to reveal. Peters eyes begin to water at the lights intensity.

The blood streaming in his ears blocks out all other sound until he hears the man speak once again. “Let us test a theory: lights to one hundred percent, sound at one hundred percent.”

Suddenly Peters senses are in agony, he can no longer see, blinded by the extreme light that he had no choice but to look at. The sound was worse. Peter wanted to cover his ears, but he doubt that it would have helped. It was too bright. It was too loud!
It hurt too much.

Peter is sure he fall unconscious within a minute.

A small respite from the pain.

... 

Day One; Peter learns to fear the word doctor.

Over the weeks everything get worse. His senses are exploited, destroyed. After he works up a resistance to the first wave of sensory overload they brought a new light and new speakers, and play it on repeat, hours at a time. Peter doesn't remember the last time he slept.

They minimise his meals, seeing how his body reacts to less of an intake. To a human intake rather than an enhanced diet.

After the first two weeks they were done with being gentle. They begun cutting him open, and examining his insides. : No anaesthetic was administered, after all, that was for humans. Peter wasn't human.

They open his arm up first, the female doctor doing is seems to marvel at it's vein structure. Peter is now an it.

Day sixteen they stop feeding him altogether.

Day Twenty-two they begin testing reaction to other conditions. The first test is the reaction to water. Peter is pretty sure he remembers watching a late night documentary about Guantanamo Bay and waterboarding. he never thought he’d experience it firsthand.

Day thirty-nine they break Peter.

Day Forty-two. Escape attempt failure, treatment is working, no longer able to stick to walls, nor any
evidence of enhanced strength.

Day Forty-six. Subject had escaped.

~ ~ ~

The two men look at Peter in horror. He had only explained that bare minimum, about his aunts opinions and the attempts to experiment. Tony can tell there is far more that Peter is not telling him, but looking at the broken look in the boys eyes stops him form asking.

Stephen Strange is livid. A doctors job is to heal, not harm. Never harm. He excuses himself from the room, not wishing to add to the boys fear of medical personnel.

Tony sits with the boy as he begins to fall asleep. The genius is already formulating a plan to protect Peter, and destroy those that hurt him. Just as Peter is about to fall asleep returns his head towards his mentor, “Are you going to leave now i don't have any powers. I understand if you you do. Just- Just don't leave me with May, after what she did I can’t - “

Tony cuts the boy off quickly, “Never. I am never going to leave you. Powers or no powers Pete. I promise. And you can be sure as hell that May wont get you again. I’ll look after you. I promise.”

Peter sits up slightly and pulls the billionaire into a hug. Tony gladly returns it, happy to hold the precious teen in his arms. Never. Never would he leave this boy. May was mad, and Tony was going to win.

Chapter End Notes

Again thanks for reading. I'm not sure when I'll next be able to update as some unexpected things just happened and need to be taken care of.

I always appreciate feedback.

I hope you enjoyed and once again thanks for reading.
The calm before the storm

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Tony was exhausted; emotionally, physically and mentally worn, and still had far more to do. It had been far too long since he had actually had a Saturday afternoon to himself, he had things to prepare for. Slumping down in a chair in his lad Tony tiredly rubbed his eyes, trying to clear them and wake up. It had been twenty-four hours since Peter had first woken up, and god did Tony want to kill the people who hurt him, though he was pleased to find the Stephen was all in to help, “How dare they call themselves doctors, do they not remember their Hippocratic oath! Do no harm, how fucking hard is that! You find them Stark, and I'll be there with you, give them a taste of their own medicine.” Tony had never seen the normally controlled doctor lose his temper, and had it been about something less serious, it would have made him laugh.

Frowning slightly Tony’s thoughts turned to Peter. The boy was traumatised that was certain. Tony found himself reminding the boy of his promise to never leave. Peter was scared. The only constant in his life had abandoned him with monsters in an attempt to ‘fix’ him. The very fact that they seemed to have succeeded made it all the worse. Peter seemed convinced that Tony only cared about Spiderman, which in the beginning had been true. In the beginning the only reason Tony had taken interest in Peter was because he could catch a car and stick to walls. After months of getting to know the young man, Tony couldn't imagine life without him, and it seemed Peter Parker, not Spiderman had become more important and interesting than Spiderman had ever been. Neither Peter Parker, nor Spiderman would ever live with May Parker again.

As if just thinking on this, Tony’s phone rang, looking down at the number his spirits were lifted to see the call he was waiting on. “You’re a difficult man to get a hold of, I imagine it would have been easier to call a dead man, though it helps if you know they’re actually dead.”

“Mr. Stark, why am I not surprised that you of all people know about me.”

Smirking tiredly at this Tony decides to turn serious, “Coulson, I need a favour.”

“What kind of favour are we talking about.” The Shield director seemed trepidatious, “I know you're trying to appeal the war crimes on the other Avengers if this has something to do with that I don't have as much sway with the government as I once hand. I would also need to know the details behind why you want to bring them back, knowing what I do about you you’re hardly one to forgive and forget.”

“No, nothing to do with the Avengers and their shit, though I wouldn't mind a second opinion on a couple of things later. This is more of a personal favour, I know during the agent stuff you also gained the required credentials to be a lawyer, correct?”

“That’s true, but you have more than enough money to hire your own lawyers Tony I-“

“Yeah but this is confidential and highly sensitive. I need someone I can trust with this, and you're the best option.”

“What do you need.”

~ ~ ~
It was early Sunday morning when May Parker heard a knock at the door of her apartment. She knew that this was coming, she would not have expected any less from Tony Stark.

Opening her door, she came face to face with a middle-aged man though he was leaning more towards the older side of middle aged. She was surprised to not he had come alone, no Stark in sight. “Ms. Parker I’m sure you can guess as to why I am here, if you’ll let me in we can finish this quickly.”

Not even stopping for an answer the man pushed past her and walked into the room, and sat at the table. He took the same chair Peter had last sat in. Closing the door, her mind was on other matters. She had known Stark would come after her about Peter, but she had no clue as to how it might play out.

Sitting uneasily in the chair across from the well-dressed man, she watched as he took out a stack of papers, neatly placing them in a pile on the table. “How much do you know about the situation Mr. …”

“I know everything Ms. Parker, Tony told me all of it.” He replied with a knowing look at the woman, making her shift her gaze to the floor, conscience heavy after seeing Peter motionless in the bed. “I have taken the liberty of drawing up the papers, giving Mr. Tony Stark full guardianship to your nephew Mr. Peter Parker, until he reaches his majority, or so chooses to apply for emancipation. In signing these papers, you are signing over all rights and all access to Peter until he becomes responsible for himself and chooses to contact you. Should you attempt to gain any contact with the minor involved whilst he is under Tony’s protection Stark will be well within his rights to pursue a case against you as far as the law will allow him to – and believe me, he is more than happy to do so.” The man’s voice is calm, listing off the aspects of the papers, his face completely devoid of emotion.

“In signing this, you are also admitting your failure to care for a minor in your custody, and acknowledge that you are an unfit guardian for Mr. Parker.”

The room is filled with silence after he finishes, though May can feel tears streaming down her face. “I wanted to help him. To make him normal and live a normal life.”

The man’s calm mask cracks at her words, inviting a much colder atmosphere into the room. “Ms. Parker, I have only met your nephew once, yesterday evening to be exact. I cannot claim to have known him for a long time, nor an in depth understanding of his psyche, but from that one meeting I can already say with the utmost certainty, that it is not any kind of super power that makes your nephew anything less than extraordinary. The people you allowed to steal his powers from him, the monsters you left him with, have done nothing to help him. Did you even check on him?”

May holds her head in her hands, her body shaking with sobs. It was as if she had just realized what she had lost. Going over his words in her head, she looked up, confusion in her eyes. “It worked? His powers are gone?”

Scowling at the woman before him Coulson resisted the urge to shake and yell at her. She broke the child she had been charged with protecting, and now all she wanted to know was whether she had succeeded in destroying part of her nephew. “Just because he’s supposedly normal now, does not mean you will get access to him.”

“But all Stark is interested in is Spiderman, does he know that Peter doesn’t have powers anymore. I want my nephew back and things can go back to the way they were. Why would Stark want Peter if not for his powers? I won’t be signing those papers.” May held onto this hope, this was her chance. She would always want Peter with her, and now if he was normal, Stark would surely back off.
The man was visibly angry at her words, making May slightly worried for her health, “Ms. Parker, I’ll have you know that Mr. Stark is fully aware of Peter’s lack of powers, and yet is still more than willing, hell has damn well invested to fight you on this, and I can assure you we shall win. Perhaps you should look at yourself and recognize that a child should always be wanted, irrespective of whether they are different or not. A child should never be forced to change to suit the desires of their guardians, the very fact that you seem to think so shows your absolute failure to care for Peter.”

Swallowing dryly, May Parker stewed over his words, and connected that perhaps he was right, she clearly wasn’t acting within Peter’s best interests, instead focusing on her own needs. “Stark really want him then.” This was more of a statement than a question. The man simply nodded, pushing the paperwork towards the woman.

So, May Parker sat reading over the documents that would changer her life forever. The only thing she could feel was loss. She was losing the last part of her family, the last piece of Ben that really mattered, and it was all her fault. With a shaking hand, she picked up a pen that lay on the table, and began to sign. “He’ll be happier this way.”

Taking the papers out of her hand, Phil Coulson neatly packed them away and brought out some new documents. “This, Tony refused to have anything to do with, but Peter asked for it.”

Sliding over the papers the man stood and began to walk out of the room. “He wants you to have another chance, the paper work is untraceable and completely legitimate. I suggest you take this chance, after all, people are going to talk about Tony Stark’s ward, and Tony has already organized a revised story to feed to the media about the circumstances surrounding his new guardianship. The media will know about the abuse and neglect, and people wont be happy with you. Take it as a new start.”

May Parker stared down at the papers. Social security numbers, passport and identification, all in another name, but had her face. A new start - without Peter, her heart broke at the thought.

~ ~ ~

Doctor Strange decided he liked Peter Parker, though it did slightly ruin his aloof and important image. He was uniquely smart, and kept up with most of his explanations about the magic powers he had. Sat next to the bad, Stephen found himself explaining his fight with Dormammu, seeing the young man smile and laugh at his expense was a far cry from the broken boy he had brought in a few days ago, and far less terrified than he had been on his waking. It seemed that Peter Parker was far more resilient than anyone he had ever met, and, Stephen mused, he was unlikely to meet another such person.

Tony was out, the billionaire was organizing the defense of the world, finding new superheroes and adopting a teenager, Stephen was glad he wasn’t in Stark’s shoes. He had however promised to help, his current job it seemed, was ensure Peter Parker’s health. Arguably Stark’s most important role to give to anyone. Happy Hogan had been in and out, joking with the teen, yet looking troubled. Hogan and Pepper Potts had arrived two days ago, though Stephen had yet to see the Stark’s fiancé, she was busy organizing for the was. Stark industries had its role to play, and Pepper seemed to thrive under pressure.

“Why did Mr. Stark call you in? I know he’s been more busy than usual for the past few weeks, but it’s not just you he’s meeting with. What’s happening?” Stephen almost cursed the way Peter was so perceptive.
“You’re right, Stark contacted me, though I had also been thinking of contacting him. There is a war coming Peter.”

Peter sits still, his face losing all emotion. Stephen can’t tell what he’s thinking, not even an inkling as to how this news is affecting him. He’s certainly calmer than most teenagers would be if they were told by a superhero that a war was coming.

Peter turned directly to Stephen, his eyes are haunted in a way no child’s eyes should be. “How long have you guys known?”

An uneasiness settled in Stephens chest, “Almost three months.”

“Do you know about the experiments?” The teens voice was quiet but strong, and eerily calm.

“What experiments Peter?” Strange’s eyes furrowed in confusion.

“The ones Hydra have been doing. They’re preparing for another war.” Peter replied, looking at Stephen’s face, watching as the older man’s face turned to one of confusion to one of horror.

“Stark and I are preparing for war with aliens, not Hydra.”

Peter’s eyes widen at this. Both Peter and Stephen sit in silence trying to process what had been said. Hydra was going to war. Aliens were invading. The earths heroes were as of yet divided. What chance did they have?

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading I hope you enjoyed.

Please leave a review, I love feedback.

I'm sorry to say you will have to wait for the next one, I have exams coming up as well as a funeral so it will be some time before I can sit down and wright properly. Sorry.
Tony sat unhappily in the middle of a meeting with the head of national security at the Pentagon. Everything was falling to pieces, the control he had felt less than a week ago seemed to be slipping. It had been six days since he had taken that call in the middle of the night, finding Peter half dead and terrified out of his mind shook him to his core.

“Mr Stark, I admit that Hydra have been on our radar since the inception of the terrorist group however, the most recent activity we have found is from ten years ago, forgive me but perhaps after all of the…trauma you’ve experienced in recent years you’ve become obsessed with threats that are not there. Your bid to get your past colleagues exonerated for their crimes hardly seems rational, I cannot and will not waste resources for either of these propositions.” The politician looked smug at being able to call out the billionaire.

Tony growled, “I’m not being paranoid, for god’s sake I’m trying to save the world, but even I’m not arrogant enough to think I can do it alone. You need to listen – “

The doors open to the secured room. The security personnel moving to stop the intruder. “Sorry for being late to the part Tony, just trying to follow by your example.” Phil Coulson entered the room, flanked by his top field personnel. “Secretary of Defence, sorry I don’t know your name, I make it a habit of knowing only useful information. Stand aside, I have business to attend to.”

The Secretary’s face grew redder and redder, though he looked unnerved as his personnel had been dispatched easily. “I don’t know who you are but I am – “

“Actively working against the interests of our country, which is something I won’t stand for.” Coulson looked coolly around the room, the federal workers not moving for fear of upsetting the intruders. Tony Stark, finally relaxing at the familiar face. “Listen up everyone. My name is Phil Coulson and I am using my authority under the Failsafe Protocol ID B0101 to take over this institution and relive the man in front of me from his duties.”

“No such protocol exists, now I want you arrested and taken out of here.”

The members of the room ignore the Secretary of Defence, the workers of the Pentagon each feeling a strange familiarity with the names protocol. They moved to check the protocol named. The woman to the Defence Secretaries left was the first to stand. “Sir, with your permission I will remove Mr Kelley from the room.”

Phil nodded his assent and the politician was escorted out of the room yelling at the insubordination around him.

“What’s Failsafe Protocol B0101?” Tony stood and shook hands with the SHIELD director.

“It was designed in the fifties; three organisations, one being SHIELD were given permission to act with the intention to protect the country if given information of a disastrous threat. It supersedes the government’s control, as the needs of the country should not be ignored for politicking. Every high-level member of the Pentagon is informed of the protocol, then the memory is locked away until it needs to be used. I am now acting with more authority than the President when it comes to national security.” Phil explained, looking at ease despite the great responsibility. “After checking everything
you’ve told me, I couldn’t just sit back and allow the government to ignore you.”

Smiling sardonically Tony gestured to the seats left vacant. “Shall we try and save the world?”

---

Scott Lang was freaked the fuck out. He had been on house arrest for almost a year, and it had been strictly enforced by the FBI. Now Jimmy Woo, had turned up not to ensure his captivity, but to take him to somewhere… hopefully not prison.

“Do you have any idea what this is about?” His leg bounced up and down nervously as he sat next to the FBI agent.

“Not a clue. Maybe they want to know if you’ve had contact with Hank or Hope Pym.” The agent shrugged.

“I keep telling you that I haven’t heard anything from them.”

“You could be lying” Jimmy raised his eyebrows in question.

“What no! I swear I haven’t lied to you guys.”

Frowning slightly Jimmy replied, “Magic is a form of deception. AND you won’t tell me how you did it.”

Scott’s jaw dropped, he wanted to bang his head on the car window as his reply. “Are you serious right now? That’s the whole point of magic!”

The car stopped, Scott didn’t know whether to be thankful or fearful. He didn’t know what was waiting for him when he got out.

Getting out of the car, Scott felt his stomach drop. There was Tony freaking Stark, the guy he had fought against. He was so fucked.

“Mr Stark, sir I want to apologize for our last meeting, totally not cool everything that went down. Umm I would like to say I have a daughter that shouldn’t grow up without a father so please don’t kill me.”

The man next to the billionaire spoke up. “We’re not going to kill you. We actually need your help.”

---

Scott was sat awkwardly in his chair. He was in the Pentagon, and he was needed to help save the world.

Tony Stark hadn’t said much to him; it was mostly the Coulson guy doing the talking. Stark had left two hours ago, after getting a phone call and rushing off. Scott didn’t know whether to be glad he had left because it was awkward sitting in a room next to the guy you had actively fought against and then landed you in jail, or wish he had stayed behind because everyone else in the room were super important government workers that had jobs to do. Iron-man and Ant-man weren’t there to organise paperwork, apparently, they were expert advisors. Honestly, Scott had no clue what was going on.

“Mr Lang, we want you to be first contact with the rogue Avengers. Having worked with them before, you are the best candidate to convince them to return to America and help prepare against the
threats."

“Ok. Um yep can do, can do. We’re all pardoned and stuff. Awesome. What specifically am I meant to tell them about these threats that will convince them to come back and work for you guys?”

“Tell them that if they don’t the world will end.”

Well shit.

Scott Lang was not qualified for this kind of pressure.

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys, sorry I went completely radio silent, my life went upside down and things got pretty dark for a while there. if you've actually stuck with this story, I'm really sorry and I hope you'll stay. If you're new then welcome, and be warned I am pretty terrible at being punctual when updating but just know I do intend to finish this story.

Obviously a lot of movies have come out since I last updated so heres the basics; Spiderman Homecoming obviously happened.
Thor 3 is happened.
Ant-man and the Wasp did not happen, though I will keep elements.
Guardians 2 happened.
Infinity war did not happen, though Thanos will turn up

Hopefully I'll be back with another update soon.

Again I'm really sorry, and I hope you'll stay around, but if not, I totally understand
The kid was quiet. Tony didn’t know if that was normal in this kind of situation or not. Scratch that, nothing about the situation was normal. A week since waking up and Peter was strangely calm about the whole situation. He spoke when spoken to, he even smiled when someone joked around with him but when left on his own, he seemed to retreat inwards, to an almost meditative state.

“You up for a walk kid?”

Peter looked up from where he had been staring blankly and nodded his assent. The doctors had been shocked, even Strange was fascinated by Peter’s healing, though he did his best to hide his fascination so not to scare Peter. As they understood so far Peter had lost all but his healing abilities; no super strength or enhanced senses, no more sticking to walls. Out of Peter’s earshot Strange had theorised that in order to survive Peter’s body had perhaps shut down anything unnecessary to survival and pushed everything towards healing. It was a blow to Peter, knowing that Spiderman was gone, and Tony could tell that it played on his insecurities, after all the only reason they had met was because Peter had superpowers. Tony admitted to himself a long time ago however, that they may have met because of Spiderman, but he had grown a relationship Peter Parker.

The kid was on the mend, he no longer looked like skin and bones, only underweight which Tony counted was a win. The bones were healing and the bruises fading. The worst part was the open wounds. The incisions where they had opened Peter up and poked inside him, like a common frog to dissect in science class. They weren’t healing nearly as fast. They remained and would scar for life, the stitches fragile, barely holding the boy together.

They walked slowly, heading outside into the fresh air. Peter seemed drawn to it.

“Pete.” Tony started and stopped. How does he even begin? Tony knew he had never been associated with responsibility, nor did he ever see himself taking in a child. God, Tony’s greatest fear had been ending up like his father. Swallowing harshly, he took in a deep breath, steeling himself, “We need to talk about what happens now. The Strange says you’re good to leave med bay.”

The kid looked down at the ground, body tensing with unease.

“Kid, I’m not good with this kind of stuff, and I…”

“Please don’t send me back to May-”

Wait what?

The kid began shaking, his body seemed to give out from under him, collapsing to the ground and curling into itself.

“I know I don’t have powers anymore but I’ll be good I promise. I can go stay with Ned or live by myself but I can’t go back not after – not after – “

His breathing came out harshly, the beginning of a panic attack. Kneeling down beside the boy Tony pulled Peter to his chest, cursing himself for freezing mid speech and not calming the kid down. This was why he was the least qualified person for this job.

“No kid, there’s no way in hell that you are going back. I’m sorry I should have been clearer. Shhhh, just breathe. In. Out. In. Out. That’s it, just breathe.”
Cursing himself Tony held Peter until he calmed down, mentally berating himself for already screwing up.

When the kid seemed more calm Tony moved away, leaning on the wall behind them. Peter copied the movement, wiping his eyes on his sleeves.

“So what is going to happen to me?”

Tony tentatively stretched an arm out, pulling Peter to him in a side hug. “The paperwork was officially approved today; I should have told you earlier but I needed to be sure. You’re under my guardianship now kiddo. You can come home with me. I hope that’s ok with you.”

Again, Peter froze, causing Tony’s heart to drop. Had he stepped too far? Had Peter wanted another course of action?

“Mr Stark I-“

“I know I’m not exactly parent material but I couldn’t find any other family, and there’s no way I’m letting you go in the foster system.”

“Its ok Mr Stark. I, well, thank you. Really.” The kid stumbled over his words, clearly unsure of what to say. “I won’t be much work I promise; you won’t even know I’m there.”

Frowning at this Tony moved to try and catch Peter’s eye. Looking into the kids face Tony could see the insecurity and worry in his face. He felt like a burden Tony realised.

“Peter look at me.”

Peter’s eyes were bloodshot and teary, “Peter I want to know you’re there. I want to make sure you’re ok. Is that ok?”

Peter gave a small but honest smile. “Ok”

---

May Parker was slowly packing up her life. Piece by piece into moving boxes. She had decided on Toronto, Canada. The apartment was empty; it had been empty for a while with Peter gone. Looking back, May realised she didn’t remember when it the apartment became so lonely. After Ben’s death? Had it been when Peter had lied? Had the teenager abandoned her when he became Spiderman? No. Even as Spiderman he had still remained Peter, May understood that now. She understood that it had been her own actions that drove the boy away. The apartment lost its soul after she had found out. After Spiderman killed her vision of her nephew and masqueraded around in his body.

She had only hoped to protect him. To make him normal.

When she caught him in the suit she had screamed at him until her voice lost it strength. Those first few moments she had lost all control and hit him. Anger. A normal stage of grief. It had been reasonable; Peter had been lying to her for months.

Those first weeks had been painful. She could barely be in the same room as Peter, she had taken on longer hours and more shifts just to avoid the boy. How could she live in a home where a lying freak
also resided?

But Peter was always Peter, and he had weighed down on her. He had stayed up until the early hours of the morning hoping to catch her when she got home. He’d leave her cooked meals or record her favourite shows. It had made her believe that even beneath the freak, part of Peter, part of her Peter, still lived.

So they had tried to work things out.

It had been a godsend the letter in the mailbox. There were people out there that knew about Peter and understood that he was wrong, that he was a freak. And they could fix him. May didn’t know whether to regret the correspondence that would lead to losing Peter. They fixed him. May held onto the knowledge desperately. Now the freakishness was gone Peter could be ok.

Tony Stark had stuck around. An annoying tumour that came along with the freakish cancer that resided within her nephew. She allowed Peter to grow the relationship against her better judgement. Once the summer came May knew that the relationship would end along with the madness. Not once did May imagine that Stark would still want to be in Peter’s life without Spiderman. That had been her one mistake.

Tears stained the cardboard box that she had been packing. She had misjudged the situation. Peter was meant to come back to her and things were meant to go back to normal. Sometimes May still dreamed about the future she planned. Peter would come home and be angry for a while, but he’d learn, he’d understand that what she did was in his best interests. They could be happy again.

May walked through the apartment like a ghost, gliding towards Peter’s bedroom. She hadn’t entered the room in months. Running her hand over desk, papers and notes floated to the floor. She moved to lay on his bed. Breathing deeply, it still smelled like him. Like her Peter.

May didn’t know how long she laid there for. She missed Peter so much that her soul ached. It was all Starks fault that he was gone. She should never have signed those papers. He was her kid.

Dragging her body up out of the bed, she moved to the closet. Pulling out his favourite jumper she hugged it to her chest. It reminded her of Peter’s childhood bear Blue. Knowing Peter kept the bear in a box at the bottom of his closet she sifted through the shoes and fallen pieces of clothing. Opening the box she found Blue, photos of Peter’s parents and Ben’s wrist watch sitting on top, other mementos hidden underneath. Holding the box reverently she carried it to her moving box and place it inside.

For when Peter came back to her.
Of Liars and Lawyers

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Iniquitous Iron-Man

Anthony Stark has been charged with the abduction of 15-year-old Peter Parker. Abduction of a child is one of several crimes the supposed “superhero” has been charged with, others including; intimidation, blackmail and fraud. These charges filed yesterday by May Parker against the billionaire brings into question the already shaky characterisation of Tony Stark.

The issues surrounding the case have led to a warrant being released for the arrest of Anthony Stark, who has 48 hours to comply with the demands of the state before further charges may be lain. Stark must submit himself to the custody of the police. Stark should release Peter Parker into the care of the State to ensure the child’s safety.

Now you must have questions about the child in question, we here at the Daily Bugle have uncovered some concerning facts surrounding the nature of Starks relationship with the child. The child in question is an orphan that had previously been living with and was raised by his last remaining relative May Parker. During his Freshman year Parker claimed to have obtained an internship with Stark Industries. As the cooperation, has never hired high school aged interns, many at his school doubted his claims, however this development in relationship proves the child was at least in constant contact with Stark himself. Why Stark would take active interest in a child such as Parker is unknown, however such strange behaviour from Stark raises questions of mental stability.

May Parker, the aunt and guardian of the child has claimed that Stark used intimidation and blackmail to fraudulently gain guardianship of Peter Parker, forcing her to sign over parental rights. Such malicious and cruel behaviour in separating a grieving woman from the last member of her family is a clear injustice, we at the Daily Bugle hope that Stark is held accountable for his actions. Peter Parker’s safety should be at the top of our countries priorities, such and abuse of power shown by Stark must not set precedent.

We as a nation must not sit quietly while a child’s life is toyed with on the whim of an unstable and dangerous billionaire. We must stand by a woman that wants the child she raised to return home. We must stand against this clear abuse of power and ensure that no one is above the law, especially not Anthony Stark.
Stephen did not like the news article he was reading. For a news article concerned about the wellbeing of a child, it did little to show concern about the privacy of the child. It was the Daily Bugle, which was known to hate superheros, Stephen found it almost ironic that they wanted to protect Peter Parker when they were so willing to slander Spiderman.

The pit of his stomach dropped when he arrived at the Avengers compound to find Tony collapsed against a wall, his head in his hands. He didn’t even look up at Stephens arrival, just stared blankly at the floor.

“They took the kid.”

Closing his eyes in resignation Stephen reign in his emotions. His fury.

“We’ll get him back.”

Tony’s head shot up at the answer. His eyes were bloodshot from crying. “He’s unprotected and alone. He’s a sitting duck if Hydra want him back. Besides, the kid trusted me to look after him and I failed.”

James Rhodes arrived behind him, the door slamming into the quiet of the afternoon.

“Tony, thank god! I’ve been trying to reach you all morning. What the hell has been going on the news?”

Strange rolled his eyes, “It’s pretty self-explanatory Colonel”

“Yeah I know what’s happening, but why? Surely she knows she can’t win.”
Stark slowly rose to his feet, “She can’t win the case, but she can ruin Peter.” He growled, a dangerous glint to his eye. Inhaling deeply Stark seemed to compose himself. “I need to talk with my lawyers.” He turned to look at Stephen, there was a fire behind his eyes, an intense blaze of fury. “Can you find out where they’re keeping him, make sure he’s safe.”

“You let them take Peter?”

Stephen could throttle Rhodes that moment, the look of self-loathing the question brought to Starks face disturbed him.

“I left him home when I went into custody. It took half an hour to push forward for bail. When I got back CPS had taken Peter away.”

“Can they do that?” Rhodes asked.

“My lawyers said that immediate removal only happens if the child is in immediate danger or with a court order. There was no proof of either so they took him illegally, however my lawyers also said that Peter being in the care of the State could assist my trial.”

“But you can get him, back right?”

“That was my reaction, but now he’s in the custody of the State and with the public outrage against me, there’s no judge in America that would force them to give him back. They’re happy to ignore their own laws if it keeps the media off of their backs. My only choice would be to forcefully take him back, which would mean I lose the case.”

Stephen did not like any of this. The kid, didn’t deserve this. Walking away from the pair, he couldn’t listen to the intricacies of the law without wanting to punch someone. Stark was right, they’re happy to ignore the law when it benefits them, the biggest issue was that a child had to suffer the consequences.

Matthew Murdock was a defence attorney and proud of it. As a lawyer, it was his job to find the truth and protect the innocent. It was certainly a useful skill to be able to tell when someone was
lying, however he had been wrong before.

Sitting across from May Parker he felt as though something was off about the entire situation. First she accused Tony. Fucking. Stark. Of child abduction, and he in turn accuses her of child abuse.

Foggy was all for taking the case. It would be amazing promotion for their practice if they won against Tony Stark and saved the kid. All he needed to do was convince Matt that it was the right course of action. So far, it was working.

“I came to you two because I heard that you take on cases even when the client can’t pay. I’m not poor or anything buy Tony Stark will do everything he can to get these charges to stick and I can’t compete with that.”

“We understand completely Ms Parker, we’re glad you came to us, right Matt?” Foggy nudged Matt under the table.

Ignoring Foggy’s obvious push to agree to take the case Matt ground his teeth. Something wasn’t right. “Ms Parker, if we’re going to defend you we need to know if the charges against you have any merit. If Stark is setting you up, the best we can hope for is that it comes out in his trial and the charges against you will be much easier to drop.”

Before May Parker can answer, Foggy grabs Matt’s arm. “Excuse us, we need to have a quick discussion outside.”

Feeling himself be lead out of his office into the waiting room Matt could feel Foggy’s frustration with him practically oozing out of him. “Dude what the hell. You’re acting like she isn’t a victim, you’re always the one taking on ridiculous cases and now here’s our chance of getting an insane amount of good press on this and helping a kid, this should be right up your alley.”

Sighing Matt responded, “If you were paying attention to something other than your wallet Foggy, you’d have noticed that since she came in she hasn’t actually answered whether she abused the kid. Not once.”

Matt heard Karen move over to weigh in on the conversation. “Matt, she’s scared anyone can see that. Tony Stark takes your kid away, that’s insane.”
“Exactly, think about it. Tony Stark is the last person we could imagine willingly taking in a child and randomly he picks this kid. There’s got to be more to the story and the Aunt hasn’t been very helpful in piecing it together.”

Matt could tell that Foggy and Karen disagreed with him. They wanted to take the case.

“Just let her answer the damn question, if she answers it directly without lying we’ll take the case.”

“Thank you!” Foggy slapped Matt’s back appreciatively. “Come on, you human lie detector, let’s go take on our biggest case ever.”

Moving back into the room, barely paying attention to Foggy’s apologies Matt listened to the heart beat across from him.

“Did you ever abuse Peter Parker?”

“I’ve always had Peter’s best interests at heart.” The heart beat was strong. Unwavering. But the answer felt wrong. Not direct.

He felt Foggy nodding next to him. “Good enough for me, Matt?”

The answer was close but not as straight forward as he would have liked. Internally groaning Matt made his decision. Foggy had often put his faith in Matt’s decisions, this time he would return the favour.

“We’ll do our best to ensure justice is achieved Ms Parker.”

Chapter End Notes

Only complaint with season 1 of Daredevil
The moment T’Challa stepped into the room he recognised the tell-tale signs of frustration and boredom. Staring at the inhabitants, they were new this time, the Americans seemed to have grown a backbone.

“King T’Challa, please be seated, we have a lot to get to.” It was the American that spoke, barely glancing at him. It was disconcerting to be dismissed so easily, and the young King did not appreciate it. Since he had opened Wakanda to the world, he had more of a voice in international affairs, and yet it appeared perhaps the excitement of his country’s power had dulled. Shaking out of such thought T’Challa inclined his head and moved to the offered seat.

“Where is Kelley? I thought he and Secretary Ross were acting on America’s behalf in these negotiations.” One of the other nation diplomats questioned. The closed United Nations meeting rarely had a change of membership, it would be difficult to fill a new person in on such sensitive and dangerous information.

“Kelley has been relieved of his duties and Ross is being charged with treason as we speak.” The new member spoke with authority and confidence. This man was not to be trifled with.

“Ha! I knew Stark and Ross were cut from the same cloth even if they hated each other.” The frown on the new American member indicated to T’Challa that the man across from him had just made a mistake.

Moving in his chair, T’Challa readied himself for confrontation.

The American smiled tightly, his eyes cold, “You are entitled to your opinions Sir, but I ask you do not insult my friend. The charges against Stark are false, it won’t be long before our justice system proves it. May I suggest also not insulting the man that has done more than any other person in this room to protect the world.”

“More like make a mess.” Came the sniffed response. “He’s the reason we’re here after all.”

T’Challa, unlike the rest of the room remained quiet as the other members murmured their agreement. His eyes remained on the American. He would tell, the man in front of him was the only other person in the room that had seen true battle. The way the man moved, disciplined and strong. Not the best fighter, perhaps – yes – the strategist.

From where he sat, the American looked peaceful, calm. Underneath however, anger. To whom or what, T’Challa did not know. The man was dangerous.

The Americans gaze looked coolly over the room. Calculating. Turning, ignoring the insult made to his friend the American turned off the lights. He walked slowly and purposefully back to the table, ignoring the exclamations of the other diplomats. He opened a brief case, and the room was alight with a hologram. It held documentation and images that made T’Challa’s blood freeze in his veins.

“My government, with the help of Tony Stark,” he paused on the name, making a point to highlight his friend’s work, “Have found that extra-terrestrial life, similar to that which was seen in New York in 2012, it coming to Earth. Why, we cannot be positive, however given the nature of our last interaction with alien lifeforms, we expect it to be openly hostile.”

The room was silent. Scared.
The American flicked through the images, one by one, each alien looking more dangerous than the last. An army approached Earth and all they had been doing was arguing amongst themselves.

“Ladies and gentlemen; we need to take immediate action if we wish to survive the coming threats.”

It made sense T’Challa reasoned. This was why Stark had been ready to move beyond Germany. It was the desire to protect the world. Closing his eyes regretfully, the young King realised he had misjudged Stark. He had been functioning under the assumption that Stark’s desire to clear the names of his previous teammates had been an attempt to lure them into the open and then have them charged. Stark far more noble than he had expected. He was like Wakanda, with hidden strength and a character that cared deeply.

Turning to look upon the new enemies T’Challa narrowed his eyes, the American’s words echoing in his head. “You said threats. There is more to this than you are telling us.”

The American smiled as if he already regretted what he had to say. “Stark has also uncovered another, more internal threat. Dangerous nonetheless. Hydra the internationally recognised terrorist organisation has been preparing to world war three. We in America are concerned that they will take advantage of the worlds weakened state after alien encounter.”

Looking around the room, previously bored faces had turned grim. Last time Hydra had started a war; 80 million people had died and every man woman and child had lost part of their innocence. Men had done terrible things to each other and created monster and machine for killing.

The meeting went on. The fear settled in each person’s stomach. Each diplomat not looking forward to returning home and preparing for war. No one wanted to tell their people that the horror of 2012 New York might reach their shores. That they might live like the Great generation, that they too might lose the innocence that had been carefully cultivated and protected. It was perhaps the greatest show of international cooperation the members of the meeting had ever shown. Nothing unites people like a common enemy.

T’Challa was relieved when the other diplomats began filtering out of the room. Tired after listening to every damn member insist on having their opinions heard, they may finally be on the same team, but everyone needed to feel important. Remaining behind the American, Phil Coulson, stood talking in quiet tones with the German diplomat. It was important for the German people to seek out old stronghold of Hydra’s power.

T’Challa remained behind for another reason. He was intrigued by the American. This man before him, this strategist, was a man that could make a great ally, or a terrible enemy.

“King T’Challa,” Coulson looked to him, his eyes appraising the King. “I’m glad you stayed behind, it saves me the trouble of finding you.” The man pulled the brief case next to him closed and walked towards the door.

“Please,” He held the door open, “Take a walk with me.”

Pausing momentarily T’Challa complied with the request. Striding out of the room next to the American, the king relaxed slightly feeling Okoye fall in behind them. He did not fear the man he walked with, but it was best to be prepared when walking with an unknown entity.

The walk was silent, it made T’Challa uncomfortable. He wanted the man beside him to get to the point and speak however the man ignored him in favour of the quiet.

Grinding his teeth in frustration T’Challa stopped, Okoye fell in next to him sensing her king’s agitation.
“You wanted to speak with me, so speak.”

The American slowed to a halt, he turned slightly, as if not fully invested in communing with T’Challa.

“I never said I wanted to speak with you.”

Okoye moved slightly, edging herself closer to the man she swore to protect.

“Then why am I here.”

Turning his head Coulson looked down the hallway, the echo of footsteps met their ears. From around the corner emerged two men.

One in clear uniform, neat and stoic.

The second wore wrinkled casual clothing.

T’Challa watched as the second man made his way awkwardly toward him.

“What on earth.” He heard Okoye mutter as she fell into a least defensive stance.

“Hi” the man held out his hand tentatively, grinning uncomfortably. As quickly as his hand was offered, it was revoked, reacting as if his hand had been burnt. “O my God, is that disrespectful. I swear I totally didn’t mean it if it was.”

T’Challa found himself echoing Okoye’s sentiment. What on earth indeed.

The man glanced back at Coulson as if looking for direction. Getting little response the newcomer bowed slightly. Standing back up he puffed out his chest, as if preparing to say something important. “Your majesty. My name is Scott Lang and I need to speak to Captain America.” Nodding to himself in a congratulatory manner Lang smiled to himself. “By the way I got to say, it’s really cool meeting you properly.”

Looking behind Lang to Coulson, T’Challa could watched as the man shook his head, whether in amusement or exasperation he could not tell.

Looking back to Lang, T’Challa could not remember meeting him.

Seeing his confusion Lang’s hands covered his mouth in a gasp. “Shit sorry. God I just swore in front of a king. Anyway, I was in Germany. Antman. The little big guy.”

This man? This man had the ability to change his size so incredibly.

“What makes you think that he is in Wakanda?” This was dangerous ground. He knew he was technically harbouring war criminals, and it was his right to do so under international law. But it was not good for international relations. The young king new, Tony Stark had tracked them to Wakanda, the Ironman was as clever as the media presented, however previously with Kelley in charge of defence, T’Challa had no issue stepping around the subject.

Lang turned and pointed at Coulson, “He seems pretty convinced your majesty.” Turning back to look T’Challa in the eye Lang sighed, “I just need to talk to Captain America, and the others are Avengers, and they need to be on board for what’s coming.”

It was a strong argument. The Avengers he was housing were needed for the coming wars. Grimacing the king knew he needed to give them something. “Wakanda will do our best to contact
the missing Avengers.”

“We know you have them.” Coulson replied sharply, his face showing steel beneath, unwilling to back down.

“You would normally take the advice of a man that has abducted a child?”

T’Challa watched as Coulson’s face shuttered closed. He watched as he seemed to physically push down the emotions cause by those words. T’Challa cured himself, remembering the meeting. Stark was friends with Coulson, and Coulson would not hear word of insult against his friend.

The cold fury of Coulson’s eyes met T’Challa’s. “These are strange times your majesty. I wouldn’t normally be asking for the help of a man harbouring war criminals either. Perhaps, like I believe you would like me be believe about your situation, you should think there is more to Stark’s as well. I know Stark is innocent, can you say the same for your guests?”

Coulson walked off quickly, still angered by T’Challa’s accusations. Yelling behind one final order, “Take Lang with you, if the Avengers happen to turn up, Lang can do his job, if not, then Lang can our contact point between Wakanda myself.”

Watching the American stalk away, T’Challa felt a shadow if unease enter his heart. It would not do well to have Coulson as an enemy. As king, such rash words were dangerous.

T’Challa gestured at Lang to follow him, the best way in apology would be to agree to take the Antman to meet the Avengers.
Peter Parker was slumped over in his chair a picture of teenage angst, studiously ignoring the man behind him. The teen traced the words etched into the desk bellow him, he noted with furrowed brow the list of names, each with different styles to them. Should he add to the list? Should place his own name down in the same desk that had house other troubled youths before him? Did he even belong among them?

Shaking his head Peter remembered his aunt’s words. He’s a freak. He belonged nowhere. His stomach churned with unease at these thoughts – though that could have been the partial starvation the State doctors had ignorantly imposed. Mr Stark still wanted him around. That had to count for something, right? It had to, Peter concluded, it had to mean something, otherwise Peter really was alone.

“Mr Parker, whilst I’m sure that the wall is very interesting, I’ve been told that I can be somewhat engaging if given a chance.”

The shrink was persistent; Peter would give him that. Half an hour of talking to the back of the teens head, making idle small talk was impressive, annoying, but impressive.

Peter turned slightly glancing behind him to see the man sitting comfortably in the middle of the room on the beanbag that normally resided at the end of the bed. He smiled easily seeing Peter turn his head, causing Peter to frown.

Sighing agonisingly slowly Peter turned slowly to face the man. He had given no indication of intention to leave, and while Peter had no intention of talking about anything actually important, perhaps speaking to someone would be better than the isolation he had been living with for the past few days.

The man’s grin widened slightly then his eyes seemed to zero in to the left of Peters face. “That’s one mighty shiner kid, what happened there.”

He referred to the bruising on Peter’s face, it had been caused when he fought the child protection officers when they arrived at Tony’s house to collect him. Now that Peter had been given smaller amounts of food, recommended by doctors to ensure he’d get back to a healthy body weight, his healing wasn’t working as quick as normal and was still trying to fix the other damage done by
Hydra. This gave Peter another reason to hate everyone that came into contact with him since the State came to “protect” him. They didn’t know him, they didn’t understand that he had an increased metabolism, and their “help” was actually doing harm. Plus, Peter was hungry again. It wasn’t as bad as being with Hydra, this felt more like a dull ache that made itself noticeable every few hours, it was better than the agonizing emptiness that never went away.

He really was a freak.

“Peter?”

The man pulled him out of his thoughts. Peter returned to the present and tried to recall what the psychologist had said. “Don’t call me kid.” His voice came out croaky and sore. As it turned out, not speaking for long periods of time wasn’t good for the vocal chords.

The man raised his eyebrows at the reaction. Peter had ignored his question and had responded abrasively. Peter could practically see the cogs turning in his head, judging him. Evaluating him. It made Peter feel dirty.

The teen knew that the man wasn’t from Hydra, hell, Peter knew the man meant well, but Peter couldn’t bring himself to submit to his questioning. He couldn’t bring himself to simply pretend that he was ok with being taken away from the only safe place he had left.

This meant that the normally polite and accommodating Peter Parker was finally showing a rebellious streak. It only took weeks of torture to get there.

“Do you not feel like a child anymore Peter?”

It was a good question. Was Peter Parker still a child? Thinking about what defined a child gave Peter pause. How long had it been since he actually felt like a child?

He wasn’t carefree. Not like others his age. Sure, most teens felt the pressures of school and homework they were still relatively carefree. Peter had been baring responsibility since Ben died. He needed to be strong, he needed to support himself and May.

Now he needed to support himself.
Was he innocent? No. Peter couldn’t bare go further down that train of thought.

Sure, Peter supposed that he was legally a child. Under 18 years old and that was the whole issue. He just wanted to go back to Tony’s house. It wasn’t home, Peter didn’t have a home anymore, but it was safe because Tony was there.

That was the issue. Tony called him kid. A sign of endearment. A sign that he cared. This man didn’t care. Not really. He meant well sure, and probably cared for Peter as much as he would care for any child but that wasn’t enough. It rubbed him the wrong way, gave an insinuated closeness between them that Peter resented being forced upon him.

“Just don’t call me kid.”

The man nodded, accepting the answer quietly.

“So how are you feeling?”

Peter snorted at that. While it made sense that a psychologist would ask that, Peter was almost amused by the stupidity of someone asking him how he felt. His entire personal life was being broadcast over the news, he was the victim of terrible horrors no matter what side people went for. If they were in May’s corner he was the victim of indoctrination by the manipulative Tony Stark, and if they were on Tony’s side he was the new poster boy for child abuse victims. He was such a freak.

Deciding that most of that was pretty damn obvious Peter went for something else, “I’m hungry.”

“The doctors said that the diet isn’t working as they would have liked. Apparently, you’ve lost weight since getting here. Your body is stressed, hopefully it’ll work itself out soon. You’ve got good people here Pete, we want to make sure you’re ok.”

Peter scoffed at that, if they actually wanted him to be ok, they’d let him go back with Mr Stark. Standing Peter moved to lay on his bed, “Whatever.” the teen mumbled as he stared at the ceiling. He should have just ignored the man, being alone was better than listening to this rubbish.

“Peter – “
“If you actually gave a damn about me you’d let me go back to Tony!” Frustration dripped from his words, doing a bad job of masking the underlying desperation.

“We can’t let you go be with Tony. We need to make sure it’s a safe environment and that nothing untoward is happening. Do you understand that Peter?”

Rolling his eyes Peter sat up to look the man in the eye. “Why do you even care? It’s because he’s Tony Stark, right? I’m not as stupid as you all think. I can hear you guys talk behind my back! You all think he brainwashed me, basically the whole damn world think he’s guilty, maybe you should ask me! But apparently, I’m just a dumb freak that can’t tell he’s being manipulated. Your all being manipulated, my aunt hurt me, she fucking left me. Is that what you want to hear? You don’t know a damn thing about any of this so just leave.” He was breathing heavily; his throat was sore from yelling.

Turning on his side Peter ignored the man as he left.

He was so tired.

It was morning quicker than Peter would have liked. Time was a finicky foe, and did exactly the opposite of what Peter would have liked. It was quick when he slept and dragged on in his waking hours. Dragging himself out of bed he moved to the bathroom, going through the normal morning routine took longer trying not to aggravate his injuries. The stitches still didn’t want to close properly; his body was being held together by threads. He was truly a freak.

Moving to the kitchen Peter grimaced at the small serving waiting for him. Part of him wanted to be glad to be eating something, it was better than his treatment with Hydra but the louder, hungrier part of him was angry that he was being cared for by people that didn’t understand him at all, and if they weren’t careful, it might kill him.

One of the social workers, Sally if Peter recalled correctly, walked into the room, she smiled like always before taking a seat across from him. She reached out to take his hand in hers, but Peter pulled back. Even after a week of being here he didn’t feel comfortable with them, and didn’t want to pretend like he was.
To her credit she kept smiling and simply placed her hands in her lap. “Peter, today we’re going to
get you to speak to some lawyers about the upcoming trials Ok?” Her choice was soft and melodic,
perfect for speaking to little children that didn’t understand what was going on. Peter understood his
situation, he knew they only saw him as another broken child.

“I thought I was only meant to give the police my statements?”

Peter may have been a science and mathematics orientated student, but he was still aware of his
rights with regards to legal situations. Sadly, this wasn’t his first experience with the justice system,
however Peter was thankful because this time he could tell something was off.

Her smile froze slightly, growing tighter as if annoying by being questioned, or at least annoyed by
being caught out. “It’s up to your legal guardians as to whether you get interviewed for evidence at
court. Whilst you in care here that means it’s our decision. You’ll be speaking to the lawyers and
you’ll answer any questions as best you can ok sweetheart?”

The teen bit back a retort, hating the patronising tone and insincere epithet. Peter knew that his
guardian was still technically Tony Stark, and Peter doubted he agreed with these people. Peter also
knew that it was his guardian’s duty to ensure what is happening has his best interests at heart. This
didn’t feel like his best interests.

Shifting in his chair, trying to alleviate the discomfort that had settled at the pit of his stomach Peter
kept quiet. Fighting them would only add to the narrative they had built for themselves. No matter
what they thought, Peter could tell when he was being lied to.

Once he finished his breakfast Sally lead him to a lower floor, it had meeting rooms and government
officials looking very busy. They stared at him as he walked by, he was famous now. The
brainwashed kid from Queens. The kid that Tony Stark kidnapped. As the days went on the slander
against his mentor had gotten worse, insinuations were being made about their relationship.
Sometimes Peter wondered whether he was worth all of the trouble he causes Tony.

Probably not.

Entering a room, two men sat at a table facing the door with a woman on the side. Noting their suits
and professional posture Peter concluded the men must be the lawyers.

Sitting down across from the blind one to make room for Sally he sat. “Peter these men are Matthew
Murdock and Franklin Nelson; they’re lawyers your aunts case. They’re here to get to the bottom of
things.”
Peter noted that she didn’t tell him if they were prosecution or defence grinding his teeth in frustration Peter knew this meant that they were probably working for his aunt. It was ludicrous that they actually expected him to help the people defending his aunt.

Franklin held out his hand, “Call me Foggy.” Peter ignored the offered hand to glare at the social worker.

She kept smiling, “Peter if you need me I’ll be a few rooms away working.”

The blind one, Matt, seemed to want to protest. He frowned when the woman closed the door with a click, leaving Peter alone. She should have stayed; Peter could tell this whole thing was shady and her leaving him alone with lawyers that weren’t his own was the nail in the coffin.

Mr Nelson cleared his throat, also looking slightly put out by the lack of protocol being observed. “Mr Parker, is it alright if I call you Peter?”

“No.”

His response seemed to draw an amused snort from Mr Murdock.

“Forgive my associate Mr Parker, we don’t often get opportunity to interview child witnesses, the courts normally frown upon it due to the distress it causes.” He turned his head at the end as if emphasising the odd situation to his partner.

Peter realised that Mr Murdock didn’t want to be here anymore than he did. The teen decided that he didn’t dislike Mr Murdock that much; he was still the enemy, but he wasn’t all bad.

The lawyer across from him kept talking, “This is our secretary Ms Karen Page, she’s here to take notes, though seeing as your guardian has left you alone I feel obligated to ask her to sit on your side and keep Foggy and I from taking questions too far, this is an odd situation for us all.”

Ms Page looked at Mr Murdock surprised by his request. Processing his words, she nodded to herself before moving to sit on the chair Peter had left for Sally. It was a token move, trying to even the playing field, but Peter appreciated the sentiment even though he knew it was still three against one.
“Mr Parker we’re here on behalf of your aunt. You accused her of child abuse…” Mr Nelson trailed off, as if unsure how to continue.

Peter remained silent. Was he meant to say something? There wasn’t a question in what he said right?

“What my associate was trying to get to I believe is whether Mr Parker you would be willing to be more clear as to the abuse you feel you suffered.” Mr Murdock was clear and to the point.

“What the hell Matt? You couldn’t start off with a nicer question?” Karen glared at lawyer as if offended on Peter’s behalf. Whether it was because he was blind, or because he just didn’t care, Mr Murdock refused to wilt under the admonishing glare.

“And what Karen? Ask him how his days going? None of this is going to be a nice experience for him, no use pretending it will be.” He growled. It gave an echo of familiarity that confused Peter.

“Then what do you expect me to do if I’m on his side?” Ms Page shot back.

“Make sure I don’t go too far. Asking about the nature of abuse is in the job description here seeing as the police statement was useless and the aunt insists she never did anything wrong.”

“You don’t have to be a dick about it, he’s a kid for Christ’s sake.” This time Mr Nelson interrupted.

“Yeah a kid. Perhaps you should have taken note of that before we took this damn case.” Mr Murdock stood quickly and moved to leave the room. His movements were far more fluid and graceful than Peter expected. “I’m going for air.” The blind man muttered while opening the door. Narrowing his eyes at the movement Peter again noted the twinge of familiarity the action presented.

It was becoming clear to Peter that the argument had been simmering for a while. Sitting awkwardly in the room with Mr Nelson and Ms Page, Peter lamented the loss of Mr Murdock. He had been the first person he had met while here that actually seemed to care about his wellbeing.

Before the other adults could apologize for the argument Peter spoke up. “I’ll speak with Mr Murdock.”
Matt Murdock stepped out of the room shaking. The more time he spent on this case the more it made him uncomfortable. He shouldn't even be speaking to the kid, what guardian allowed a child to meet alone with the lawyers defending the very person the child had accused?

Peter had entered the room, his heart beat was slow, slower than anything Matt had heard before in a normal person. He could hear the stretch of his stitches as he moved, and the creak of bones still healing. There was no doubt in his mind that the kid had been through something horrific.

Was he defending the guilty party? The thought pushed a shiver to run down his back. He never wanted to defend someone that hurt a child. Matt leaned on the wall behind him, trying to alleviate the sick feeling that had risen to into his chest.

The door beside him opened, Foggy and Karen stepped out. Sighing Matt knew he needed to apologise for his own part in the unprofessional argument a few minutes ago. Before he can get a word out Foggy interrupts, sounding unhappy, “He wants to speak to you.”

“Me?”

“Yeah you. It’s kind of obvious that you’re basically on his side. Just try to keep in mind the fact that we’re defending his aunt, kids probably brainwashed remember?”

Nodding Matt moved to go back into the room. “Foggy if the kid is telling the truth-“

“I know, I know, it’s on me. I get it you hate the fact we took this case. I still think Stark’s just screwed with his head, the aunt seems legit.”

Shaking his head Matt squared his shoulder.

It was time to get some answers.
Saw Endgame and loved it.
Thanks for reading.
Please leave a review!
The kid wasn’t nervous.

If Matt needed another reminder that this case was off, listening to the steady, strangely slow heartbeat of the boy in front of him, he knew that that he needed to tread carefully. Taking a moment to appraise the boy, Matt listened to child’s body. It was off. Whether it was due to abuse, or something more sinister he could not tell. Perhaps Stark had done something to the boy, changed him to suit whatever his needs were. Matt felt his phone vibrate in his pocket, electing to ignore the phone Matt frowned noting that he didn’t like Tony Stark. The billionaire was pretentious, arrogant and loud. He had always been brash and uncaring of people’s expectations and goals. But he did seem to mean well. He had become Ironman, he had changed his business to help rather than harm, he had even submitted to the will of the people in signing the accords.

So why throw away the good will he had garnered in taking in this boy? Arguably this boy was a nobody, another blip in the grand scheme of things. What made this boy special?

“Mr Murdock are you ok?”

Snapped out of his thoughts the boy’s voice broke his concentration.

“Sorry Mr Parker, I was just thinking.” Matt smiled, hopefully a reassuring smile, preparing himself for the task at hand. “So… shall I start with a new question or do you want to answer the first one?”

He heard the boy run his hand through his hair. Holding his breath Matt waited. This would give him answers, he just hoped he was prepared for them.

“Have you ever trusted someone…?” The boy trailed off unsure of how to continue. “Have you ever trusted someone so much that you knew, or at least you thought you knew that they would never hurt you?”

Matt sighed. The last person Matt trusted so implicitly had been his father. “My dad, he was… he was the greatest man I’ve ever known.”

“My father wanted me to live a certain way, I can’t say I’ve successfully followed his dream for me, honestly he’d probably not like the way I go about certain things. I like to think he’d be proud, but even if he isn’t, I know he would never hate me for it.”

The boy sniffed at that, Matt could taste a salt to the air that hadn’t been there before. Had he already made the kid cry?

The boy in question cleared his throat. “I don’t think your dad would get along with Aunt May.”
Shifting uncomfortably in his seat, Matt Murdock processed the discussion he had just had. The boy certainly hinted at a disagreement between himself and his aunt. That was not new information. His aunt had spoken of their disagreements surrounding his internship with Stark as the main reason why Peter would have turned against her. Nothing illegal or abusive about a parent disagreeing with a child’s choices, that was parenting. But hatred? How deep did the disagreement run to make the boy feel as though his aunt hated him?

Perhaps it was teen angst, or miscommunication on both ends.

Or there was more to the story. The nagging voice at the back of his head seemed insistent in reminding him that he did not know everything. It was getting quite annoying.

“Your aunt doesn’t hate you Peter. She wouldn’t be so determined to get you back if she hated you.”

The boy flinched as if struck. Matt quietened down, not wishing to cause the child pain or fear.

“She left me.”

It dawned on Matt that the summer camp the child had been left at was the root cause of the issues. May had said offhandedly about leaving the boy there so he might be distanced from the internship. Judging by the injuries of the child, the camp had been abusive. The boy blamed May for the abuse. It was an illogical conclusion for the child to come to but Matt could understand the confusion the child must have felt.

But where did Stark come into it?

“Peter, whatever happened at the camp wasn’t your aunt’s fault. She didn’t want you hurt.”

“She did.” The reply was flat. Forceful in its admission.

There was no change in heartbeat, not flutter of confusion or uncertainty. The child believe his aunt had left him there on purpose.

“She knew what they were going to do. She wanted them to fix me. She wanted me to stop being a freak.”

Matt’s chest tightened as the horror began to well up inside of him.

“She fucking knew and she left me there!”

Matt was defending a child abuser. Sitting in shock, Matt felt eerily calm. The ghost of irony hit him, he had always used his senses to help people, to make sure that they were honest and good. This case, the case that Foggy said would be the most monumental case of their careers he had used his powers ad believed a woman, no, a monster. She must be so convinced of her own lies that she believes them herself.

Here he sat, the devil of Hell’s Kitchen, in a room with a broken boy that wanted, needed to be believed. How could he not believe him?

There still remained the question of Stark. Matt knew a good man would leave the boy to compose himself. He knew a good man wouldn’t push the boy more.

Matt wished he was a good man, but he was the devil; “Why Stark?”

“Because he’s all I have left.” It was a miserable admission, resignation drowning the statement.
The boy was trembling. It was as if saying out loud his precarious situation had made it real. As if suddenly the child had remembered that the man he was talking to would be the one against him in court.

“There’s more. Why wouldn’t Stark let the police take you and then file for custody following state protocol. Any decent lawyer would have given that advice.”

The boys heart rate jumped slightly, uneasy with that question. Turning his head to listen more closely to the heartbeat, perhaps he was mistaken.

“I. “

The door behind him opened suddenly.

Foggy leaned through. Matt cursed his friends timing.

“Matt, please tell me you checked your email.” Foggy sounded nervous.

Shaking his head in the negative he heard Foggy swear under his breath.

“It’s from the DPP, the trial is in four days, someone insisted it be moved up as a high priority case.”

Shit.

Four days? Four days meant that any hopes of dropping the case and handing it on to some amoral ass were dashed. No judge in their right mind would let them drop the case, there just wasn’t enough time to prep the other lawyer.

“That’s not all, the our case is going to be run simultaneously with Stark’s.”

That was unusual. They were accused of different crimes and had no association as criminals, it made no sense for a judge to merge the trials.

“Oh what grounds?”

“National security. It’s going to be a closed court. They want as few people allowed in on the facts as possible so they’re being trialed simultaneously.”

Foggy entered the room fully, seating himself next to Matt. “Matt, please tell me you know why a child abuse case it a matter for national security.”

Matt turned to the boy across from him. “Any chance you’d know?”

The boys heart was pounding, loud and desperate.

“She left me with Hydra.”

Steve Rogers sat comfortably in the living space granted by the Wakandan’s. He had been keeping track of the news back home, watching with morbid fascination as his old friend and teammate had been accused of child abduction.

Watching the news, they kept replaying the same clip of Tony as he walked out of the police station after having his bail granted. Tony looked tired, so terribly tired.

Taking in a random child despite opposition of the original guardian was madness even for Tony.
Had he gone off the deep end after the events in Siberia?

The kid involved was young, the news kept flashing his school picture, 15 years old eyes full of life.

Tony had done a lot of stupid things in his life, since waking up from the ice Steve had found the chaos surrounding the son of Howard Stark disconcerting, however this really took the cake. At least there had been some basic logic to Tony’s foolishness, taking in this kid really floored Steve.

“Mr Rogers, I hope I am not interrupting anything important.”

Surprised that he wasn’t alone Steve turned to see his host shockingly accompanied Ant-man. Flailing slightly trying to remember the Ant-man’s name Steve stood to greet them. Seb? Seth? Skye?

Scott!

“T’Challa. Scott.” Steve nodded at each of them “It’s good to see you. Both of you” He moved to stand in front of them, curious as to why Ant-man was in Wakanda. If Steve remembered correctly, Scott and Clint had taken deals to return home to their families. So why was Scott back?

“I invited the other Avengers to meet here. I have been given important information, Mr Lang is here to assist in delivering it.” The king was straight to the point, a stern look in his eye indicated to Steve that the news had unsettled him.

By luck of serendipity the other refugees made their way into the room, each looking as curious as Steve felt.

“So what’s going on and why do I get the feeling something bad is going to happen?” Sam spoke first, looking serious. He crossed his arms defensively, a move Steve almost copied, the desire to hold his shield filled him, as if the piece of metal could protect him from whatever news they were about to receive.

“I was sent the papers a few minutes ago, you have all been pardoned in America. Scott has been here a few days giving me what information he could about the new threats.”

“Threats, as in multiple?” Steve interrupted, his body tensing as if ready to fight.

“Tony Stark has gone to the American government with proof of an extra-terrestrial threat like 2012, only on a more global scale.”

Sam gave a low whistle, “Damn, why can’t aliens be like ET.” His attempt at humour fell on deaf ears.

“The other threat?” It was Bucky that spoke this time, looking equally as tense.

T’Challa’s eyes turned regretful, as if already guilty for telling them. “Hydra.”

Steve’s breath caught in his throat, his chest felt tight, crushed. Shaking his head in denial, Steve moved to sit down.

“How do we know it’s true? Stark seems to have gone mad since we last saw him. He could be wrong.” Wanda asked. She was the least affected by the news, Steve watched as she moved toward him concern covering her features; moving as if to help him breathe again.

“He gave proof. I saw it myself. The American replacing Kelley also seems adamant that Stark is
innocent of the charges against him.”

Steve frowned. Irrespective of whether he was innocent of child abduction he was still mad for taking in a random child, in their line of work it was too dangerous publically have many ties, let alone have one of those close ties be an innocent child he has not rights to.

Wanda’s hands held his trying to give comfort. Trying to ground him

“So what, they want us to go back and save them? They exiled us.” Wanda spoke again, no malice to her voice, but it was a valid question.

“Right my job…” Scott muttered as he moved forward to speak. “You have to go back, at least for a bit. We need to work with the other Avengers. The other hero’s. You may have noticed but America has the most. There’s us and Ironman and Spiderman and other dudes like Daredevil. We need to stand together, otherwise we may not win. And that’s not an option, I have a daughter that I want to see grow up and you guy’s kind of owe me.”

He was right. He was right on all counts.

“So we go home then.”

The others seemed to be in agreement. They needed to prepare for the rising threats, stand together or fall.

Scott seemed to collapse in relief. “I just told of captain America.” His awed exclamation breaking the tension in the room.

Time to go home.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading
I should note that this isn't anti team captain america, but definitely for team ironman and for the accords.
I hope you enjoyed, Please leave a review.
Hopefully I can update soon
Promises

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Life was hard. The past few years had not been kind to Tony Stark, but he had endured. He had found small lights in the black of the world, Rhodey first, followed by Pepper, for a while he had seen the other Avengers as lights too, and things had seemed ok. Then as most of the lights extinguished Peter Parker had turned up. It hadn’t been his plan to become close to the kid, though looking back Tony knew it was inevitable from the beginning because that kid never seemed to be able to follow plans properly.

The more time he spent without seeing the kid, the more and more agitated he was becoming. If he wasn’t careful, he was going to say the wrong thing in a national security meeting and actually end up in prison. Peter’s welfare weighed on him heavily, the way the kid had trusted him and only him on return from Hydra freaked him out. He was not parent material; he didn’t know how to look after himself for god’s sake! Yet all he wanted was Peter back, he wanted to screw up and muddle his way through parenting, because that was what Peter needed.

Looking down at his phone, Tony sighed. Life was hard. “Coulson, I’m glad you called. I’ve been meaning to thank you for organising the court, I just need this behind me.”

“I’ll be honest Tony, organising it was for selfish reasons. I need you focused and I’d be willing to wager the only way to do that would be if Peter’s back with you.”

Tony nodded, even though Coulson couldn’t see him. “What did you need me for anyway?”

The rustling of papers could be heard on the other side of the line. “This is more of a conscience call. The rogue Avengers should be arriving within minutes of my making this call. I just wanted to see how you’re handling it?”

Tony couldn’t help the groan escape him. He had been avoiding the reality of his situation as much as possible. “I’m as prepared as I can be. I’ll let them in, tell them the rules and head off to another meeting, no need to be chummy even if a king is with them.”

“I wasn’t aware you had another meeting today, I thought you would be preparing for the trial tomorrow.” There was an unasked question to Coulson’s words
“I’m meeting with a potential ally. Daredevil to be exact.” Tony ground his teeth at the thought of meeting the man. He was an enemy. He was defending a monster.

But he was needed. Just like the damn rogues.

“You tracked him down? You don’t sound pleased, don’t like the guy?”

Tony cursed Coulson for being a spy, he didn’t want to be reminded of exactly who he was meeting. “Turns out he’s easier to track down in his day to day job. I’ll let you know how it goes.”

Turning the call off, Tony moved through the compound going to meet Vision and Rhodey.

Vision, for all of his social naiveté, was sitting calmly in a sofa in the communal lounge room, Rhodey was visibly nervous, his hands tapped on his legs agitated.

“Are you well Colonel Rhodes?” Vision, questioned, despite his formal address, the android had studiously observed his peers, and while he may not be able to pick up the average human idiosyncrasy he had learnt the other avenger’s habits, particularly Tony and Rhodes, the three had somewhat bonded since being left behind.

“Not really Vision,” Rhodes glanced at the android only for his gaze to land on Tony. “I’m worried…” Made eye contact with his friend as the colonel trailed off.

“If I can give some advice, I would recommend letting go of the worry and focus on the job at hand.”

Tony almost laughed at that, it was easy to say and much harder to do.

“Sir, the cars have arrived. Entering the building now are the Rogue Avengers, accompanied by James Barnes, King T’Challa Princess Shuri of Wakanda and the Dora Milaje.”

Like out of a nightmare, the ghosts of his past walked back into his life. First walked Steve Rogers, leading the group confidently into the room standing to attention across from Tony. Behind him followed Romanoff and Barton striding comfortably into the room and took seats in the corner,
where everything could be seen. Maximoff next, her eyes lingering on Vision as she took up residence next to the television. Scott Lang followed, nervously skitting from side to side and ended up awkwardly in near the spies. Barnes and Wilson walked in together, Wilson looking unusually serious, Barnes failed to make eye contact with Tony. The billionaire took note on the uncomfortable stance the Winter Soldier took to Steves left as Wilson sat down across from Rhodes.

Finally, the king and his guards came in, next to him a teen looking around curiously, her eyes also zeroing in on Vision, eyes alight with excitement.

“I’d say welcome but I think we’d all agree its insincere. Your rooms are the same, extra ones made up for the new kids on the block. I don’t care much what you do as long as your around to save the world, if that’s all, I have somewhere to be.”

Tony moved to walk away, already feeling his heart in his throat as his calm began collapsing around him. He was not ready for this.

“Tony come on, we need to talk.” Steve held his hands up imploringly.

“There nothing to talk about Rogers.” Tony took a shuddering breath shutting his eyes tight as if it would make the world go away.

“There’s a lot and you know it. Aliens and Hydra? Not to mention the accords. We all acted rashly, we need to move on so we can trust each other.”

“You know what Rogers, fuck you. Living up to the righteous and oh so noble Captain America mythos, you left. I’ve been the one here actually trying to do the world some good, you can’t act all high and mighty because you left. You fucking left.”

He was shaking, whether with rage or anguish he did not know.


“Some good? For god’s sake, you kidnapped a child! Everyone’s telling us we need to work with you after the accords, you were all for accountability then but you go crazy and take a kid into this – “
Steve was cut off by a punch.

The whole room was still, like time had stopped.

“Say one more thing about my kid and I’ll shove your damn shield down your throat.”

Tony stalked off breathing heavily, Rhodey at his side.

The other residents of the room did not follow.

T’Challa turned to his sister, “This is why I did not want you to come.”

“If you thought I would sit at home when the world was at stake you need to reassess what you know of me brother.”

Their quiet argument was ignored through Steve’s frustrated rant about Tony Stark.

“Might I suggest next time; you take time to understand more about the situation before bringing up such sensitive topics.” Vision stood, a frown marring his face.

“He brought a kid into our world that’s not ok.”

“Oh come off it Steve. You have an issue with my kids? With any of us having kids? Stark knows he’s not parent material but he is trying to take in a kid anyway, that means somethings up. He must have felt he had no choice. If he hadn’t punched you, I sure as hell would’ve, you shouldn’t have brought the kid up.” Clint’s voice rings true from the corner of the room. It leaves no room for argument.

The kid was off limits.
Tony strode into the room, a different sight then he had been at the Compound. The three colleagues looked shocked to see him there.

“Mr Stark! What are you? Why are you here?” The woman, Karen Page stood from her desk in alarm.

“I need to speak to Mr Murdock.”

“If this is about tomorrow –“

“It’s not.” Tony cut the blind man off. “It’s an unrelated matter I think you’ll be quite interested in.” He gestured towards one of the practising rooms, insinuating a more private need.

“Matt…”

“It’ll be fine Foggy.” The blind man walked carefully into the room, Tony followed shutting the door behind him resolutely.

“The Devil of Hell’s Kitchen. I have to admit you were difficult to track down.”

Murdock froze. It appeared this was not what he was expecting, a slight crack of panic appeared momentarily, schooled away quickly under a mask of calm.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about –“

“Don’t bullshit me, you’re the vigilante running around after street gangs. Got to say, I was surprised by you, the whole blind thing, ordering certain things online, or are you just really into bondage?”

“So what, this is blackmail? I can’t get off this case, I petitioned the judge who refused. I have to defend Ms Parker.” His tone was clipped, clearly not happy with the situation.

“This isn’t about the case, or I suppose it is just not your part in it. The whole national security bit,
that’s about Hydra. And you’re on their list, the kid wanted me to track you down and warn you. I almost didn’t, asshole lawyer like you wouldn’t be missed. But the universe hates me and so I need you to come work with me against them. Against threats bigger than either of us.”

The lawyer looked confused. Frustrated. He turned his head as if listening to something. Tony knew it must be his senses, what the lawyer listened for however Tony didn’t care, as long as his listened to him.

“Why are Hydra after me?”

“Because your enhanced. They’ve been tracking down enhanced humans and experimenting. You’re on their list.”

“Where does Peter come into this?”

“I suppose you’ll find out tomorrow at the trial. Peter was Spiderman.”

Tony enjoyed the way his words seemed to punch the lawyer in the gut. Murdock may want out now, but he still chose to stand up and defend May Parker, and even though it was his job, Tony couldn’t bring himself to forgive him for that.

Michelle Jones would not consider herself overly invested in the lives of her peers, however two weird nerds had managed to integrate themselves into her life. They had annoyingly endeared themselves upon her. Due to this unfortunate turn of event, she found herself becoming increasingly worried as the news kept referencing Peter’s current situation.

Ned had gone offline completely. He had deleted every social media account, and even shut off his phone. She couldn’t contact him at all.

Peter was the same, though she expected that. Whatever mess he was actually in was likely weighing on his mind, an acceptable excuse.

School had started again; it had been a lonely experience without either boy next to her. She missed
their weird debates about Star Wars and other pop culture contentions. She even missed the way they would try to hide that fact that Peter was Spiderman from her. It was dead obvious, and how no one else had figured it out was almost concerning.

People stared at her, whispering about how she was friends with the kid in the news. Some had even approached her, wanting to know more. It made life difficult, and she had felt the urge to cry or yell or just punch someone in the face. Peter was her friend and she didn’t know if he was ok, and that scared her.

Which was why the young activist found herself cutting school and walking to Ned’s apartment at 6am on the cool Wednesday morning. It was time to get Ned out. She couldn’t do much for Peter, but she could make sure Ned was ok.

Knocking on the door as loudly as she dared she checked her watch. If they left soon they could make the train on time.

The door opened, “Hey Mrs Leeds, I know its early and all but I didn’t want Ned to be alone today.”

The older woman smiled appreciatively. “Thank you dear, he’s been so worried. I’m glad you came I was just about to go to work, at least he won’t be alone.” The older woman grabbed behind her, picking up her car keys. “Taylor, we need to leave honey.”

Ned’s little sister came into view, dragging her school bag behind her. “Why do I have to go to school when Ned gets to stay home?”

“Sweetheart, you need to go to school. Ned will go back soon, he’s just really sad right now.”

Michelle moved out of the woman’s way as the rushed past, the eleven-year-old trudged behind her, giving Michelle curious look.

Mrs Leeds turned around hurriedly, “Oh sorry MJ, Ned’s still in his room, there’s food in the kitchen feel free to eat something. Thank you for coming, I’m glad he won’t be alone.” Taylor rolled her eyes, grabbed her mother’s arm and began walking down the stairs out of sight.

MJ stepped gingerly inside the Leeds household. She had only been there twice before; the trio had normally spent time in public spaces or Peter’s place so they didn’t have to deal with siblings.
Honestly was surprised that Mrs Leeds had recognised her.

Squaring her shoulders, Michelle Jones marched into Ned’s room. They were on a schedule.

Seeing Ned asleep in bed, the teen rolled her eyes. She grabbed the end of his blankets and tugged.


“Get dressed, we need to get going.”

She looked around the room and spotted what appeared to be clean laundry sitting atop the dresser. She threw the clothes towards him and walked out of the room.

“What – Where?”

She heard him scramble out of bed as he closed the door behind her so he could get changed.

“We’re going to court.” She called through the door.

“It’s a closed court MJ, we won’t get in.” His voice was muffled through the door, sounding despondent. Listening carefully, she could no longer hear the tell-tale sounds of dressing.

“You’d better be dressed because I’m opening the door.”

Grabbing hold of the door knob she heard Ned curse, she opened the door to see him pulling on a sweater.

Gazing coolly at her friend she took time to properly take in his appearance. He had bags under his eyes, paler than usual. His body language was nervous, like he was uncomfortable around her again.

“We might see Peter go in.”
Her words seemed to spark a determination in him. He nodded as he grabbed his school bag from the ground.

“Ok.”

They missed the train. Michelle had insisted he go pick out a darker sweater, the reporters were going to be swarming the court room and she didn’t like the idea of being interviewed because of her friendship with Peter. Ned had also insisted he make sandwiches so they could stake out the court the whole day, packing them into his bag along with other snacks and water bottles.

They sat waiting for the nest train. Michelle nervously tapping her thigh. She had wanted the early one in the hope of avoiding the media.

“So how’s school?” Ned asked.

“Awful.”

Ned seemed to deflate slightly, it occurred to Michelle that he was looking for a distraction.

“There’s a bunch of new kids. Rich creeps that act like they’re better than the rest of us.” And they were entitled assholes that kept talking to her because she knew Peter. Harry Osbourne and Justine Hammer were probably the most prominent names among the new supposed upper class of Midtown, the only amusing thing about it was the Flash suddenly wasn’t even close to the top dog anymore, seeing him demoted was almost amusing. As it turns out, whether or not Tony Stark actually got access to Peter Parker didn’t matter the to elite of New York, what mattered was that he was clearly Starks chosen heir, and that meant the rich creeps were willing to pull their kids from fancy private schools and bribe the school board in letting their kids into Midtown.

Peter was going to hate coming back to school…if he came back to school.

“Why would there be so many new kids?” Michelle sometimes worried about how innocent Ned could be, but it would do her no good in freaking him out.
“Probably just the universe deciding Flash needed to be pushed down a few pegs.”

Ned gives a light chuckle, it warmed Michelle’s heart to see him smile for the first time this morning.

When they finally arrived at the courthouse they hid on a side street, avoiding the media.

“Hey kid – Ned right?”

The pair turned, Michelle saw a middle-aged man dressed in a suit and cursed. Was he a reporter? Did he know that Ned was friends with Peter?

“Mr Happy! Is Peter with you?” Ned seemed excited to see him, making Michelle relax slightly. Looking closer she realised he was the man that picked Peter up occasionally from school.

“No kid, he’s in court, or he will be soon I think.”

“Is he ok?” Michelle asked, it came out more aggressively than she intended, but she stood tense, desperate for an answer.

The man winced, “Last I saw, he was still pretty bad. You guys need to be prepared for it. He’s going to need you.”

And they’d be there. It was a promised Michelle made silently.

They’d be there as long as he needed.

Chapter End Notes

Not my best work, I wanted to get it out to you guys but its not what I had hoped. I
might edit and rework it soon,
Even though it's not my best I hope you enjoyed it.
Thanks for the reviews I really appreciated them from last chapter.

If you have time let me know whether it's better for longer chapters but updated farther apart, or short chapters with quick updates because I'm toying with doing longer but that obviously takes more time.
The Suit gestured for them to follow him behind the courthouse. “I don’t know when Peter’s getting here but you can wait with me, I don’t know how long this is going to take but I don’t like the idea of you two getting attacked by the media.”

Michelle followed quietly behind ‘Mr Happy’, she had never interacted with him, she knew who he was of course, for a while there he had the unlucky job of being Iron-man’s bodyguard. Ned seemed to know him well enough, nervously asking what the man knew about Peter.

“When Tony found Peter I was actually on leave; he called me when the kid was out of surgery. He had me pick up his aunt, before, well before we found out she was one of the reasons the kid was in such a bad way.” Happy spoke quietly, holding the back door of the courthouse open for the teens to enter. Luckily the media were waiting at the front entrance, hoping for a shot of Peter Parker, May Parker or Tony Stark himself.

Ushering the teens into a side room, Michelle noticed a man sitting in a lounge chair in the corner. He looked up, his face showed surprise and confusion, “Happy?” the man, Michelle realised he was Colonel James Rhodes, raised his eyebrows and looked at the teens as if to ask why they were there.

“Peter’s friends. They were hanging around outside. I didn’t want them to be caught by the media.”

Nodding his assent the Colonel smiled at the teens, it was strained Michelle noted, the stress of the situation was clearly getting to him.

“Stay away from the windows and keep the blinds drawn, the media will be swarming soon enough, believe me you want to avoid them.” He leaned slightly towards the window, checking to see if his expectations were accurate. Seeing him grimace, she knew he was correct.

Glancing over at her friend, Michelle was relieved to see he was not freaking out about meeting War Machine, or was he now the Iron Patriot? Now she would have to keep up with the superheroes more than ever, it was Peter’s life now, so it was hers too.

“Peter’s friends mmmh? It’s going to be tough you know. Ever since I met Tony, my life has never been the same, the media will want to know you, will follow you to uncomfortable places. People
will want to get close to you to get to Peter. You know that, right?” He spoke to them, explaining the path they were going to go down. It made Michelle’s stomach clench with unease.

“But Peter’s not Mr Stark.” Ned spoke, his naiveté showed again. No Peter was not Stark, but in taking him in Tony Stark had basically broadcast to the world that Peter Parker was important to him. Important enough that people could expect things from him, great unreasonable things that the Stark’s had made their legacy.

Mr Rhodes closed his eyes as if not wishing to look Ned in the eye. Not wishing to see the young teens realisation of just how drastically their lives were going to change.

“Kid… You understand Peter is now Tony’s heir, right? Tony recognised Peter publically, claiming him as his own. Biological or not Tony basically said Peter is his kid. That doesn’t come without a price. How they treat Tony, that’s going to happen to Peter, and how they treat me, that’s how they’re going to treat you. You both understand, that, right? Because if you don’t, get out now.”

“We aren’t leaving. We may not know exactly what is going to happen, but we’re staying. Peter needs us…and we need Peter.” Michelle felt a fire ignite within her, a determination she had never felt before, but hearing this man doubt their faith in Peter, even if he meant well made her angry. Everything was uncertain now, Peter was famous in a way he had never intended. Stark, a man Michelle did not know and did not trust was protecting one of the few people she had allowed to become close to her and it terrified her. Why did it have to be like this? Why had May betrayed them? It was all so unfair.

The future was not what it once was and Michelle grieved for what could have been.

Mr Rhodes eyes met her own, steadily assessing her, searching for something, what she did not know. Nodding his head, as if he had found whatever it was he had wanted to see, he gestured at the other chairs in the room for them to sit.

“The trial will take a long time, I may have to leave as witness, but being here you will be as up to date as possible.” He stood, moving over to have a quiet discussion with Happy.

Peter decided that he did not like crowds at all. He hated them, all loud and close, too close. They kept touching him and pushing him, he almost fell as he made his way up the steps of the courthouse.
Were they allowed to do this? Were they allowed to be so close? He felt claustrophobic as the media rushed at him, yelling questions and pushing microphones in front of his face. It was overwhelming to the point when he felt his breathe quicken and his heart seize. He had to keep breathing, he had to stay calm. Why his State guardians thought it was a good idea coming this way Peter did not know. All he could do was keep his head down and not let them jostle his injuries too much.

“Mr Parker how do you feel about the case today?”

“Peter, are the abuse charges against your aunt true?”

“How do you know Tony Stark?”

“How do you feel manipulated by Mr Stark?”

And so on, the questions kept coming.

Peter hunched over, trying to make himself as small as possible. It was all too much. He wasn’t ready for this. He just wanted to disappear. Vanish as if he had never existed. It would make everyone’s lives a lot easier the teen agonised over that thought. Maybe he was meant to have died by now, and his escapes were becoming more and more damaging. Perhaps he would not survive the next disaster that would come. And he was sure another would come.

“Enough! Leave the kid alone.”

It was the blind lawyer. Murdock.

Peter looked up to see the lawyer making his way towards him. The crowd parted, having respect at least for the blind man as his cane cleared the path.

Flinching lightly as the lawyer’s hand moved and rested on his shoulder Peter was conflicted. He was standing with the enemy, the man that would defend his aunt, and yet his presence was comforting and familiar. Peter was reminded again of the shadow of a memory at the back of his mind that he knew the lawyer. Either way, at least Mr Murdock seemed to care about Peter enough not to accost him on the steps of the courthouse.
“C’mon inside Peter. Where did your caseworker go?” the man held onto the back of his neck leading Peter inside. His caseworker, Sally, nowhere in sight. He had been abandoned by her again.

The courthouse was louder than outside. The walls held the sound in, each voice becoming louder than the last in an effort to be heard. There were lawyers and judges and reporters all ready to go about their daily lives, to do their jobs. Peter felt out of place, he did not belong here, he had been dragged here through a series of unfortunate events that seemed to be the steady progression of his life.

Some stared, all curious about the boy that had taken Tony Starks attention. The boy that instigated a court case so important that it was considered a national security risk. Shuffling nervously Peter looked down at his shoes. They were plain white sneakers, Happy had bought them for him when he had been at the medical wing in the compound, the only pair of shoes he had when with Tony. They were also the only shoes he had at the State house. His caseworker had managed to find him some borrowed dress trousers and a button up shirt, both were too big. The trouser pants were rolled up and the belt was pulled to the last notch. The shirt sleeves only revealed the tips of his fingers. Peter was most certainly out of place.

Sally strode towards him, looking over him once again in despair. “Peter you need to stay with me. You can’t wander off.”

Grinding his teeth, he almost snapped at the woman. She had left him to the rabid pack of reporters outside, he most certainly did not wander off.

“Thank you Mr Murdock for finding him. Best of luck in your case today, we all hope you win so Peter can go back home where he belongs.”

Peter cringed at the implications. He couldn’t go back. He wouldn’t go back; he’d run away first. He hated the fact that the government employees all seemed to want Mr Stark to lose, it terrified him, what if the judge wanted him to back with May? What if the judge didn’t care about what happened to him? Shaking his head Peter did the best he could to push such awful thoughts from his mind. It would not do well to dwell on such questions, all he could do was react decisively when they are answered.

Mr Murdock smiled tightly at his caseworker, “All we can hope is that justice is served.”

Once again Peter was left alone with his caseworker. They sat outside the courtroom, Peter played with the sleeves of his shirt anxiously.
Loud exclamations made him look up.

“Mr Stark, how do you feel about the upcoming court case?”

“How do you react to the accusations of obstruction of justice people believe you have caused by calling a closed court?”

“What are your intentions towards Peter Parker?”

There he was. Tony Stark looking unusually solemn as he walking into the courthouse. Peter stood at the vexation of his caseworker. “Peter sit back down, you don’t belong with that man.”

Peter ignored the venom that dripped from the woman’s words. She, like everyone he had been in contact with seemed to hate Mr Stark, something he could never do.

“Mr Stark!”

Peter was moving before he even consciously realised. Ducking past the reporters he moved to his mentor’s side, desperate for some kind of familiarity to comfort him.

Hurtling toward the billionaire, he was barely aware of the other occupants of the room. Falling into his arms Peter felt as Tony’s arms folded around his body protectively. Finally, peace. He didn’t even care if they got photos of his tears as he clung to his mentor, he was safe again.

“Mr Stark.” He didn’t even know what to say. It was a culmination of things he needed to communicate, thank you for coming, sorry for what has happened, please don’t leave, don’t let them win.

He felt Mr Stark’s arms give him a tight squeeze, trying to answer his plea. “Its ok Pete, I got you. It’s going to be ok.”

Sally was not pleased with him as she practically dragged him back to his seat. Tony watched him
the whole time, there to give Peter a reassuring smile from across the room. When May entered the room, Peter paled considerably, and ignored any attempt made by his caseworker to take him to his aunt.

Peter really hoped this would not end in disaster.

“All rise for the justice Sonia Sotomayer.”

A hush fell over the court room Tony Stark and his legal team sat on one side. May Parker sat to his left, both on the defendant’s side. The persecutors looked stood on the other side.

If Peter Parker had been Matt Murdock, he would know that the prosecution for May’s case was a young, inexperienced and barely passable barrister that had used her father’s money to get through law school, he would also know that the prosecution for Tony was a well-respected and talented barrister that was known for his strong successful arguments. However, Peter was not Matt Murdock, and so was not horrified by the obvious attempt by the Department of Police Prosecution to push for a certain outcome, one that involved May Parker’s exoneration and Tony Stark’s conviction.

Still, Peter Parker was nervous from his position in the back of the courtroom. He had been allowed in, sitting next to the other major witness Dr Strange put him slightly more at ease as the man keenly watched the other occupants. Dr Strange had forgone his usual cloak and robes, also donning a suit and tie. Peter was glad Sally had to remain outside, only vital personnel were required in

The Judge sat, allowing the rest of the room to sit before her. She frowned when taking in the line-up in front of her, it was an unusual situation, and she was sure it would prove an interesting day. She also noted the less than subtle attempt forcing their own version of justice by the DPP. Irrespective of what the media said, she was determined that justice would be found, it was no trial by media.

“Before we begin, I will address the jury before me. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have all been vetted by the state and by the lawyers here. You understand that this is a closed court, anything said here today is to remain within these walls. This has been deemed a matter of national security, and therefore should you choose to reveal the events about to occur, you yourself will be held accountable as a traitor to the nation. Secondly, you are to put anything you have heard in the media about this case, and about the defendants put of your minds. You are here to judge based upon the evidence provided whether the defendants are guilty or not, you are not here to judge them on past
decisions or what you think of them as people.”

It was a long speech, by a reassuring one from Peter’s perspective. Perhaps this would end up ok.

Peter’s gaze lingered on the back of Tony’s head. The man sat confidently, resolutely ignoring May Parker next who sat just a few meters away.

And so, it began.

The beginning was slow, each lawyer conforming with the niceties and formalities of court. Each rising and sitting like a rehearsed play. Peter didn’t understand all that was said, the legal jargon was confusing, every now and then Dr Strange would whisper explanations for a few of the more confusing terms.

“Your honour… the charges against Ms Parker shows that erm Tony Stark said he was being abused. He has injuries, as seen here in these documents. “

She was not a good lawyer, the other prosecution lawyer furious. He too realised why she had been given the case.

“Your honour, I would like to highlight to wilful neglect of Peter Parker as to leave a child alone with a known terrorist organisation such as Hydra can only be considered a gross failure in protecting and caring for the minor in her care. Tony Stark moved to take the child into his care, she willingly signed the documents.”

Peter cringed. He understood that line. It caused a rumble through the jury. It was as if they suddenly realised why exactly the case was closed in the interests of national security.

“Objection your honour. The defence is making insinuations about my client’s knowledge of the organisation that harmed Mr Parker.” It was Mr Murdock that stood, looking like he swallowed a lemon as he defendant May Parker. Irrespective of how unhappy he looked, Peter still felt a stab of betrayal.

“Irrespective of whether she knew they were Hydra your Honour, it was gross negligence on her part in failing to ensure his safely in their care. The Mr Parker has even given statements indicating Ms Parker was aware of Hydra’s…medical and scientific intentions toward him.”
“There is precedent for a guardian to give medical care to a minor in their care. It is not outside of the realm of possibility that Ms Parker wanted her nephew to receive medical treatment for his health and wellbeing.” Mr Nelson stood with his partner.

The judge raised her eyebrows in disbelief, “And why, pray tell did Ms Parker not go to a reputable hospital facility instead of resorting to an allegedly unknown organisation that turned out to be Hydra?”

“Because Mr Parker is…was the enhanced individual known as Spiderman. His guardian believed it was in his best interests to lose the enhancements and dangerous lifestyle that it brought.”

“Your honour medical precedent states that a minor may have control over their medical needs as young as 14 years of age. Mr Parker clearly did not agree to such procedures. Not only that but it is an insult to practitioners of medicine to call the unanaesthetized dissection of a human being a medical procedure. Strange growled his agreement with that line.

“In defence of Mr Stark, his action to take a clearly vulnerable child out of an incredibly dangerous situation should be commended rather than vilified. My client acted, perhaps not to the exact letter of the law, but certainly to its spirit.”

They were each called to the stand. Dr Strange vilifying anyone willing to defend Peter’s injuries, speaking in complex medical terms, that left Peter’s head whirling. He may enjoy biology but he certainly had not attended six years of medical school. Peter nervously stumbled over his answers, not being able to look anyone in the eye as he described some of what happened to him. Clearly distraught, the judge had allowed Dr Strange to lead him out of the witness box and into an adjacent empty room to calm down.

“With regards to the matter of May Parker what is the jury’s verdict?”

“Guilty.”

May shrieked as if in agony. Part of Peter felt sorrow for the woman he once knew, the other half felt numb. She was lead out of the courtroom by the court officer.
“With regards to Tony Stark what is the jury’s verdict?”

“Not guilty.”

Peter felt the cement in is chest dissipate. May was going to prison. Mr Stark was free. The world that had previously seemed to be on its side had finally righted itself.

“Mr Parker,” the judge looked down at him from her seat, her face kind but sad, “I would like to commend you for surviving horrors than others for older than you would have crumbled facing. Thank you for all the good you did with no desire for recognition. I hope one day; this city will be able to understand the sacrifices you have made. I hope that you will find peace in the future.”

Peter nodded slightly, unsure of what to say. Standing shakily to his feet, Peter moved to Tony’s side.

“Mr Stark, I shall give a court order allowing Mr Parker’s immediate return to you care.”

It was over.

Chapter End Notes

I hoped you enjoyed it.
Please leave a review :)
Aftermath

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Relief” would not be the proper word to describe what Tony felt at the words of the judge. Turning to look at the back of the courtroom, he caught sight of the teen this had all been for. Peter looked exhausted, the State clearly hadn’t been looking after him properly, the thought stirred an anger within him.

He stood and shook hands with his lawyers, Pepper really had found the best. He nodded to them as they walked out of the courtroom, noticing how their eyes also strayed to the teenager in the room, catching a glimpse of the boy that was once Spiderman as they left. It was to be expected, he was a curiosity to those that knew his story; FRIDAY would be monitoring every person that had taken place in the proceedings for the rest of their lives.

Peter moved over towards him, his movements were timid and unsure. Forcing a smile to his face in an attempt to hide his unease with the whole situation he pulled the kid into a hug. He had to keep it together, the kid was finally safe again, that’s what mattered. Any misgivings he had about becoming the parental figure of an abused teen needed to be forgotten quickly.

“I’m sorry about this whole mess Mr Stark and the media—“

“Nope,” he cut the kid off from his apology. It was concerning how much the kid wanted to apologize all the time, “not gonna hear it kid. None of this is your fault. And the media have always been like that, one day they love me and the next I’m the devil incarnate. Next week I’ll probably guest star on Sesame Street or whatever it is you kids watch nowadays.”

Looking behind Peter, Strange was indicating his need to leave. It was almost creepy how well he had learnt to read the Doctor, they had only been working together for a few months but they worked seamlessly. He nodded his thanks to the magician, his help had been fundamental to winning the case.

Returning his attention to Peter, Tony frowned, he hated the ghost hidden behinds the boy’s eyes. Life was not fair.

Sighing deeply, he pulled the kid in for another hug, hoping to chase the ghosts away if only for a few moments.
“Come on we should get out of here. Your friends are here; do you want to see them before we head home?”

The kid nodded tentatively, which Tony took as a good sign. It would do him good to see his friends.

Keeping a hand on Peter’s shoulder he led the teen out of the room and into the busy hallway. The reporters were loud in their discontent as Tony pulled the teen into an adjoining room, where friends were waiting.

“Peter!” Two young voices greeted them as they entered. Tony watched as the eager teens practically crash into Peter in their excitement. Looking beyond the reunion he felt a clam wash over him as his eyes landed on Rhodey, Happy and Pepper, each looking as relieved as he felt. Here in the room, his family was whole again.

Moving past the teens hoping to give them some amount of privacy he moved to his fiancé. “You made it.”

The red head smiled, “You needed me, of course I did.” She had been incredibly busy the past few weeks, trying to placate the press that had been demanding his head and trying to placate the board members that wanted to divorce him from his own company because the stocks had taken such a terrible hit. It was a nightmare, and he was damn luck Pepper loved him, because any other CEO would have joined the board in that endeavour, he was bad for business.

What he did to deserve her, he did not know, but he sure as hell wasn’t going to lose her. Could he propose again? Or should he just marry her immediately? They were in a court house, and the judge seemed pretty nice, it could work.

“By the way, the president wants to talk to you. Seeing as it was published as of seven minutes ago that you are innocent, people no longer think you’re a lunatic, and therefore it’s not political suicide to take you seriously. I’d suggest waiting until tomorrow before you call him back.”

“My dear Miss Potts, are you encouraging me to shirk my responsibilities to the nation? I believe I may be a bad influence on you.” He pulled her in for a kiss. Smiling Tony pulled back, basking in the simple joy of the moment.
“Your influence is only twelve per cent, the other eighty-eight is my own anger towards the political institution that is apparently protecting our county.”

“Percentages again, really? You need to let that one go.” Rhodey came up beside them, clearly amused by his friends’ behaviour. The Colonel had seen many things in his lifetime, he had been with Tony at his lowest point, and found that the most recent events surprised him, after all there should be a capacity for how much any person can suffer, and yet his friend carried on. He should stop being surprised by the strength of Tony Stark.

Looking regrettably down at his watch Tony knew it was time to leave. “Pete, we should be heading off. Your friends alright to get home or am I asking Happy to give them a lift?”

The kids turned, and while he may have faced down aliens and gods, the look on the girl’s face open in revolution, perhaps he should check if there was any relation between the girl and Pepper, it was almost the same look.

“We’ll come with you.” She jutted her chin out stubbornly, perhaps she was related to him? Only he would act stubborn in the face of logic.

“I just got off charges for kidnapping, I have no interest in doing so again. You should go home, it’s almost 5pm, your parents will want you home.”

“I can call my mum Mr Stark.” The boy...Ned probably? - Tony realised he didn’t actually know all that much about Peter’s friends. It was horrifying to remember just how out of his depths he was. Hanging out with a kid for a few hours a week did not make a parent. Tony pulled himself quickly of his internal terror to catch the girl whispering to the boy.

“Your mum doesn’t know we’re here idiot.” She whacked the boys arm.

“I can still call her, she’ll understand.”

Peter moved between them, “It’s ok guys, you should head home. I’m probably just going to go to sleep.”

The girl still looked rebellious, but her eyes softened when looking upon Peter. It made the billionaire glad to know that Peter wasn’t alone in this.
“Call us. We’ll come see you as soon as you want.” The boy hovered close to his friend, it was clear none of them wanted to leave.

Peter pulled them into a hug, smiling shakily at his friends. “I will as soon as I get a phone.”

“Tony Stark literally owns a tech company and you don’t have a phone? You’re a mess Parker.”

A Trial by Media: Criminal Justice System as seen by under the guise of the media.

Case Study: The People v Tony Stark

A rejected article meant for the school paper because Mr Warren said “it’s too topical” but I am publishing it anyway because the press should never be silenced!

by Betty Brant

Disclosure: as students of Midtown we are all inclined without own personal bias towards this case. As a student that has shared class with Peter Parker and having grown up with Iron-man as a personal hero, I have my own thoughts and feelings on this matter, but have tried to stay impartial in this essay piece so that the truth may be heard.

Yesterday, Tony Stark was found innocent of all charges with regards to the kidnapping of Peter Parker. This has shocked many of the people I have come into contact with in my day to day life. The media ran a campaign against Tony Stark and it worked very well. Now, despite the not guilty verdict being handed down, people are still calling for the head Ironman. This brings an interesting question to mind; is Stark simply innocent and pulled strings to get off, or is the media running a smear campaign.

Tony Stark: Billionaire, philanthropist and most importantly Iron-man. We all know him, many of us were raise to see him as a hero, as an Avenger.

The media have had an interesting relationship with Stark since his birth. The media watch his every step as a child, and watch every blunder. In his youth, particularly after the death of his parents, the media portrayed him as a drunk playboy with no interest in work. Then Afghanistan and Iron-man.
He became a literal hero overnight. The Avengers happened not long after, and his popularity skyrocketed. During the accords, he was even celebrated, seen as a man of the people, a man for democracy.

Then the alleged kidnapping.

Suddenly, he’s the most hated man in America. Like every news outlet and channel forgot all the good he’s done.

Of course, kidnapping is an abhorrent crime that everyone should be against, but our justice system is built on the premise that a person is innocent until proven guilty. And Stark has been proven innocent. So why does everyone still hate him?

I should also take this moment to point out the fact that Tony Stark is not nearly the most concerning figure in society currently, the Rogue Avengers have been exonerated for any crimes they committed during the accords and have returned! Why has no one covered this? Do the news outlets want us to focus on a case that’s already completed over a case that should have but never occurred? This coupled with the new leadership in the Pentagon, the Secretary of Defence has become the equivalent of an intern in his own area! Wake up people! The honesty and freedom of the press is dying.

The issue the media has with Stark’s case is the lack of visibility in the case as it was a closed court. We don’t know the evidence given or the arguments made, so how can we the public know if he’s innocent. I would argue we should trust the justice system, and if not that, we should look to Stark’s history. He’s not perfect, but he’s always tried to do what’s right.

Loki, god of mischief, the trickster and adopted son of Odin shifted uncomfortably, looking down on the bright blue planet beneath their ship. The last of Asgard has travelled far, of the nine realms that had been protected by the mythological race of gods, none had offered refuge for the refugees. Earth was their last option, and while Thor looked forward to reuniting with his friends, Loki felt dread and sorrow enter his spirit.

The trickster, that was what he was. Not a murderer.
Yet here he returned to the planet that he had invited chaos and destruction to, releasing all of the darkness that resided in him upon hundreds of people. He had been their doom. It was a horrifying thought, and a guilt Loki had never thought he would carry with him. While humans had never been a fascination to him as they were for Thor, they did not deserve his wrath.

Thanos had been easily appealing and understanding. He had used the darkness within him and twisted it, the roots of madness grew and he killed people, murdered them where they stood. It was unsettling to recall the fragmented memories, blurry and warped. He had not been himself.

“You look pale.”

Turning in surprise to see the infamous Valkyrie lurking behind him. It had taken them almost two months to reach their destination, though they couldn’t even be certain if they could stay. The others would fare better without him. Part of him wanted to disappear into the black of space but he remained, loyal to his people, to his brother. It was strange to feel such devotion to people that he had scorned for so long, but perhaps he had simply feared their own dismissal. Now they were alone together, refugees.

“Brunnhilde, shouldn’t you be with Thor?”

“Shouldn’t you be? You are both the leaders of the Asgardians after all. If anything, I imagine you’d be better at planning diplomacy seeing as Thor’s more of a punch first ask questions later.” She raised her eyebrows questioningly, a condescending smirk on her face.

“He’s actually a lot better than he had been a few years ago. He knows the humans far better than I. The humans and I have a… complicated past.” Loki frowned, a shadow passing over his face as he turned back to look at the blue planet.

“Well, whatever it is, you have to move past it. Your people need you. Thor needs you. He’s doing a good job of hiding it but the weight of the crown is getting to him. He won’t crumble if there’s a second to carry the weight with him.”

It was everything Loki had ever wanted. Acceptance. To be recognised as equal to Thor, to be worthy of the throne of Asgard, but it left a bitter taste in his mouth. Everything he had done, all the harm he had caused to get here. Did he really deserve it.
So I hate this chapter, I don't feel I got the characterisation right, but I wanted to get one out because you guys have been so nice in the comments for the last chapter. I hope its not completely terrible.
I may take a while for the next one because of exams but after that I could be able to do longer ones which would be nice.
Please leave a comment I alway appreciate them :)
And I hope wherever you are I hope you're doing ok
Peter woke slowly. It took him a moment to process his surroundings. He was back with Mr Stark. His new room had the items from his old one, same clothes, same bed sheets, same old tech he had pulled out of the trash. It was a comfort seeing the familiar items, he had a feeling that Ms Potts had ensured his room was still his and not a whole bunch or new expensive things that would be weird to use.

Moving about slowly he made his way into the kitchen where Tony was waiting for him. “Morning Pete. You sleep ok?”

Looking at his mentor he could tell that the billionaire was uncomfortable with the new relationship they had. He was trying, but it was strange. Everything about this situation was strange.

“Yeah I slept ok. Better than I have for a while.”

Tony nodded accepting his answer. Peter moved around behind him to move and grab the box of cereal by his side. The silence was awkward, neither of them knew how to act around each other, Peter found himself wondering whether Mr Stark was even a morning person? Tony had turned back to his tablet, spying over his shoulder Peter realised it was the new Accords, the ones that everyone were going to have to sign.

Grabbing the box of cereal, Peter realised he didn’t know where anything was, he was home but not home, “Mr Stark, I erm… I don’t know where the bowls are.”

“Right, of course you don’t. They’re in the cupboard above the coffee machine,” he pointed over to the cupboards, Peter followed the gesture opening the cupboard, “Yep that’s the one. Spoons and other stuff are in the drawer next to the sink, and cups are in the cupboard next to it.”

As Peter sat down at the kitchen bench to eat his cereal he felt his mentor’s eyes on him. “You know you don’t have to call me Mr Stark. If it’s what you’re comfortable with then that’s fine, it’s just with me being your guardian now I thought you could call me Tony. We’re there, we’ve actually been there for a while I just…” he trailed off, unsure of how to continue.

He was right Peter realised. It was weird to call people you lived with my Mr or Ms. So now what,
Tony? That’s weird, right? Calling a superhero, by his first name? Calling scientific genius, you’ve looked up to your whole life by his first name? Was he making a big deal out of nothing?

“Yeah I guess calling you Mr Stark is a bit weird.”

“Totally up to you what you call me kid.” He was being so nice about everything. Peter felt like he should be surprised that Tony Stark cared so much. He was just a kid, not even a kid with superpowers anymore, but ever since the disaster of homecoming, and actually spending time with the man, Peter was only surprised that more people didn’t know about this side of Tony Stark. He just wished it was less awkward.

“Ok Doctor Stark.” He grinned, trying to lose the tension building up between them.

The billionaire paused his eyebrows furrowing for a second before he rolled his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Alright then Mr Parker I see how this is going to work.”

The rest of the morning was spent with the two trying to catch the other out as they addressed each other in increasingly formal language. Peter was the first to break, quietly laughing when he was addressed as ‘Master Peter of House Parker the first of his name loser of backpacks and herald of old movie quotes’.

Tony just smiled as Peter laughed, clearly content with the situation. It wasn’t home yet but it would be.

Tony felt that the first few hours of acting as a parental figure in earnest were going relatively smoothly. Peter seemed to be ok, now the kid was finally home with him was when the healing could actually happen.

Moving into Peter’s room the kid was seated, playing around with some of the old tech brought over from his old place. He was glad Pepper had insisted they keep in instead of just buying him new stuff, it seemed to keep the kid busy.

He looked up as Tony walked in, giving a nervous smile.
“So we need to talk about how this is all going to work, you have school and I have Avengers and we both have to deal with the media.”

Peter nodded he had been expecting this conversation. Tony noted how he shrank into himself slightly, and how he started fiddling with his hands. Tony wished for the millionth things were easier, that the kid in front of him hadn’t been dealt such a shitty hand. He leaned on the kids desk, trying to look relaxed.

“Let’s start with school. Do you want to go back? If you don’t feel like you can that’s fine, I can have the best tutors around, hell I reckon you’re smart enough to finish school now and go to college if you want. But I know you’ve got friends so it’s up to you.”

He could see the cogs in the boy’s head move, if he was given the choice not to go to school or college at Peter’s age he would have taken it. Had he been through half of what Peter has been though he wouldn’t go, being amongst a group of children that didn’t understand what it means to suffer didn’t seem appealing.

All of that didn’t even cover the reality that Peter was now his kid. Peter was his responsibility, which had its own set of baggage with it; Tony never thought he’d have to teach anyone about the rich kid politics that his childhood encompassed.

“I’d like to try going back.” Peter looked unsure of himself, “If it’s not too much trouble I mean.”

“No Pete, we can work with that. Dr Strange recommended at least a week off, ideally two before you head back. He’ll give the final ok though.”

Clearing his throat, Tony moved to sit on the end of Peter’s bed. Trying to figure out how to approach the next topic delicately, “With the Avengers back together and recruitments happening I’m going to be needed at the compound. I was thinking of doing Fridays Saturdays and Sundays there full time, that way I can be here during the week with you and you can come to the compound with me.”

Realistically he could also spend school hours at the compound and fly back to meet Peter as he got back from school, but Tony didn’t actually want to spend all of his free time hanging out with a bunch of people that left him for dead. He was actually avoiding the whole situation with the rogue Avengers quite adamantly. He felt a twinge of guilt, leaving Rhodey and Vision to keep the peace at the compound, but in his defence he had a damn good reason for not being there. Peter had to be his first priority, egos of the other Avengers could hang.
“You don’t have to do that Mr Star– Tony. You don’t have to organise things around me, I can get to school and back fine. I don’t want to cause trouble.” Peter’s head bowed, shoulder’s slumped in resignation.

“Kid it’s no trouble. It’s my job to look out for you and if there’s anything I learnt from my childhood, it’s that having someone just be there really helps.”

Peter’s head shot up in surprise, it wasn’t often he brought up his childhood, very few people knew the truth behind Tony Stark.

“So we’ll be here at your house on weekdays and weekend at the compound. Do you want me around the other Avengers, I know you don’t like most of them?” Tony almost laughed when the kid called their current residence a ‘house’, it was one of the most expensive pieces of real-estate in the city. It was a strange reminder of what Peter was actually used to, that he was new to being one of the elite.

Thinking about Peter’s question made Tony pause. He didn’t trust the newly pardoned Avengers, and his recruits counted figure like Daredevil who he most certainly did not like. But the kid was smart, and it was unlikely the Avengers would hurt a kid, “It’s up to you if you want to be around them. My rooms are closed off from the others on purpose so if you just wanted to hang out there that’s an option too. This is a partnership kid, I’m here to look out for you, not control you. You’re a good kid, I trust your judgement.”

Peter flinched at his words, his arms curling around himself to hug his body. “But aunt May –”

Tony moved to pull the kid into a hug. “Trusting May was expected. She had never done anything to make you think otherwise, you can’t be blamed for her jumping off the deep end head first into the psyche ward.”

Tony felt Peter shake his head, the teen took in a shuddering breath, “But I did. I knew I was just too stupid to see it.”

“Peter you’re not stupid for trusting someone you love.”

Peter sniffled softly, burying his head into Tony’s shoulder. “You don’t understand. There were signs. I – she – when Ben died she started drinking pretty heavily. She’d say things, bad things and
she locked me out a few times, but she got better. She was basically back to normal by the time you turned up. But when she found out about Spiderman – she hated it. She hated me. She started drinking again and it was worse than the first time. She broke my computers and checked my back whenever I got home. Sometimes she wouldn’t let me eat, like if I was late home. And she went back to normal, and I thought it was ok again. But it wasn’t because she still hated me. Because she had found how to fix me.”

Tony’s stomach dropped, how had he missed this? How had he missed the kid going through all of that? He felt sick just thinking about it.

“What’s wrong with me Mr Stark? Why didn’t she love me?”

Blinking away tears Tony just held the shaking teen in his arms. Trying to be some form of comfort in the hurricane that was Peter’s life. There were no answers to that question, as far as Tony was concerned it was impossible not to love Peter Parker.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHERE IS SPIDERMAN?

By Flash Thompson

As Spiderman’s biggest fan here at Midtown, I feel obligated to ask the question, “Where is Spiderman?” No one is talking about it. Like yes the Avengers are back and everything is crazy, but seriously Spiderman is missing and no one seems to care. Heck! The Daily Bugle wrote an article theorising that Spiderman is dead and it was a relief. Not cool dude, not cool.

What if he is dead? What if the government decided to kidnap him because he never signed the Accords? Like we covered that in class, we know Spiderman was exempt because he’s not an official Avenger, he looks out for the little guy. He looks out for people like us. So, I think the least we can do is to also look out for him and at least call on someone, anyone to look into Spiderman’s disappearance.
I was cool to believe he just went on holiday for a while, the dude’s human, I can totally believe that. But it’s been months and there’s no sign of him. If he died he should at least be honoured as a hero, and if he’s in trouble we should help him. I can’t think of any other reason why Spiderman would disappear; I’ve watched every video of him and all I’ve seen is that he loves our city. So, I ask the question. Where is Spiderman?

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked it. Thanks for reading

Please leave a review I would really appreciate it :)


SPIDERMAN’S SECRET MISSION

- By Harrison Thompson of the New York Times

People have been wondering over the past few months where Spiderman has been. Disappearing at the start of last Summer, many of us assumed the masked hero had just taken a short holiday, after all it can be expected that being a superhero is exhausting. However, it has been released to the public, through uncorroborated means, that Spiderman has tasked on an undercover mission to take down the threats alluded to in the closed court case revolving around Tony Stark and Peter Parker his young ward.

No one but those attending the court that day know what occurred, only that the matter was classed as classified by the Secretary of Defence himself. His power to do this would have been allowed if the case pertained to national security.

It is known that Spiderman has close association with Tony Stark also known as Ironman. This is detailed in the footage caught during the ‘Civil War’ in Germany last year where Spiderman worked with Stark to capture the Rogue Avengers.

Spiderman was not however an official Avenger and has never publically indicated his desire to become one. His work has often been surrounding the area of Queens, occasionally moving further around New York, but his work is more mundane and human compared to the Avengers and their work against global threats.

A source reported that Spiderman’s disappearance is due to his assistance with another threat. That he has been working in secret to uncover and protect us from.

As a New Yorker and as someone that has had a son personally rescued by Spiderman personally, I hope that this is the reason you’ve disappeared. To know that even with all the politics and drama, there is a hero out there, looking out for us, the little guys.

Spiderman, if you have the chance to read this, stay safe, and come home soon. New York has missed you, and we always have your back.
Peter looked down at the article, uncertainty swirling in his chest. Had this been the right move?

Tony had sat him down and explained the growing worry over his counterpart’s disappearance. Part of him knew that perhaps his powers were never coming back, but a deeper part of him wanted to be Spiderman no matter what. He could make tech and be more like Ironman, or if that doesn’t work, he could train like Daredevil. He was scared, after all they business with Hydra was terrifying. But at his core, he wanted to option to return to helping people. Tony had agreed and had an anonymous tip to the Times. Close enough to the truth and give comfort to people that were worried, and far enough to allay any possible suspicions to his true identity.

It occurred to Peter about halfway through the drive to the Avengers compound, that he should be nervous. After three days of hanging around with Tony at their new home, Pepper and Happy occasionally making appearances, Tony had decided he couldn’t put off of going to work any longer particularly now that the Asguardians had arrived. As Peter was still healing up, Peter had been given the option to come. He didn’t have to, Tony had made it clear that he should do whatever made him comfortable, and Peter realised that the only way he could feel comfortable was if he was around Tony. Tony was safe.

Their relationship was still in the weird and awkward stage, in the back of his mind Peter worried that it may always feel this way. Tony didn’t know how to be a parental figure; it was often Peter reminding him that is was time to eat or that most people slept for around seven hours a night. Peter on the other hand did not know what he needed; did he need Mr Stark to give him a hug after nightmares? Was that weird? Did he want help with the homework Ned and MJ had sent over? He hadn’t really needed help before but maybe just company? It was all so confusing.

Sitting in the back of the car next to Tony, Peter resisted the urge to play with the window button. Tony was already on edge, going into a room full of people that had such opposing views on topics that they were willing to go against the law and use violence to make a point. A group of people that had used violence against him. It was ironic that despite going into a room full of Avengers, it was Tony Stark, not Peter Parker that was more nervous.

The car came to a halt outside the Compound. It was odd looking at it. The first-time Peter had been too nervous to see Tony after the Vulture incident, and the second time he had arrived half dead in the black of night. Getting out of the car, Peter noted the entirety of the Compound, four large buildings, one looking slightly newer than the other three and behind in the open field was four massive ships, three notably were alien and the fourth looked to be of Wakanden make. Peter’s thoughts drifted to the news, he knew the United Nations were arguing over the validity of the Asguadian refugee status, being not human seemed to make laws difficult to interpret. It made sense
that they would have been abandoned in Avenger territory until a solution was found. Feeling a sore sense of solidarity with the Asguardians, losing one’s home, one’s identity… he promised himself he would try meet with them and help them in whatever way he could.

Tony put an arm around his shoulders and pointed at the building in front of them; “Main building, it has most of the facilities, conference and meeting rooms. Over there,” he pointed to one of the others, “is the medical facility, the one I brought you to after your call. That one beside it is the living quarters, most of the avengers stay there, plus there’s rooms for diplomats and what not. The one at the back is the lab facilities, and hanger where we keep all of our toys. You’ll have unrestricted access to the whole area. Once we’ve met everyone I’ll take you to your room and show you the panic room.”

Nodding along, Peter followed Tony into the building, he took note of exits and entry points, corners and crevices, just because it was an Avengers base, did not mean it was safe.

“O my god you’re here!” Peter’s head snapped to the owner of the voice. “Dude your like totally my hero.”

He exchanged confused looks with Tony. Who was this woman?

She walked swiftly over towards them, her arms outstretched. Tony moved out of the way and they were both surprised when she ignored him and moved to Peter, pulling him into an uncomfortable hug. “You’re way more adorable in person.”

Peter looked to Tony for help, but his mentor seemed to be surprised that the woman saw him as her hero and not Ironman.

“Um sorry. Who are you?” Peter pulled away, not entirely comfortable with hugging a complete stranger.

“I’m Darcy.” She nodded to herself as she said it, as if that was everything they needed to know about her.

“And why are you here Darcy?” Tony gestured around them at the Avengers base, having snapped out of his shock and now attempting to figure out why a random woman was in a secure facility and hugging his ward.

“I’m Jane Foster’s intern. She’s here to help with the aliens. But mostly I’m here to hang out with my
buddy Thor and meet the most epic intern that ever interned.” She turned back to him excitedly. “Seriously you’re my hero. You managed to get adopted by your boss and become a millionaire. My boss won’t even buy me a pizza.”

Peter looked to Tony for help, this was not a situation he was ready to deal with. Tony moved between him and the strange woman, waving her away slightly. “Please tell me you’re not also on my payroll.” He kept looking at her while sliding a reassuring hand around Peter’s shoulders making him slightly less tense. Hugging random strangers was not within his comfort zone.

The brunette smiled at him, as she escorted them down the hall. “I don’t know, I think everyone is on Coulson’s payroll. I mean whenever Jane needs something he says she’ll have it within the week! It’s great, but she still refuses to buy me pizza.”

She falls silent as they enter a kitchen and dining area. It becomes apparent quickly, that they’ve interrupted lunch. It surprised Peter how domestic the scene looked, a group of super heroes and geniuses and warriors Peter assumed were with the King, all sitting around eating and talking.

The rooms attention however shifted to one single point; them. Peter inched slightly behind Tony, uncomfortable with the stares he was receiving. They were assessing him, whether he fell short of their expectations he could not tell, but as someone used to being ignored in group settings, he felt unnerved.

“Tony, we’re glad you could finally join us.” It was the king that spoke first, moving forward to shake his mentors hand. Peter noticed the slight against Tony made by the comment. ‘Finally’ as if Tony was less invested in the safety of the world. With those words being their greeting, Peter realised they were walking into a ticking time bomb of a situation. There were unsettled disputed and unspoked feelings and grudge matches to settle. They had walked into a house of cards, and one wrong move would send it tumbling down.

Taking a second look around the room, he chose to be the one assessing the inhabitants.

The Rogue Avengers were likely to be argumentative, particularly the leader Mr Rogers. Something had happened between him and Tony, and it had to have been big.

The King and the Wakandens; were likely just as hostile, the greeting of the King was setting off red flags. Whatever the issue between Tony and the King, it appeared Tony didn’t know either. Peter observed as his shoulders tense slightly, he too had noticed the cloaked insult. He hadn’t expected it. No whatever was there was new, and therefore something to be weary of.
Thor looked similarly grim, though perhaps more at his situation than anything else. However, he may be touchy, Peter remembered that Tony’s base here was now responsible for housing Loki as a prisoner.

Dr Strange stood alongside a group of scientists, several he had studied in class, including Dr Foster, Dr Selvig and Dr Banner. Had the situation not been so tense, Peter probably would have fallen over in excitement. The group didn’t look hostile, if a little exhausted.

Mr Rhodes and Vision were together; they were clearly the friendliest of the groups. Rhodes stood and smiled, Vision following, though his smile looked slightly more alarming. Still adjusting to human behaviours then.

Tony took the outstretched hand of and shook. “Yes well some of us can’t laze around a Compound all day on somebody else’s dollar. I’ve been tracking down Hydra bases, tracking down other potential allies and working on designs that will assist space warfare. Remind me again what you’ve been doing, you know, other than harbouring known international criminals.”

Peter closed his eyes in frustration. While he knew, Tony was lashing out in frustration and exhaustion, this was not going to help anything. He was a kid, and he was relying on the adults actually being able to do something about the looming threats. This was not going to easy. But he had Tony’s back, of that he was sure.

The tension in the room shifted, Peter’s senses were pulling him to stay calm.

Well that’s new.

Pushing it into the back of his mind, Peter watched as the potential threats in the room bristled.

Moving forward on instinct, Peter grabbed Tony’s shoulder. “You said you’d give me a tour?”

Tony turned slightly to look at him. His eyes understanding Peter’s intervention. “Of course Peter, lots of time for friendly catch ups later. Strange, would you care to join us.”

Strange moved towards them, looking at Peter with similar intrigue. Something was different,
whatever it was Tony and Dr Strange could tell.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, sorry for the wait, hopefully I can get back into a routine after a few crazy weeks. I hope you enjoy, and let me know what you think :)

End Notes

Thanks for giving this a go. I'm not very good at keeping on top of things but I will do my best to update. Apologies for any incorrect spelling or grammar (they are not my strong points). I hope you enjoyed.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!